

# Local Musicians

a look at the history of the brass band movement



**Presentation at the  
Boroughbridge & District Historical Society**

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“Brass bands are all very well in their place - outdoors and several miles away”.

*Sir Thomas Beecham*

- History of the brass band movement
- Instrumentation
- Types of bands
- Contesting
- Music
- Local bands

# Early years

- Waits – town “bands”
- Church bands
- Mixed and varied instrumentation
- Oldest?
  - New Mills Old Band - 1812
  - Coxlodge Institute Band (Durham) - 1802
  - Nottingham City Guild Band - 1759
  - Besses o' th' Barn Band (as Cleggs' Reed Band) - 1790's.
  - Blaina Brass Band (Monmouthshire) - 1823
- **Brass v. silver** – earliest known “silver” band was Stephenson’s Operatic Silver Band in 1872 from Newcastle Upon Tyne



# New instruments

- Manufacturers – piston valves - Sax, Distin, Boosey etc.
- Variable instrumentation, also included some woodwind (especially flutes and clarinets). Now largely standardised at 25 brass players + percussion

# Cornets



**Soprano Eb**



**Bb**

# Flugel Horn



# The bandsman



Visualised by "Nezzy"

# “Saxhorns”

**Tenor  
Horn**



**Baritone**



**Euphonium**



**E♭ Tuba**



**B♭♭ Tuba**



# Other uses for larger instruments



# Trombones

**Tenor Trombone**



**Bass Trombone**









# Percussion

- Lots!
- Including timpani, drum kit, tubular bells, gongs, glockenspiel, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, triangle, cymbals, woodblocks, tom-toms, bongos, maracas and many more

# “Shed Builders”



Don't forget the conductor, musical director, bandmaster....



# Town & Village bands

- Most bands are associated with a particular location and consisted of musicians from a range of occupations in the place. Often established through public subscription, or supported by a local landowner or benefactor, they quickly became a key part of the community. School teachers and vicars were often the initial driving force to establish bands

# Flookburgh village band



# Industries

- Collieries
- Iron foundries
- Wool & cotton mills
- Gas works
- Railway works
- Shipyards
- Manufacturing
- Publishing



# Crookhall Colliery Band



# British Oil & Cake Mills Band (Hull)





# Cambridge Railway Silver Band



# Oxford University Press Band - 1884



# Religious Organisations

- Salvation Army
- Methodist & Wesleyan chapels
- Church of England, Catholic, Gospel, Baptist and Church Army bands were also common
- Adult Sunday Schools, Bible Classes, the “Pleasant Sunday Afternoon” movement and young men’s organisations (e.g. the Y.M.C.A, Boys Brigade) also spawned brass bands

# Barnsley Salvation Army Band





# St Giles' Church Band - Killamarsh



# Eagley Sunday School Band





# Temperance Organisations



# Temperance Organisations

- Church associated – Methodist, CETS etc.
- International Order of Good Templars
- Rechabites
- Sons of Phoenix Temperance Society
- Total Abstainers/Abstinence
- Suppression of Drunkenness Society



# Tyldesley Wesleyan Temperance Band



# Friendly Organisations

- Very few freemasons
- Foresters
- Ancient Shepherds
- Free Gardeners
- Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes
- Oddfellows
- British Legion
- Comrades of the Great War

# Terrington St Clement Archangel Band of the Oddfellows



# Comrades of the Great War Band





# Volunteers

- 1804 act of parliament – 1859 War Office memorandum
- Rifle and Artillery corps – also engineers (land and submarine miners) – county based
- Drum & fife + brass bands
- Intermixing with civilian bands
- Continued through to WW1
- Later – Home Guard, Territorials and forces “brass bands”

# 1<sup>st</sup> Clackmannanshire RV - 1870



# Middlesbrough Submarine Miners Volunteers Band



# Other bands

- **Institutional bands** – children’s homes, workhouses, industrial schools, orphanages, asylums, prisons
- **Professional bands** – theatre, menageries, circus, “family”
- **Political** – conservative, liberal, labour, Irish nationalist & loyalist
- **Trade** – brick layers, carpenters, seamen, fishermen
- **Ladies’ bands**
- **Strange** – cycles, kazoo



