

Fovant Band - Royal connections

The Band has a long history that goes back at least as far as 1830. New silver instruments were bought at the time of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of George V. The Band was always keen and competitive and, apart from local engagements, took a great interest in the many competitions arranged for 'brass bands'.

On Coronation day in 1953 according to Dr. Clay *'In the early afternoon the Fovant Band marched from the Church Hall to the large barn at East Farm where a drumhead service was held by the Rector, The Reverend Hill. Afterwards the Band played while the children had tea, played games and were each presented with a Coronation Mug full of sweets. All the old people of the village were fetched by motor car to watch the festivities. These consisted of a comic football match, games for adults, tea and dancing. In the evening there was a firework display, a bonfire and more dancing. . . Unfortunately, the weather was bitterly cold – as cold as an average day in winter.'*



Coronation Day 1953. Fovant Band marching past the Cross Keys and (below) playing on the cricket ground(FHG)



Dr Clay recorded that 'fifty two full standard flowering cherry trees of the Hisakura variety were purchased by the Coronation Committee and planted on 13th November in suitable places in gardens and by the roadside to enhance the natural beauty of the village'. Very few remain but there are still three on the cricket ground at East Farm and an effort is being made to remove the ivy which has grown over them in the last 60 years.

Reginald Dicker was the bandmaster of Fovant Band at the Coronation. He had been a musician in the Household Cavalry and performed at the pantomimes put on at Buckingham Palace by the then Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. The band flourished under his leadership and many certificates were obtained during 1948–51, at competition locations as varied as Chippenham, Poole, Southampton, Wimborne, Wincanton and Larmer Tree at Tollard Royal.



Band concert in the British Legion Hut in Fovant in the early 1950s(FHG)

Standing L – R

Bill Hayman (Soprano Cornet), David Penny (Flugel Horn), Tom Bracher (Cornet), Ernie Abel (Cornet), Robert Chalke (Cornet), Chris Coombes (Cornet), Teddy Scammell (E Flat Bass), Fred Snook (Bass Drum), Bill Weeks (Side Drum), ? Parsons from Ansty (B Flat Bass), Bill Turner (B Flat Bass), John Coombes (Bass Trombone), Frank Lever (Trombone), Frank Read (Trombone)

Seated L – R

John Love (Cornet), Arthur Fulford (Cornet), Ay Coombes (Cornet), Tom Coombes (Horn), Alf Lever (Horn), Reg Toomer (Horn), Jack Parsons (Baritone), Fred Spencer (Baritone), Sid Wyatt (Euphonium)

Seated at the front – Reginald Dicker, Musical Director and Conductor

Various views of Fovant Band in the village in 1950s/60s





Marching past the village hall



Dedication of the Scout flag on 27 March 1954/55 (FHG)



Reginald Dicker and the band (place not known)



British Legion Parade in Tisbury

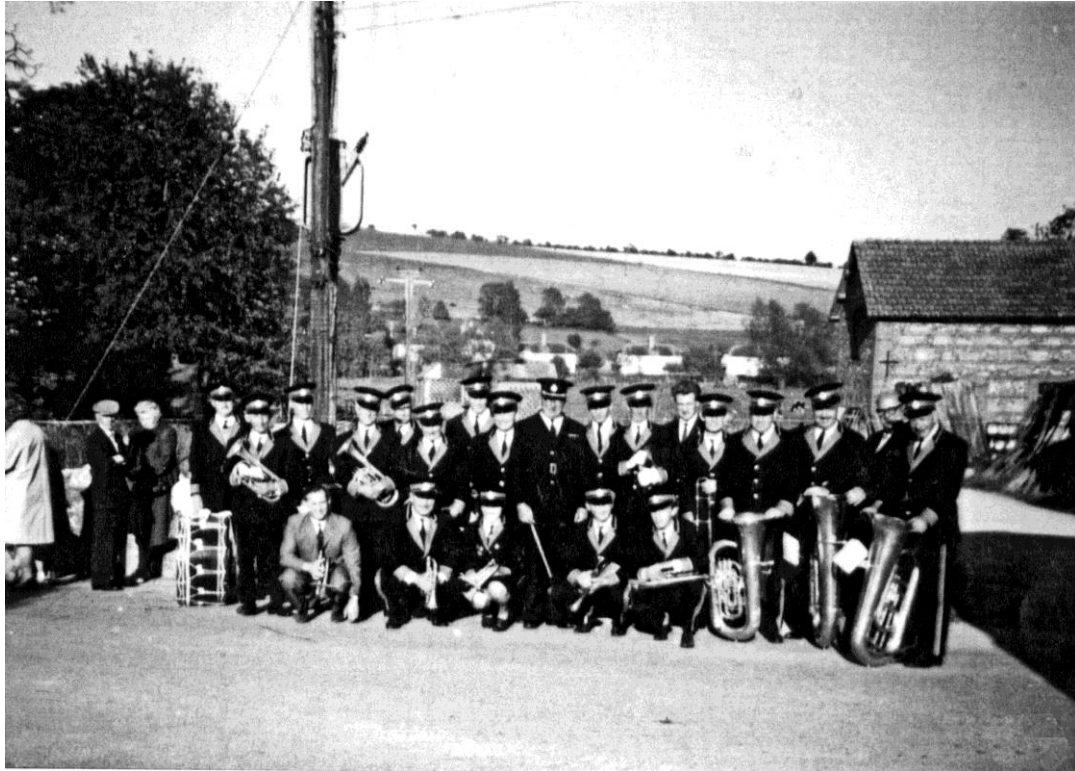


Reginald Dicker leading the Band in Tisbury



*Charley Butt (standing at the centre back)
Colin Lee (centre front)*

The band flourished until the 1960s, when a decline in membership meant that it was sometimes necessary to join with Shaftesbury Band, who were also short of players and eventually they amalgamated and it is now the Shaftesbury Town Silver Band. Reginald Dicker, Fovant bandmaster was asked to take over in Shaftesbury. Below is a picture of the band shortly after amalgamation in the 1960s.



A Junior Band was formed after amalgamation directed by Charley Butt. Colin Lee (second from the left) and Ian Simper (far right) were both from Fovant.



A few personalities in the Band



Teddy Scammell (FHG)



Colin Lee (aged about 12)

Colin Lee (the son of Bryan Lee, recruited as a band member after the war from the village school) plays the Last Post from the top of St. George's Church tower and at the war memorial by the Village Hall every Remembrance Day. Colin first played the Last Post in 1968 at the age of 12 and he has played for the village every year since then.



Tom and Ray Coombes, Eva Coombes and Evelyn Stokes (Ray's wife and mother-in-law) (FHG)



Shaftesbury Town Band in 1969. The arrow indicates Sid Wyatt from Fovant who retired in 2002 after 76 years as a bandsman and who sadly died in 2012

A few earlier historical pictures connected with Fovant – dates unknown



This is a picture of the 'Big Drum', an old Marine Drum, which at one time was used by the Compton Chamberlayne Band. When this came to an end in 1870, the drum was sold to a man in Gosport; George Read of Fovant hearing of this, went down to Gosport and bought back the drum for Fovant. At that time the Band wore Hussar uniform.



An educated guess is that is the occasion of the Fovant Club's annual walk to the church after their celebratory breakfast at the Cross Keys taken outside the Old Rectory. The bandmen can be distinguished not only by their instruments but also by the fact that they are all wearing a 'uniform' cap, the first recorded example of a uniform.



Fovant Band in 1920s