

Additional interview with Brian Heaton about Brute Force, the band. Interviewed by Diana Brand on 22 December, 2014 at Halsway Manor

BH: Yes, um, there wasn't a great deal of local music here, I mean people I think did play a little bit around about but our, we had a chap called Charlie Bottomley who played for the Morris dancing because the Morris, the West Somerset Morris started here in 1965 and Charlie used to play and gradually there were one or two musicians, and I thought well you know we ought to have our own group, we should encourage musicians here. And so one evening we started with, um, a pianist who used to...couldn't read music but played, Ken Funnel his name was, he played the piano, and we had, I think it was twelve sets of spoons, um, one person played the flute very well, a competent flautist, but mainly percussion and nothing much else, so we had this wonderful band called the Brute Force Ceilidh band, which was really set up to encourage people to begin to play and we did all sorts of dance tunes based on things like Coming Round the Mountain, anything we could sing. So, I felt you see, having spent my life encouraging people to play who couldn't, we used to run 'Players days for non-musicians', and eventually this band finished up with fifty four members and they were at the mid-summer revels on the tennis court and I remember we had the matron from the local hospital and the chief administrator, they all came along and played, they were all in our band, you see. And eventually, when it got out of hand...we'd gone run a dance for...I remember we were doing one here for..we were asked to play for the Berkshire District who'd got their weekend here, and we played on the basis that we would charge five pounds for the evening and you would get sufficient music for your dance but whoever wished to come would come and play . Now it happened to be that on that occasion, one of the members of the band was getting married so all the members of the band were in the area and they turned up and filled half the Long Room with musicians. And Berkshire District weren't very happy with this, there were just too many musicians and eventually we decided it had perhaps lived its life, We used to have these wonderful evenings and it split up into about eight different bands which played locally, The Foot and Fiddle and The Perfect Cure. and lots of other bands in this area. It just split up, it split up into that.

Summary

Brian Heaton remembers encouraging local people to play in a new band called Brute Force where it didn't matter if you couldn't play an instrument or not – spoons would do. It eventually got too big and split up into many smaller bands.