
Hellifield's Dance Band Days

If we look back over the years, it seems that Hellifield was a village that was never short of people who were not averse to picking up an instrument and belting out a tune. In fact we can find records going back to a Male Voice Choir organised by members of the Midland Railway Company in the 19th Century, plus local singers who performed at 'Band of Hope Days' and even bands of visiting Minstrel Troupes who were joined by locals in performing operatic numbers and popular standards of the time, in concerts which took place inside the main sale ring at Hellifield Auction Mart.

Nowadays of course we are not short of a wide range of sounds, from the recent Country and Blue Grass music of Stan Gray (known at one time as The Singing Postman) plus his son Ian and his wife Jane, who have carried on the family tradition with popular contemporary sounds plus well known numbers, both old and new.

We also have 'Time Bandits' – latterly known as 'Total Wrex' (who currently include yours truly, Andy Dakin, Mick Cardus and Barry Powell) - a mix of sounds from the 50's through to the 80's with a touch of country and a splash of Glam Rock! With the mention of recent additions to the Village Music Scene we must also include 'THUMP' (The Hellifield Ukulele Musical Players) with Karen Dunwoodie at the helm, and also the

melodic power of all the members of the W.I Rock Choir.

The photo shows members of the 'Melrose Dance Band'. It dates back to the 1930's and smacks of vintage appeal. The members of the band got together to perform popular numbers, in the days when swing and jazz ruled, and the music of Jack Hylton, Henry Hall and popular crooners like Bing Crosby were the order of the day. The band had an enthusiastic following and played regularly at the Old Co-op Hall (now Hellifield Surgery) plus concerts at the Village Institute and other local venues. Band members who were all local lads included: Left to Right – Jack Bowker, Bill Grime, Jimmy Fairbrother, Harry Anderton and Edwin Robinson. The names will be familiar to some of our older residents, and the picture sums up a debonair image of a bygone age. Long may the music continue!

Ken Leak, August 2019

Photo courtesy of J Glossop. From 'Hellifield A Journey into the Past' © Ken. Leak 2001

