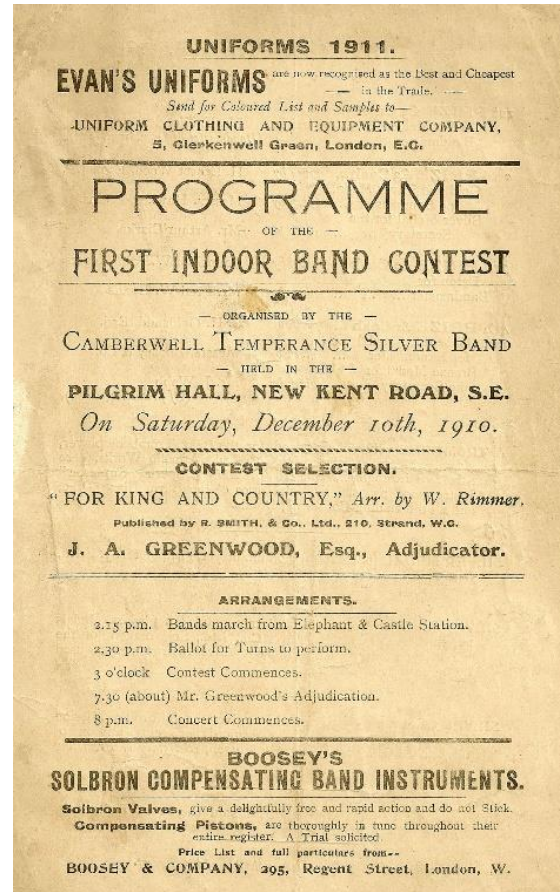


The Pilgrim Hall contest: a snapshot of Edwardian banding life in London

Gavin Holman, March 2020

On Saturday 10th December 1910, the Camberwell Temperance Silver Band promoted a brass band contest at the Pilgrim Hall, New Kent Road, London, S.E. It followed this first successful event with similar contests in 1911 and 1912, and a later one-off contest after the War in 1923.

The band had made arrangements to ensure the contest was a success, engaging the services of J.A. Greenwood, the famous composer, arranger and adjudicator, to judge the contest, with William Rimmer's arrangement of "For King and Country" as the test piece. They offered prizes of £5, £4, £2, and £1 for the first four places.



The programme for the day was:

2.15 p.m.	Bands march from Elephant & Castle Station
2.30 p.m.	Ballot for Turns to perform
3 o'clock	Contest Commences
7.30 (about)	Mr Greenwood's Adjudication
8 p.m.	Concert Commences

It is not known if the evening concert was by the winning band, the Camberwell Band or perhaps the massed bands.

Sixteen bands entered the competition - Battersea Tent Mission; Camden Unity; Dartford Town; Edmonton Temperance; Hanwell Town; Holloway Crusaders; Ilford Horns; Kilburn Gas Works; Lewisham Borough; New Barnet Town; Old Nichol Street Mission; Shoreditch Borough; St Alban's City; St Pancras; Wandsworth Borough; and Whyteleafe Mission. However, Wandsworth Borough withdrew, leaving 15 bands to compete on the day.

Here are some details of the bands involved in the contest, followed by the full contest results as reported in the local newspapers.

- **Battersea Tent Mission Band** – Active from at least 1908 through to WW1. It contested several times during that period, winning the “Mission” section of the London & Home Counties contest in November 1909, conducted by E. Hawke, later by J. Jackson. It is not known what denomination the Mission belonged to, but it was likely to have been associated with the Independent Order of Rechabites, a fraternal organisation which was closely linked to the temperance movement – its lodges were known as “tents”.



BATTERSEA BOROUGH PRIZE BAND.