# Countesthorpe Cottage Homes Band, 1916



# Horsforth Ladies' Band





# Bramusa Family Band



# Christchurch (NZ) Bicycle Band

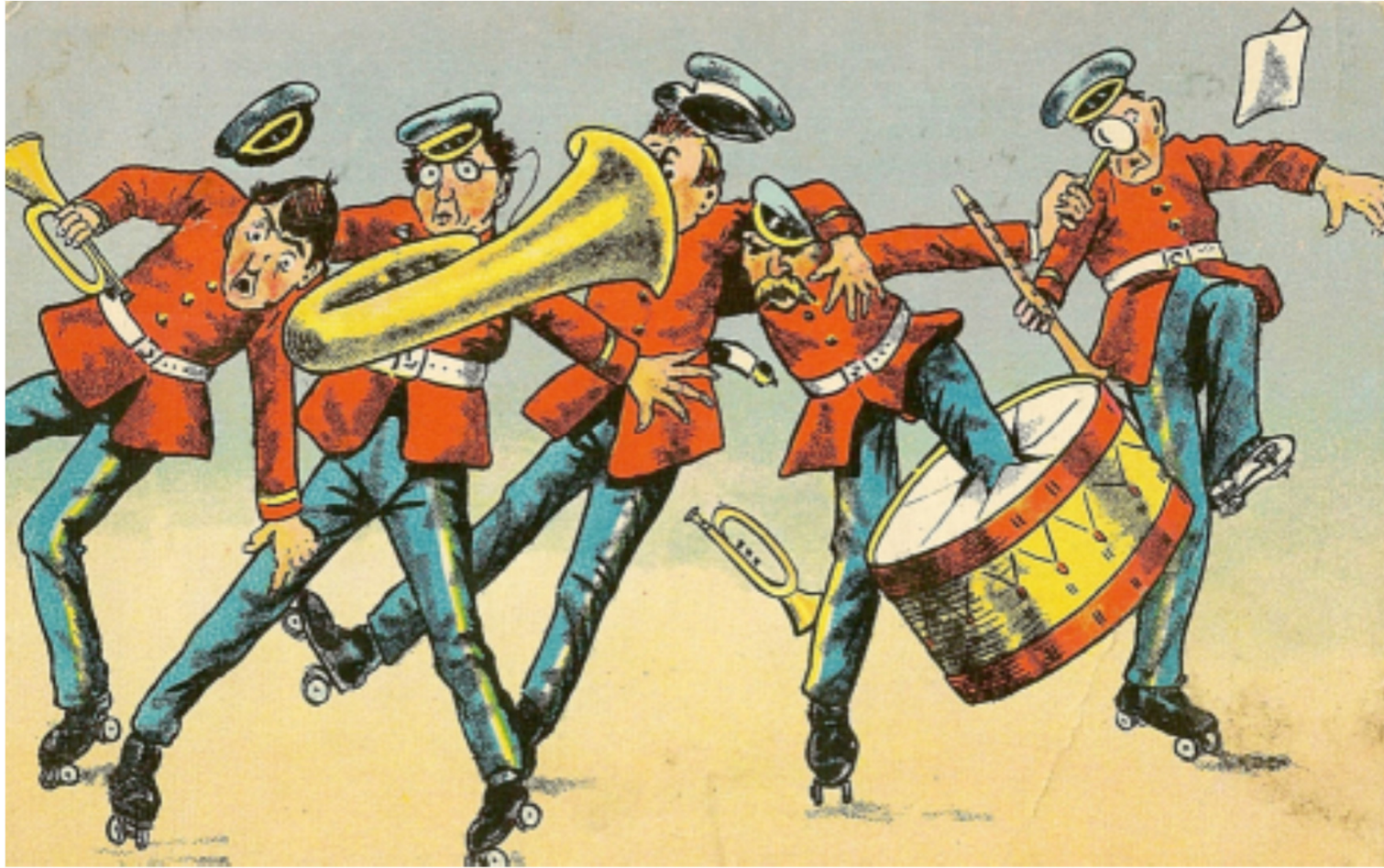




# Leeds Skating Rink Band - 1909



# Roller skating!



# Unicycle Band





# Morley Parrock Nook Anthem Prize Band, York, 1906





# Contesting

- First contests – Burton Constable etc.
- Local at agricultural shows etc.
- Associations, national (Crystal Palace etc.)
- Types - own-choice, set test, entertainment, march
- Sections – area + national
- International band contesting

# The “Thousand Guinea” trophy



# Band on contest platform



# Hardraw Scar – 1910s



Band Contest, Hardrow Scar, Hawes



# Harddraw Scar - today





# Hardraw Scar – Harrogate Band



# Music

- Transitions through marches, orchestral and operatic arrangements, popular tunes, test pieces and original music for brass band
- Publications – journals, magazines (published music and news)
- The Salvation Army's musical heritage

# Sample music

- My Daughter's Schottische – Montgomery (Wallace Collection)
- L'Irato Overture – Mozart (Wallace Collection)
- Labour and Love – Percy Fletcher, 1913 (Grimethorpe Colliery Band)
- Serenade – Derek Bourgeois – (Black Dyke Band)
- Gresford: The miners' hymn – (Grimethorpe Colliery Band)
- Ravenswood – William Rimmer (Black Dyke Band)
- Star Lake – Eric Ball (CWS Glasgow Band)
- Share My Yoke – Joy Webb (Yorkshire Building Society Band)
- Paganini Variations – Philip Wilby - (Grimethorpe Colliery Band)
- Harrison's Dream – Peter Graham (Yorkshire Building Society Band)
- The Harrogate Band – Cumberland Clark (Harrogate Band & Laura Jackson)



# Local bands

- Aldborough Brass Band – 1864
- Aldborough & Boroughbridge Brass Band -  
