

Dunaghy band mark forty five years on local scene

DUNAGHY No Surrender Accordion Band was formed by Dunaghy No Surrender Loyal Orange Lodge 791. Setting up a band committee in September 1953. This was to raise funds and recruit members.

Less than a year later the band was formed, new instruments and uniforms dedicated at a ceremony on 19th June 1954. The cost was £607. The platform party and band were entertained to tea at the home of Mr & Mrs Alexander Templeton.

Some members of the band committee were, Mr & Mrs David Murray, James Chestnutt, William Adams, Mrs Carson, Sam Chestnutt, James Frizell (SEN), Mrs E Mc Ilhatton, Mrs A Esler, Miss Margaret Chestnutt and Miss Rachel Gray. The newly formed band had about 20 members male and female. The uniform was white shirt, black trousers/skirt; black tie, black beret with black and white checks around the border, and black shoes. The instruments both accordions and drums were black giving Dunaghy No Surrender Accordion Band a very distinctive appearance.

Since its formation the band has attended many events up and down the country such as banner

unfurlings, Church Parades and other band parades. Also from its formation the band has proudly led Dunaghy No Surrender L.O.L. 7.9.1. and Dunaghy Star & Garter R.B.P 340 on the 12th July and Black Saturday.

Down through the years many have passed through the ranks of the band most live in and around the Ballymoney Area some have moved overseas. At present the band membership is about 25 members with some travelling from Antrim town.

Dunaghy Accordion Band have had their up's and down's as well as members having a difference of opinion but still managed to be on the road each year.

To raise funds for the band in past years the band would visit Lodge members and Band members homes and give them a tune or two. On visiting Mrs Elizabeth Mc Ilhatton's home the band was entertained to tea.

This was something the band appreciated very much. As well as visiting homes the band held the usual sponsored walks, bike rides etc, etc. The money collected from these events went to replacing instruments with 4 new drums being purchased in 1979 at a cost of £90.

Then, on 21st May 1983, an auction was held at Dunaghy Orange Hall. The hall itself was jam-

packed with an array of goods, and the Barkley family helped considerably.

Mr Brian Barkley gave the use of his yard and out houses to accommodate more items, and the independent Orange Hall was full of cakes and food stuffs. (This was an indication of the friendly relations between the two lodges and bands that the hall was gladly made available).

After the auction the band were handed new accordions in June 1983, at a cost of £3545. The presentation was done by Mrs W.J Watson. Again the brethren of L.O.L. 7.9.1. rose to the occasion to keep the band equipment up to date.

In 1987 Dunaghy No Surrender Accordion Band, lost a much loved and respected man. Mr Willie White was a founder member, bandmaster and trainer, like many others, Willie is greatly missed.

In 1992 new uniforms were purchased, new blue jackets and scooped caps were acquired to bring the band appearance up to date.

On 23rd September 1995 Dunaghy No Surrender Accordion Band had the privilege to lead Ballymoney District No. 16 in the Orange Bicentary Celebration Parade in Loughgall. This was a proud day for Dunaghy.

In 1988 new organisation was set up to promote the cultural identity of Loyalist marching bands, the enhancing of the reputation of Loyalist marching bands, the promotion and education of all aspects of the Ulster protestant culture and heritage.

Called the Ulster bands association; at the moment Dunaghy Accordion band is one of only two accordion bands in this association, but hopefully this will change in the near future.

In 1999 the band is very active learning new tunes and attending as many parades as possible. We are holding our own parade in Ballymoney on Saturday 19th June. 45 yrs to the day of our formation. As well as a fund raising event, we hope many bands and general public will help us celebrate our 45th year. Also, the band is holding a Treasure Hunt on Tuesday 22nd June 1999. Cars leave Dunaghy Orange Hall from 7pm.

To those who had the foresight to form a band we say thank-you. A fitting memory to them would be to keep Dunaghy No Surrender Accordion Band on the road in these difficult times in which we found ourselves today.

(contributed)