No picture of Battersea Tent Band – this is Battersea Borough Band

- **Camden Unity Band** – Founded in the early 1880’s as Camden Sons of the Phoenix Brass Band. Renamed Camden Unity Brass Band in 1902. Conductors included George Byford (1905), W.J. Douglas Sherriff (1906-1910), and Sam Cope (1911-1912). The band was associated with the local lodge of the *Ancient Order of the Total Abstinent Sons of the Phoenix* – a temperance society. Some of the other local north London lodges may well have united, hence the band’s name change to include “Unity”. A similar situation has existed in south London where the *South London Unity of Total Abstinence Brothers and Sisters of the Phoenix Friendly Society* had its headquarters in Clapham – by merger of societies there. It may have disbanded during WW1, but reformed and was still active in 1921, conducted by H.W. Crane.

- Camberwell Temperance Silver Band** - Active in 1899 through to WW1. Possibly associated with the Camberwell Temperance Lodge of the Phoenix Order, which itself was active in the 1890's. It performed in Maryon Park, Woolwich on Sunday 30 May 1909; Ruskin Park, Denmark Hill on Saturday 12 June 1909; Vauxhall Park on Saturday 25 June 1910; South Park, Fulham on Sunday 3 July 1910 and Sunday 7 August 1910; Clapham Common every Sunday at 11.30 a.m. from Sunday 3 May 1914 until the late summer of 1914.



Camberwell Temperance Silver Band

- Dartford Town Band** – Active from 1889 through to WW1. Bandmaster E. Alder (1905-1910). Conductor was William Hunt around 1910. Officers in 1905 included A. Quinlan, chairman; W.A. Blois, treasurer; H. Crockford, secretary.



Dartford Town Band, c. 1910

- **Edmonton Temperance Band** - Active in the early 1900's through to the 1920's, taking a break during WW1. Conductor F. Tyrrell in 1909. In 1911 the band charged £3 10s a performance for playing in the parks on Sundays, and £3 15s for Bank Holidays.



Edmonton Temperance Band

- **Hanwell Town Band** - Formed in 1892. In the autumn of 1891 some people had the idea of starting a public brass band and hoped to raise enough funds to purchase instruments. An announcement appeared in the Middlesex County Times on May 7, 1892 stating that a band was being formed and a committee had been formed. Among these was a Mr Williams, who was the bandmaster of the Hanwell Asylum Band. It said the personnel would be mainly professional bandsmen, but a junior band would also be formed. An appeal was made to the 'Gentry and Traders for help to buy the instruments'. The landlord of the Viaduct Inn made a room available for the band's weekly practice, which no doubt was good for business with a few pints being bought by the thirsty musicians at the close of the evening. The response from the general public was good, new instruments were bought and the band made its first public appearance at Hanwell Broadway under the baton of Mr Williams in 1892. The first full concert took place during evening service at the Union Church in late February 1893. After winning first prize in a contest at Tottenham in 1913, the name was changed to The Hanwell Silver Prize Band. During the Great War, many of the bandsmen joined the forces and the band was suspended, but in 1918 steps were taken to restart it under the conductorship of Reg Bravington. In 1979, the band was renamed the Roneo Vickers Band. The band was also known as the Roneo Alcatel Band and eventually folded around 2001. [Further information - see: Brighton, Charley - *The Hanwell Band: West London: a concise history of London's premier brass band 1891-1983* - The author, London, 1983]



Hanwell Town Band, c. 1910

- **Holloway Crusaders Band** – Originally it was not associated with any church, chapel or mission. Active in 1896 to the early 1900's. A successor band was formed in September 1907 (following the break up of the Wake Up Mission Band earlier that year), and was probably active through to WW1. In January 1909, when its lack of funds caused it to cease its own mission work, it was invited to play and rehearse at the Mission at Holloway Hall, but did not receive any financial support from the Mission. Also known as Holloway Hall Brass Band. Conductor Mr Newell in 1908. Secretary J. W. Freeman, assistant secretary H. Baldwin, treasurer Thomas Mundy, and committee members Henry Hough, Leonard Gough, and S.H. Butcher in 1909. In February 1911 the band organised a benefit concert (as did many other bands in London) to raise funds in aid of the widows and orphans of the Wingates Temperance Band members who had died in the Pretoria Pit explosion at Westhoughton on 21 December 1910 – among the 344 casualties were 7 Wingates bandsmen.