Active in 1873, when it was described as being "only young" - so probably formed in the early 1870s. However there was a Boroughbridge Brass Band in the 1850s, so perhaps this was a successor band. Still active as Boroughbridge Brass Band in the late 1880s. Conductor T. Archer in 1877.

Band at Aldborough Manor, 1904  
reception & presentation to Hon. J.T. Wharton



# United Friendly Societies' Gala, Boroughbridge, 1904 Leeds Temperance Brass Band



# Local bands

- **Boroughbridge Brass Band (1)** – Active in 1857 to 1887. A successor band was formed in 1894
- **Boroughbridge Brass Band (2)** – Founded in 1894, first public appearance at Christmas 1894
- **Boroughbridge British Legion Band** –  
Founded after WW1. Active in 1929, conductor Harry W. Hill and founder Johnny Pickering. Disbanding in 1955. After WW2, when the band reformed, clothing coupons were gathered from the townsfolk of Boroughbridge which helped to acquire their first uniforms around 1946. The instruments were stored for a while by the British Legion Club in Boroughbridge and then sold off.



# Unknown band at Boroughbridge



## Boroughbridge Brass Band - 1912





# Boroughbridge British Legion Band - 1949



## Boroughbridge British Legion Band - 1950





# Local bands

- **Starbeck Brass Band** - Formed by bandmaster Samuel Day in 1904. An attempt had been made to form a band in 1901, and three instruments were purchased, but the enterprise never got any further until 1904

# Starbeck Brass Band



# Starbeck Junior Salvation Army Band



# Burton Leonard Brass Band

- Known to be active from 1860 to 1909





# Local bands

- **Great Ouseburn Brass Band** - Active in the 1830s to 1843
- **Kirk Hammerton Brass Band** - Active in 1863, conductor William Ripley. Still active in 1869
- **Ripley Brass Band** - Active in 1860, performing at the ceremony to cut the first sod for the new Nidd Valley Railway
- **Ripley Harmonic Brass Band** - Active in 1889, conductor T. Ascough

