

March of the Civil Defence Services

'Come if ye Dare'

Composed by Major Anthony J Richards

An innocent e-mail popped up in my Inbox on 19 December 2004 from Terry Hissey, CDA member who is also a member of the RAMC TA Band. Whilst playing at a Regimental Dinner he had been idly looking through his march cards and spotted on the back of one, the piece *Come if ye Dare*. He forwarded it to me with the innocent question "*Did I know of it?*" Regretfully I didn't.

Having banged it out, badly, on the piano I decided that it would be right and proper to see whether this, our own march, could be resurrected as part of our '*60th Anniversary of the end of WWII*' project.

I set myself targets:

- 1) To obtain a copy of the music.
- 2) To get it played on 10th July 2005 at Horse Guards Parade for the official commemoration event.
- 3) To find recordings of it and the story behind these.
- 4) To issue one or more new recordings.
- 5) To find out about the composer.

No. 1 proved easy in that Boosey & Hawkes still had the band set in their archive. Delivery took a while but it was in my possession by 10th March 2005.

To get the march played on the 10th July, I wrote to the Senior Director of Music for the Ministry of Defence team organising the event, Lt Col Geoff Kingston. Eventually, to my surprise, I received a reply saying that he knew of the march, felt it to be a good tune and would consider using it. On 25th May I sent him a copy of the 1957 recording (see below) and to reinforce my request I suggested that it would be a great tribute from the Tri-Service musicians of today to 'The Fourth Arm'. This was backed up by the same request to the Head of the Civil Defence Corps, HM The Queen, at Buckingham Palace and to the Director General of the BBC. The Palace clearly spoke to the MOD and wrote back to say that I would receive a letter from the MOD, when the event programme had been finalised. On 29th June I received an e-mail from Col Kingston to say that he planned to play it as part of the march-on of the five National Standards alongside '*Aces High*' & '*The Road to Mandalay*'. He had re-arranged it to include strings and added a counter melody for the trombones in the repeat. He said that he could not absolutely guarantee that it would be played but hopes were now rising. At the event, 30 seconds of it was played and it was a delight to hear.

The search for recordings was a tortuous business. Information had started to flow in from Eric Alley, a former Civil Defence Officer, and Frank Raine-Allen, retired Civil Defence Adviser to the Greater London Council, quoting Civil Defence circulars etc. – memories had clearly been jogged.

Messrs. Boosey & Hawkes, who had originally sold the '78' recorded by the Band of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, did not have a copy. Kneller Hall also said that they did not have the music, a gap which was soon plugged. A series of visits, telephone calls and e-mail exchanges followed which told me that there were no copies in the British Library Sound Archive, at the Imperial War Museum, or in the BBC Archive. There had been no commercial recordings made and there was no record of it with the Mechanical Copyright Society. The only databases with any information were those of the Performing Rights Society who knew of it, and Boosey & Hawkes themselves. The latter had the information and the records there, in a file which had been dormant for many years, suggested that this was the only piece that Major Richards had written.

I learnt that Frank Raine-Allen had ensured that the march was played by RAF Bands during the Civil Defence Corps stand-down ceremonies at Wembley Stadium in 1968. He had arranged for it to be played as they entered port on the Civil Defence cruises that he, and others, had organised during the early 1960's on the MV *Dunera*.

In fact, he alone seems to have been the cause of it being played anywhere. I have a picture from the Holly Cartwright Archive of a Civil Defence Band, comprising of recorders or tin whistles and drums, thought to be from Dudley, perhaps they played it?

A chance conversation with Holly Cartwright's son, Peter, jogged his memory and he told me that he had heard the '78' many years ago and had occasionally, but not recently, seen the record in his late father's archive. Thirty minutes later, the record was found – Holly had 're-located' it for safe keeping. Peter kindly brought it up from Birmingham to my house in Derbyshire and I learnt from the label that the recording had been made at the EMI studios as a private recording. EMI did not have the tape and did not even have a record of the recording being made. A friend, John Thorpe, re-mastered it for me onto a compact disc. It was an emotional moment to hear it for the first time.