Holloway Hall Brass Band

- Ilford Horns Temperance Band** - Active from 1888 to WW1. It reformed after WW1 and was active through to the mid-1930's. Conductor R. Wilson in 1888-1903, H. Carl Taylor (who was previously conductor of Caerphilly Town Band) in 1903-1906, R. Wilson assuming the baton again in 1907-1909, Edward Alder from 1910 onwards. Secretary A.J. Wiskar in 1904. The band was also known as Horns' Gospel Brass Band. A concert performed at Cranbrook Road, Ilford on Sunday 8 May 1904 included *Il Guirmento* (Mercadante), *Land of Hope and Glory* (Elgar), *Chorister* (Sullivan), *March Viva Petee* (Rimmer), and *Comrades in Arms* (Adams). The collection they took on the concert at Central Park on Sunday 29 May 1904 realised £2 6s 10d, comprising 68 halfpennies, 321 pennies, 3 threepenny bits, 21 sixpences, 4 shillings and one florin. Their concert on 5 June 1904 at South Park was *Comrades in Arms* (Adams), *The Heavens are Telling* (Haydn), *Land of Hope and Glory* (Elgar), *A Casket of Gems* (Round) [- which introduced Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, no. 28; Schubert's *Serenade*; *March Militaire*; and *Der Lindenbaum*], *Shepherd of Souls* (E. Jones) [from *The Sign of the Cross*], *Gems of Welsh Melody* (Ord Hume) [- introducing *Pastorale*; *Ton y Botel*; *Land of My Fathers*; and *God Bless the Prince of Wales*], *A Hymn of the Homeland* (A. Sullivan), and *Old Hundredth* (J.S. Bach). Also in 1904 it was estimated that the expenses of the band - for music, rent, tuition, instruments etc. - amounted to over £2 per week, with members subscribing 6d each weekly. In 1902 the band ordered a new set of Besson instruments costing £320, of which £100 had been paid off by June 1904. On Saturday 1 July 1905, at a garden party at Valentines, Ilford, the band performed *Under the Double Eagle*, selection from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Delia*, *Zampa*, *Alcazar*, cornet solo *Brillianti*, *English Melodies*, *Queen Anne*, selection from *Bohemian Girl*, *Shufflin' Samuel*, *Irene*, *Crown of Victory*, *American Airs*, and *Viva Petee*.



No picture of Ilford Horns Band – this is Ilford Salvation Army Band

- Kilburn Gas Works Band** - Active in the early 1900's through to WW1. Also known as Kilburn Gas Light and Coke Company Band. Honorary Director in 1909 was Mr Horstead, with Mr Smith in direct charge. Conductor James Haywood in 1903-1904, Tom Morgan in 1909-1911. Principal cornet W. Halsey in 1910. It performed at a garden party in the grounds of St Anne's Vicarage, Salisbury Road, Brondesbury on 22 June 1907, conducted by W. Lester. The band were granted permission to perform on the beach at Southend on the occasion of their beanfeast on the first or second Saturday in July 1907. On 17 March 1909 the band gave an Irish concert at the Salisbury Road Council School, conducted by A.E. Horstead, including the fantasia *Songs of Ireland*, and the trombone solo *There Let Me Rest*. At this event the band appeared for the first time in their new uniforms, consisting of blue cloth with black braid and gold shoulder knots; and a silver-mounted baton was presented from the band to Mr Horstead. Saturday 21 August 1909 saw the band giving a concert on the Common outside the Pack Horse Inn at Gerrards Cross, at which a meat tea was provided for the band. They supported a fund-raising concert on 9 April 1910 at Brondesbury Hall in aid of the C (Kilburn) Company of the 2nd City of London Battalion Royal Fusiliers. The band supported a suffragette procession on Saturday 18 June 1910, playing the new *Suffrage March* and other music while the processionists assembled at the Women's Social and Political Union shop on High Road, Kilburn - the band were ensconced on a special brake, one of seven all decorated in purple, green and white; and each bandsman wore a rosette made by Madame Myers. The band was reformed after WW1 and performed at the King's Head Inn, High Street, Wendover, in September 1922, conducted by J. Walker. As well as the brass band, the company also supported two cricket teams of its workers in the early 1900's.



