

Noted brass band looks for new community to call its own – as lease on its practice room draws to a close

Imps seek a sound future... so the music can play on

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A YORKSHIRE brass band which once counted among the nation's finest is desperately seeking a community to call its own in the hope it can keep the music playing.

The Yorkshire Imperial Band, affectionately known as The Imps, has found itself looking for a new home as the 'peppercorn' lease on its band room near Wakefield draws to a close.

As the historical working band finds itself without a base, and without an industry, it has issued an appeal for it to be adopted by a community with a space to offer that it can call home.

"We can look after a building, make it useful, and be an asset," said chairman Chris Newbery.

"Make us a part of your community. That's it really, as simple as it is."

"We need some support right now, in finding somewhere. We're not destitute, we are proud, and we're not asking for anything for free."

"But unless we have music playing, it dies. There is an atmosphere and a greatness to it,

brass bands do matter to people. It's really important."

The Imps was formed in the 1930s originally as the Yorkshire Copper Works Band in Stourton, near Leeds, and were renamed after the Yorkshire Imperial Metals company came into existence in the 1950s.

This was an era when workers were at times hired for their musical prowess rather than their skills in industry, said Mr Newbery, when colliery bands existed and there were parades and a tangible sense of pride.

In the years since The Imps grew to acclaim with its veteran band, holding the prestigious British National and Open titles as well as the Granada Band of the Year title many times.

For the past 11 years it has been based in a band room in Gawthorpe, West Yorkshire, held in trust with token subs, but as this agreement ends – with a 17-fold rent increase – they cannot afford to stay.

"We've just been very fortunate until now," said Mr Newbery. "It wasn't fancy but it was a building that met our needs, it worked. We've built a home in Gawthorpe, played at parades."

"At the moment we are at a



TRADITIONAL SOUNDS: Top, band Ian Wilkinson and Ash Paradise practice, with Gawthorpe water tower in the background; above, from left, Sara Gartshore and Chris Lord playing; band members rehearsing; inset left, a bygone picture of the band performing. PICTURES: SIMON HULME

hiatus, we need a building. We'd love to stay in the Gawthorpe area but we've looked and looked, now we need to look around further.

"The problem is, when you have a brass band, it comes with a lot of stuff."

The band's veterans meet on a Tuesday morning for a social

gathering and music, so ideally a new base would have a space for them.

There is also the band's substantial livery.

"The veterans are an important part of our history, from a golden age back in the 1990s," said Mr Newbery.

"There was a time when it was

one of the most significant bands in the country."

"As a movement, brass bands are struggling. And what that means is music."

"It's really important for communities to have access to music and musical performance," he added.

"There's a lot of people that still care about the band, a lot of people that enjoy listening," he said. "The community is there, though perhaps smaller."

"There is something about brass bands, the rhythm and the march, that is very emotive. "We can't be losing another one."

A developer of musical talent

THE YORKSHIRE Imperial Band has issued an urgent appeal for a new rehearsal space where it can also securely store equipment and its music library.

The band, which celebrated its 85th anniversary this year, is a registered charity with a reputation for developing musical talent and with some of its past players now in leading ensembles.

After being unable to rehearse for more than a year due to Covid, they returned with a concert at Harlow Carr in August. But its lease expires in January and The Imps are hopeful to hear from communities that can help, perhaps with a large outbuilding, underused office, or even unused land. www.yorkshireimps.co.uk

Briefing

Duke collaborates for US climate call

ROYAL: The Duke of Cambridge has teamed up with former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg to write a joint opinion piece warning of the race to save the Earth from climate change.

William and businessman Mr Bloomberg penned an article for USA Today highlighting the Duke's Earthshot Prize. They described the prize as "a new call to action to the world".

Winstone uses film for cancer message

HEALTH: Hollywood actor Ray Winstone has highlighted the importance of men being tested for prostate cancer as he discusses the need to talk about the disease in a film with friends.

His latest film, *The Sit Down*, sees him discuss male friendship with city trader Gary Pettit and former Charlton Athletic FC chief executive Peter Varney, who have been treated for prostate cancer.

Shetland roles for three Vigil actors

DRAMA: A trio of actors from hit BBC One show *Vigil* will star in another Scottish crime drama, the broadcaster has confirmed.

Stephen McCole, Jim Sturgeon and Lois Chimimba are all joining the award-winning *Shetland* for its sixth series, due to be broadcast this autumn. The series centres on the murder of a prominent local figure.



BIG CAT: A 1958 Jaguar XK10 drophead coupe in exceptional condition that is up for auction alongside a Morris Mini Cooper S.

Classic cars of 'proud Yorkshireman' to go under the hammer

TWO CLASSIC cars belonging to a 'proud Yorkshireman' will go under the hammer next month.

The 1958 Jaguar XK150 drophead coupe and a 1970 Mk 2 Morris Mini Cooper S were owned by Cedric 'Gilly' Gillson, the owner of Haworth Quarry, known for its York stone paving.

They are being sold by Sworders Auctioneers in Essex as part of their October 19-20 Design Auction from the executors of the late Mr Gillson and both are in exceptional condition.

A spokesman for Sworders said Mr Gillson was as proud a Yorkshire gentleman as you could find and was seldom parted from his tweed flat cap (the auctioneers even found one under the seat in the Jag).

He kept his vehicles in a heated double garage.

He purchased the Jaguar in 1989 in parts as a restoration project and famously enjoyed retelling the tale of sending two mechanics ahead to make sure all the pieces were present. On completing the sale and starting the project, the steering wheel was found to be missing.

No expense was spared in restoring the car with most of the work done by Rawdon Restorations of Idle, Bradford. The estimate is £60,000-80,000.

Mr Gillson bought his Mini, liveried in almond green and white, fully restored in 2006. It was a regular at Harewood House classic car meetings and made a trip to Le Mans. It is expected to sell for between £20,000-25,000.

Books 'which best evoke spirit of the North' are longlisted for literary prize

BOOKS WHICH "best evoke the spirit of the north of England" are up for a £10,000 prize.

The Portico Prize for Literature celebrates new works of northern fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

This year's longlist of 14 books explores themes of family, friendship, class, race, identity, masculinity, sexuality, the meaning of place and memories of the past.

Debut writers have made their mark, with five of the 10 fiction

novels being debuts, along with three of the four non-fiction titles.

The Outsiders by James Corbett is among the debuting fiction novels, which is set against the backdrop of the Liverpool riots in the early 1980s.

Sairish Hussain's *The Family Tree* about a multi-generational British Muslim family and *The Khan* by Saima Mir, a crime thriller with a female Pakistani protagonist, are also debuts.

The longlist was selected by the Portico Prize's Society of Readers and Writers, an appointed group of 21 book lovers and literary enthusiasts.

The prize, which was established in 1985, aims to raise awareness of the north of England's historical, cultural and literary heritage.

The shortlist of six books will be announced on December 7 and the winner revealed in Manchester on January 20.

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