During my research into the composer I had worked my way through the internet: Boosey & Hawkes, the archivist for the Royal Marines Band Service at HMS *Nelson*, the archivist at Kneller Hall, and thence to Major Gordon Turner who was a friend and business partner of Major Richards and had been a Student Bandmaster at Kneller Hall in 1956-7 and remembered two recordings being made.

The first recording was at Kneller Hall by the BBC conducted by Warrant Officer (WO1) Rodney Bashford, the School Bandmaster and later Senior Director of Music. It was part of a series made for the British Forces Broadcasting Service Library. This has been confirmed by the BFB archivist who told me that they had transferred this series onto CD but he has not been able to locate the march. The second was at the EMI studios, conducted by the then Senior Director of Music, Lt Colonel David McBain. The purpose of the session was to produce an LP of regimental marches which was issued. At the same time a few other marches were also recorded, including ours, and this is the recording that we have.

Researches are continuing to see if we can find any of the other bandsmen and to help tie down the date of the recording. The copyright holder has not come to light and, in any case, the recording goes out of copyright after 50 years – the music will be in copyright for many years yet. Eric Alley added that the text that the march was based on is from *King Arthur* by John Dryden, Scene II Act 1. The full text is quoted on the CD cover downloadable from the CDA website.

To obtain new recordings I had two ideas.

My banker was a computer synthesised version. I felt certain that various young people I knew, around Matlock had both the musical knowledge and computer skills to do this. However, it turned out that my powers of persuasion were not up to the job. Finally, Terry Hissey came to my rescue. A friend of his from London, Alex Cleater, volunteered to utilise his Sibelius software which was the medium that I had first thought about, and I received it on 28 June. I am not certain what I had expected, but it is certainly delightfully different and shows just what can be done these days with computers.

My second thought had been for a school brass band to record it for me. There are several in Derbyshire of varying standards so I plumped for the one that I believed to be the best. Indeed, it was at the school that our two boys had been to so I thought that would help! The initial contact seemed favourable but there was concern that the march might be too difficult. All went quiet which indicated probable failure.

However, I had suggested to one of the Officers at Kneller Hall that, now that they had the music, they might consider recording it for us as a training exercise. Another silence followed, perhaps another failure? Unbeknown to me Dennis Fisher, our Vice-Chairman, had been lobbying his son, Keith, a member of the Royal Green Jackets Waterloo Band (Volunteers), which took up the idea. WO1 Tony Adams, School Bandmaster and one of Col Bashford's successors at Kneller Hall, kindly arranged for the recording which was made on 17th June 2005 by the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment, conducted by Student Bandmaster Ian Collin. Unknown lines of communication had come into play, resulting in the recording that we now have.

Interestingly, when I spoke to my officer contact at Kneller Hall during this period he did not mention anything about this new recording, though Bandmaster Adams was aware of my letter, he had not heard the 1957 recording.

A licence was obtained from Boosey & Hawkes to release these new recordings alongside our book '*A Brief History of Civil Defence*' on our website and on a limited number of CD-ROMs.

Finding out about the composer was initially difficult, because there was nothing on the web and those in the commercial music business had not heard of him. However, information trickled in from a variety of sources ending in a flood from the archivist at Kneller Hall and his friend Major Gordon Turner. This was added to by Terry Hissey quoting from '*Music in State Clothing*', the history of The Life Guards Band. A biography is included on the CD.

I think that we can now say that this is 'mission accomplished'. The very first broadcast of part of the 1957 version of the march was on the '*Shane O'Connor Show*' on BBC Radio Derby at 10.15 am on Monday 27 June 2005 during an interview associated with the publication of the book '*A Brief History of Civil Defence*'. Part of it, including the extract from the march, was repeated on their '*Take Two*' programme at 1.10 pm on Sunday 3 July 2005. Two for the price of one!

Hopefully, '*Come if ye Dare*' will raise the profile of Civil Defence, as well as increase interest in the book. More importantly I hope that you enjoyed hearing the march either for the first time or again. It has certainly been a most interesting journey of discovery for me and I am just so grateful for all the help that I have been given from CDA members and from elsewhere. They made it possible to complete that journey.

Tim Essex-Lopresti
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