KILBURN I. SALVATION ARMY BAND.

No picture of Kilburn Gas Works Band – this is Kilburn Salvation Army Band

- Lewisham Borough Band** - Founded in early 1897 as the Catford Diamond Jubilee Brass Band. Disbanded in WW1. Originally associated with the "Pride of Catford" temperance lodge of the Sons of Phoenix. Conductor J. Saunders in 1897-1900, John Pemberton in 1901-1902. Deputy bandmaster Mr West in 1902. Secretary Charles Grover in 1897-1902. It was renamed Lewisham Borough Brass Band from January 1902 onwards. V. Spilsbury was soprano cornet player in 1904. On 1 January 1899 the band visited many residents' homes in Catford playing selections of Christmas music, seeking new members who also had to join the Sons of Phoenix Lodge. They performed at the opening ceremony of the new recreation ground at Torridon Road, Hither Green, in May 1899, to a crowd of around 2,000 people. At celebrations for the coronation of King Edward VII in August 1902, the band provided dance music and songs at the Lewisham Radical Club garden party. It often played in various London parks during the summer months of the 1900's.

Lewisham Borough Silver Band
 OPEN FOR ENGAGEMENTS AT



**Garden Fetes,
Sports Fetes, etc.**

Terms very moderate.

**Flower Shows
Concerts, etc.**

Apply Secretary:
W. A. FITZGERALD,

- New Barnet Town Band** - Founded in 1891 as New Barnet Workmen's Brass Band (an earlier New Barnet Workmen's Brass Band was formed around 1885 - its secretary G. Chappell in 1886, advertising for cornet and bass players, noted that the band was "not strictly confined to teetotalers", however it did not last long). This second band was later renamed as New Barnet Town Band and was active through to WW1. Conductor T. Cornell in 1895-1897, F. Dimmock in 1899-1904, George Byford in 1908. In September 1895 it charged 2 guineas to support the church parade of Friendly Societies of Barnet. In October 1896 the band held weekly dances at the Warwick Rooms on Thursday evenings, admission 9d. In June 1899 the remaining members of the New Barnet P.S.A. Brass Band amalgamated with the New Barnet Town Band. In November 1899

it purchased a new set of instruments at a knock-down price of £100 - some ten years previously an order for a complete set of instruments was received from Madagascar. The instruments were shipped and transported 150 miles up-country only for the French government officials to refuse to accept the English instruments, which were shipped back to England, eventually being sold to New Barnet Town Band – they were displayed in the window of Mr Gristwood's shop for a week before being handed over to the bandsmen. Officers in 1902 included J.J. Rennie (chairman), F.J. Quinlin (treasurer), C Timpson (secretary). A. Hodson was a player in 1902. At the end of December 1902 the band was in debt to the tune of £222 4s 3d, most of which was owed to Besson & Co. for instruments. The band obtained new uniforms in spring 1905.

- **Old Nichol Street Mission Band** (Shoreditch) - Formed in 1882 as Hoxton Market Christian Mission Silver Band. Bandmaster C.W. Baker in 1900-1902, W.J. Burt in 1903-1905, J. Jayes in the early 1950s. Secretary Harry How in 1903. In 1906 it was renamed Hoxton Crusaders Brass Band and it was also known as Old Nichol Street Mission Band. Reverted to its original name some time later. In the London blitz of 1940 all the band's equipment (72 instruments and 60 uniforms) were destroyed, but it recovered and continued playing. Old Nichol at the time of the band's formation was London's most notorious slum which feature in the novel "A Child of the Jago".