# Local bands

- **Knaresborough Rifle Volunteers Brass Band** - Active in the 1850s. Still active in 1870. The band of the 17th West Riding Rifle Volunteers
- **Knaresborough Silver Band** - Founded in 1842, still going strong

# Knaresborough Silver Band



# Knaresborough Silver Band





# Knaresborough Silver Band



# Local bands

- Ripon Excelsior Brass Band – Active in 1868
- Ripon Temperance Band – Active in 1868
- Ripon City Brass Band – Founded in 1860, still going strong

# Ripon City Band

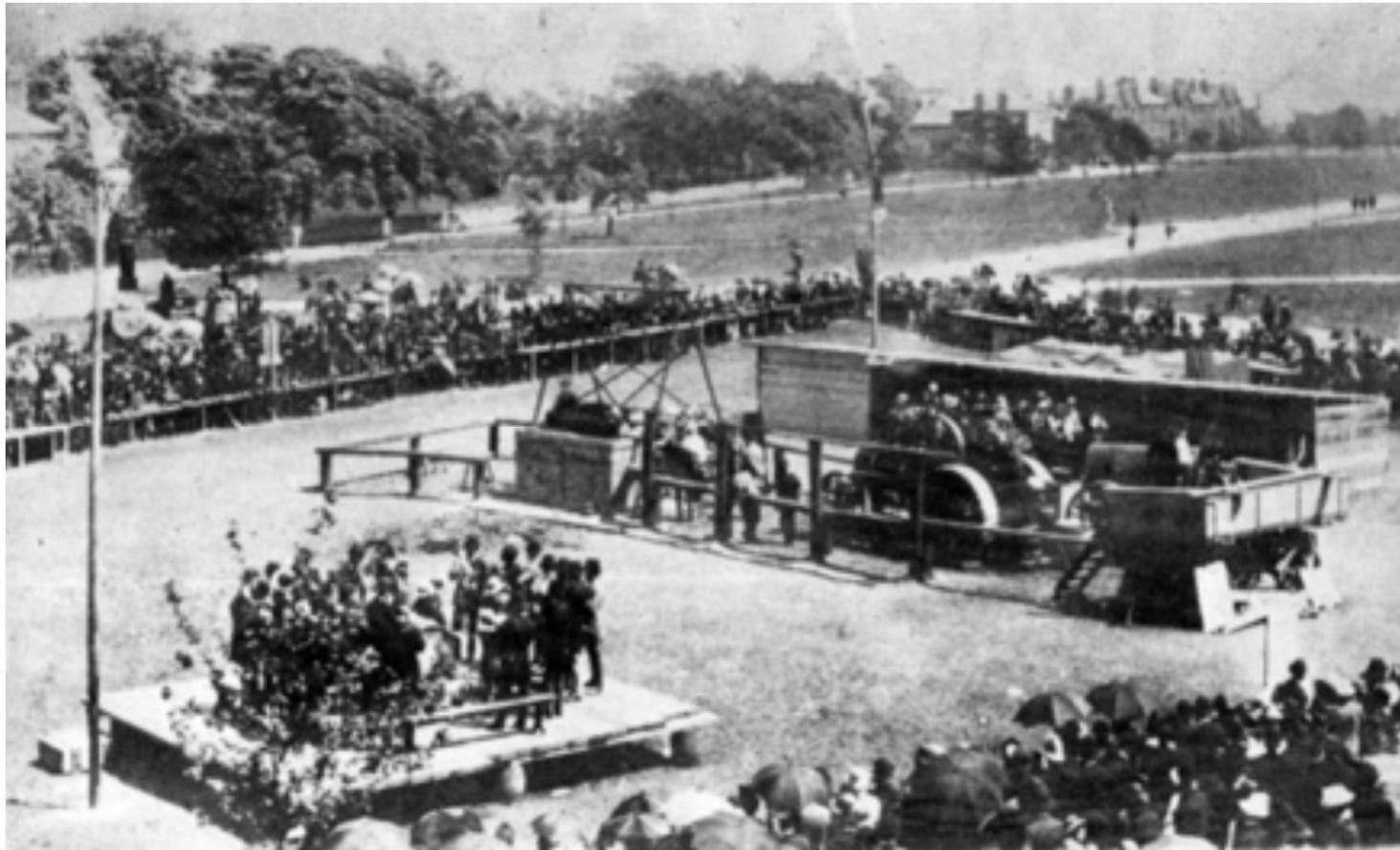


# Ripon City Band





# Harrogate Bands



Ox roasting on the Stray – Jubilee 1887

# Harrogate Bands

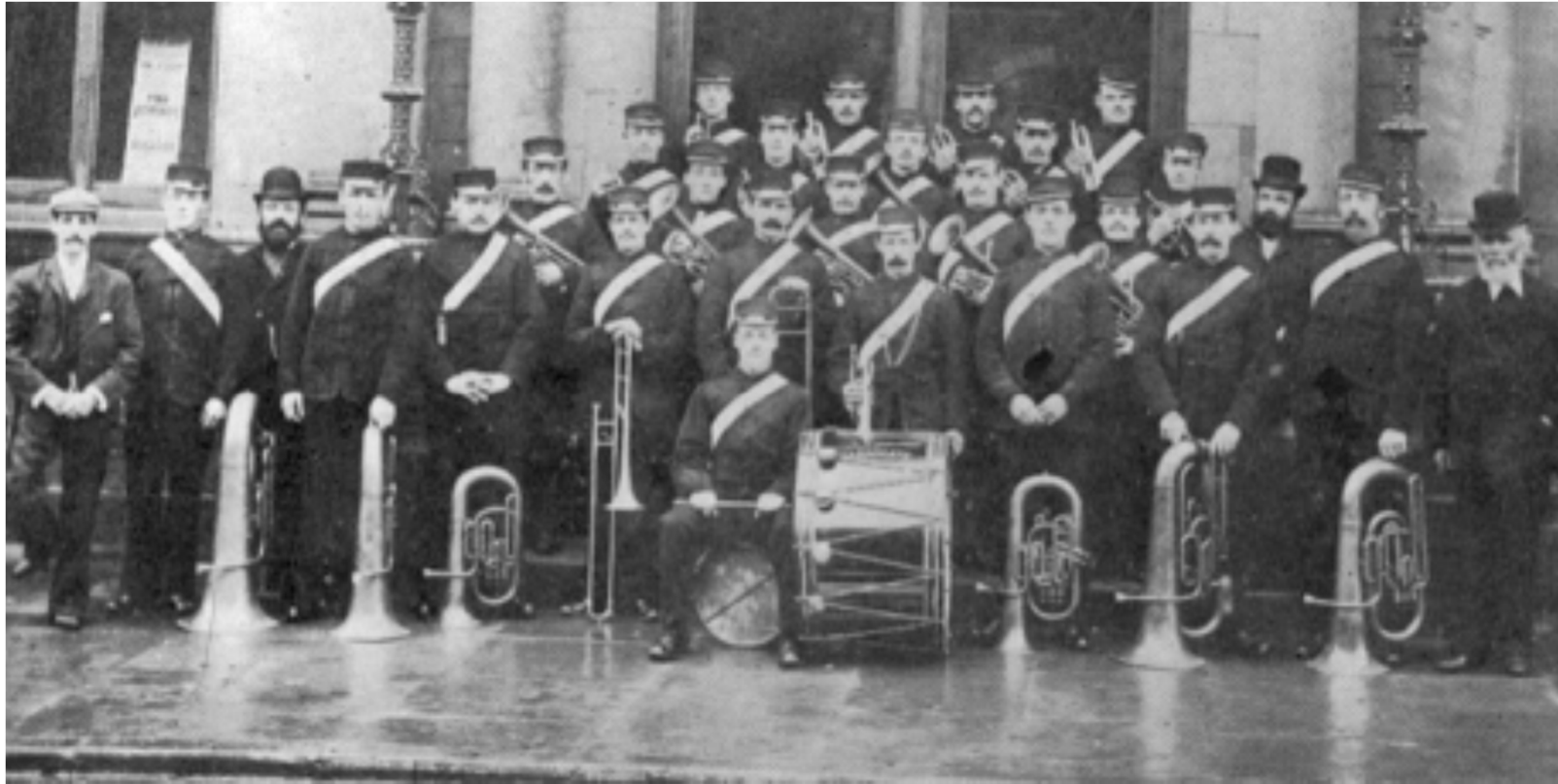
- Harrogate Rifle Volunteers Brass Band - Active from 1861. Still active in 1903. Band of the 16th West Yorkshire Rifle Volunteers
- Harrogate Subscription Band (1) - Active in 1880. Conductor Jules Guitton in 1882, Mr Merrilees in 1884
- Harrogate Subscription Band (2) – Town meeting in June 1888 decided to have a free subscription band in Harrogate. Active to WW1.
- Harrogate Temperance Band - Founded in February 1891. Active through to WW2 (later as Harrogate Silver Band).
- Harrogate Postmen's Brass Band - Active in 1890s and 1900s
- Harrogate Congregational P.S.A. Band - Active around 1900
- Harrogate Borough Band - Founded in 1901, disbanding in 1939
- Harrogate St John's Ambulance Band - Active in the 1940s
- **Harrogate Band - Founded in 1970**
- Tewit Youth Brass Band – Founded in 1978