Hoxton Market Mission Brass Band

- St Alban's City Band** - Founded in 1892. Conductor H. Cannon in 1895-1902, Frank Waddington (ex-Black Dyke solo cornet) in 1903, F. Tingle in 1907, J.N. Fletcher in 1908. It took part, together with many of the other champion bands of Britain, in the Grand Musical Festival at the Albert Hall on 20 January 1900, being the first band to perform, playing the piece *Moses in Egypt*. Band soloists in 1901 included Mr Gray (soprano), H. Cannon, L. Sell & H. Warwick (cornets), A. Francis (horn), E. Ewer (baritone), A. Field (euphonium), and R. Mason (trombone). New uniforms were purchased in spring 1902. It won several contests in the 1910 & 1911 seasons, when band soloists included W. Izzard (soprano), Reg Hutchison (cornet), J. Francis (tenor horn), W. Hollis (euphonium), and J. Field (trombone). The band is still active today. The band's minutes 1894-1953, are held in the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.



St Albans City Silver Band

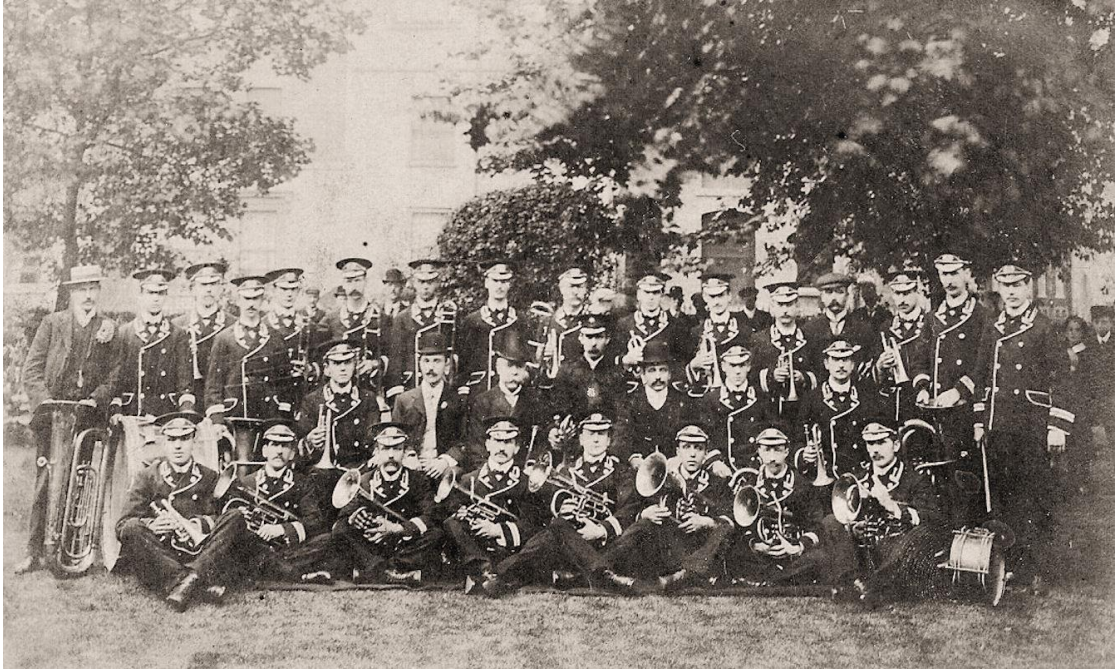
- St Pancras Silver Band** - Active in 1894, conductor W.T. Jackson. Became the St Pancras National Reserve Brass Band in the 1910s. Its heyday was in the 1920s and 1930s. In the band at that time were George Curtis (side drum), Bill Knight (Bass drum), Fred Dimmock was the band's professional conductor for many years. A fine trombone player he was also a member of the famous Luton Red Cross Band; then there were the Ashton Brothers, both cornet players and conductors who kept the band in good form for many years; there was Dick Fruin (Bass), Nobby Clark, (Euphonium), Bill Griffiths and Johnny Seabrook (tenor horn). In 1925 the band won the Daily Mirror cup at the Crystal Palace. It played in most of the local parks, including Parliament Hill Fields, Waterlow Park, the Embankment Gardens, Highbury Fields and elsewhere in North London. On Sunday mornings, all the year round, the band used to play outside Hampstead Heath Railway Station and always drew appreciative audiences. The money collected used to go towards the cost of musical instrument repairs and replacements and the purchase of sheet music. The Band joined the St. Pancras Branch of the British Legion in the early 1930's and won the first prize in 1932 competing against British Legion bands from all parts of Britain. They

played to prisoners at Pentonville Prison twice a year, played for Madame Burnett-Coutts, Swains Lane, once yearly, played at Luton and Bedford for the Orphans School at Leavesdon (Watford) whenever possible, raising money for the school.



St Pancras National Reserve Band

- **Shoreditch Borough Band** – Known as Shoreditch Borough United Brass Band in 1894, also the Borough of Shoreditch Band. Active through to the 1930s. In 1916 the band had a lady cornet player - Miss P. Chapman. Bandmaster R.E. Aldous in 1908-1922. Secretary E.G. Parker in 1908-1916. The band took part in the Paris International Contest on 26 May 1912, travelling across the Channel on the ship “Invicta”, keeping the other passengers entertained with music, together with some Yorkshire choristers also Paris bound. The contest was in a school house, facing five judges, with the test piece “Jean of Finland”, followed by a performance of their own choice piece. They then moved to another school house for the sight reading test, Bach’s “Chant Religioso No. 2”. North London Excelsior Band also attended the contest, bandmaster Mr Pursglove, winning the sight reading and coming second to Shoreditch in the main contest, where their own-choice piece was “L’Africaine”. Also in attendance were the Camden Unity Band. The band numbered 34 players in November 1916, despite having lost 38 bandsmen over the previous two years as they had signed up for the war. In September the secretary reported the death of a bass player at the front, with two others being wounded. The men who had gone to war were being replaced by boys from the Hornchurch orphanage, as well as the bandsmen’s sons. One of the bandsmen took his cornet on service abroad to France and it was lost in the trenches during a big German offensive. The band raised enough money to replace the cornet (for the band’s use at home) and also to send a second cornet as a replacement to their comrade still in service. The band amalgamated with the Haggerston Band in January 1934, to become known as the Shoreditch United Borough Band. Haggerston split away from the united band two years later, to become an independent band once more.



Shoreditch Borough Band, c. 1910

- **Wandsworth Borough Band** - Founded in 1902, conductor P.H. Childs. Active into the mid 1920's.



Wandsworth Borough Band

- Whyteleafe Mission Band** – Associated with the Whyteleafe Tabernacle Mission, a gospel and temperance organisation. The band was active in 1895, conductor Mr Springall. Active into the 1910s. Conductor J.R. Atkin in 1905-1908. It competed at Cambridge Heath on 21 September 1907, with 23 players, taking a prize playing the test piece Star of Hope (Williams). It took 2nd prize in the Mission Band (2) section of the London and Home Counties Crystal Palace Contest in November 1909. Its last, unsuccessful, contest appearance was at West Drayton in July 1914, conducted by J. Barley. Also known as Whyteleafe Tabernacle Band. Disbanded during WW1.



The Whyteleafe (Surrey), Mission Band:

Pilgrim Hall Contest results:

Place	Band	Conductor	Draw
1	St Alban's City	Randolph Ryan	7
2	Edmonton Temperance	Tom Morgan	13
3	Lewisham Borough	Tom Morgan	15
4	Hanwell Town	E. Brophy	6
	Battersea Tent Mission	E. Hawke	8
	Camden Unity	W. J. Douglas Sherriff	9
	Dartford Town	G. Ware	12
	Holloway Crusaders	W. T. Luck	3
	Ilford Horns	Edward Allder	11
	Kilburn Gas Works	T. Morgan	5
	New Barnet Town	George Byford	2
	Old Nichol Street Mission	W. Trimby	14
	Shoreditch Borough	R. E. Aldous	1
	St Pancras	Fred Dimmock	4
	Wandsworth Borough	<i>[withdrew from contest]</i>	
	Whyteleafe Mission	J. R. Atkin	10