# Harrogate Subscription Band

played 4 times a day for the spa visitors



# Harrogate Temperance Band





# Harrogate Silver Band



# Harrogate Borough Band



In 1926 a song was composed and sung (to an unknown tune) extolling the virtues of the Harrogate Band.

**The Harrogate Band Song - *Cumberland Clark - 1926***

Did you ever hear the Harrogate Band?  
Although it's so awful they think it grand,  
You can hear it as the day is dawning,  
When you take your waters in the morning.

There once was a man, I understand,  
Who said that he liked the Harrogate Band;  
I thought him the strangest man on earth,  
'Till I found out that he'd been deaf from birth.

The instruments all creak and wheeze,  
They wander off into various keys,  
It may suit some, but it's not my taste,  
For it gives me pains below the waist.

Did you ever hear that awful Band?  
There's nothing like it in all the land,  
Its' strains of music are so sad,  
It makes all good people feel quite bad.

Did you ever hear that curious band?  
The Band and the Cure go hand in hand,  
As the music is not at all too pure,  
No wonder the visitors need a cure.

They played last night for a good half-hour,  
'Till I turned pale, and the milk turned sour,  
The lights burned dim and the air went blue,  
Then the gas went out, and the cat went too.

And when they're marching through the town,  
The noise that they make really wears you down,  
The dogs join in, with all just cause,  
And citizens wane behind locked doors.

To Stand that Band you need great nerve,  
If the members got what they deserve,  
They'd be taken out to a quiet spot,  
Where the visitors could shoot the lot.

# Harrogate Band – school band 1970





# Harrogate Band – Miss World 1979



# Harrogate Band – Henry Moore Foundation 1998





# Harrogate Band – Trimdon Grange 2014



# Harrogate Band - 2017





# Bands today

- Around 1,200 brass bands in the UK
- Many more spread around the world, mainly in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA and Europe
- USA – tradition of cornet bands, leading to marching bands, British-style band later from 1980s

# Gavin Holman



- British Brass Bands – a historical directory
- The Brass Band Bibliography
- [www.ibew.co.uk](http://www.ibew.co.uk) – brass band resources since 1997
- [gavinholman.academia.edu](http://gavinholman.academia.edu)
  
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