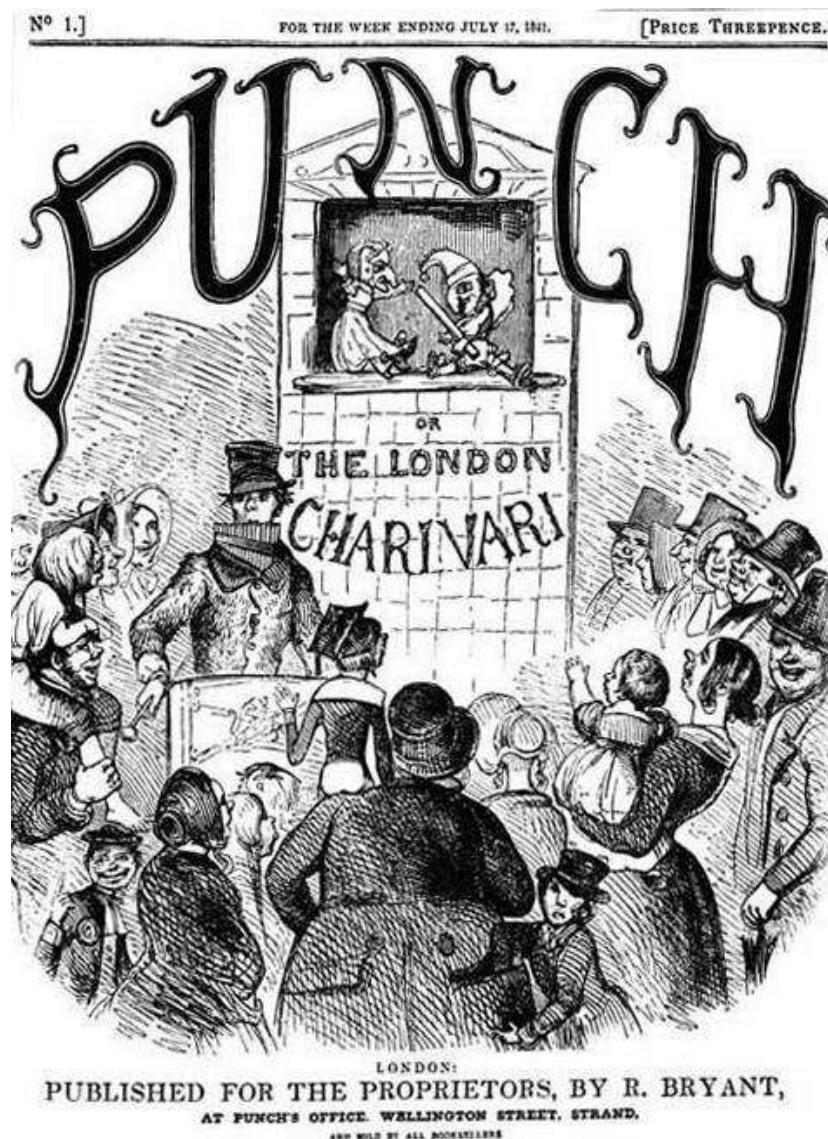


Punch and images of brass bands

Gavin Holman, 21 December 2021

Punch, or The London Charivari, was a satirical magazine which was published between 1841 and 1992 (with a brief resurrection from 1996 to 2002). Aside from its humorous stories and satirical articles on British life and wider world issues, it also introduced the idea of the cartoon as a humorous illustration – often as commentary on a political or social theme, but also just for its comic appeal.



Cover of the first issue of Punch, 17 July 1841

Some of the cartoons published in Punch featured brass bands, or brass musicians, and a selection of these are presented here. Where dates are known, they are given, and I would welcome any additional cartoons of a similar nature, or more detail about the ones shown below.



A ROW AMONG "THE POPE'S BRASS BAND."

A cartoon from 1866 – the "Pope's Brass Band" was the nickname of Irish MP's in the British Parliament in the 1860's, which were often the subject of strife and dissention on Irish and Catholic issues.

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—OCTOBER 11, 1879.



EXCELSIOR!

The Mayor of Shrimington (to Ecclesiastical Dignitary, who is congratulating his Worship on the improvements which have raised that once obscure marine hamlet into a place of elegant and fashionable resort). "Improvements, my Lord! You may well say that. Why, only last year there wasn't so much as a cornet to be 'eard in the 'ole blessed town; and now you may stand on this very spot and listen to three brass bands a-playing away – and classical music, too, mind yer – at one and the same time! Beautiful!"

A cartoon from Punch – 11th October 1879. "The Mayor of Shrimington (to Ecclesiastical Dignitary, who is congratulating his Worship on the improvements which have raised that once obscure marine hamlet into a place of elegant and fashionable resort). "Improvements, my Lord! You may well say that. Why, only last year there wasn't so much as a cornet to be 'eard in the 'ole blessed town; and now you may stand on this very spot and listen to three brass bands a-playing away – and classical music, too, mind yer – at one and the same time! Beautiful!"



NOISE AND NUISANCE.

DR. GLADSTONE. "NOW, REALLY THIS IS TOO BAD! JUST AS SHE WAS BEGINNING TO MEND—"
LEADER OF BAND. "PLEASE, SIR, WE THOUGHT A LITTLE MUSIC WOULD DO HER GOOD!!!"

11 March, 1882 – Noise and Nuisance. *Dr. Gladstone, "Now really this is too bad! Just as she was beginning to mend." Leader of band, "Please, sir, we thought a little music would do her good!"*



"SLEEP, GENTLE SLEEP!"

2 A.M. PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN WHO ATTENDED THE BRASS BAND CONTEST AND FESTIVAL AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

Unknown date, possibly 1901. *"Sleep, Gentle Sleep!"*
The portrait of a gentleman who attended the brass band contest
and festival at the Crystal Palace.



FACING THE MUSIC.

["It is proposed, with a view to economy, that military bandsmen in future shall become combatants."—Daily Paper.]

30 May 1906. Facing the Music.

"It is proposed, with a view to economy, that military bandsmen in future shall become combatants."



IN NORTHERN MISTS

No. 1 "SILENT HOURS."

E.R. JAMES.
copyright. 19.3.17.

19 March 1917 – In Northern Mists. No. 1 "Silent Hours"



A BRAZEN BAND

IMPERIAL CONDUCTOR. "STICK TO IT, TIRPITZ; KEEP ON MELTING THEIR HEARTS!"

31 March 1915



OUR OVERCROWDED BEACHES.
THE LITTLE SHRIMPTON BAND CARRIES ON.

30 July 1930. *Our Overcrowded Beaches. The Little Shrimpton Band carries on.*



A BAND OF HOPE.

(Left to right: Sir A. C. —, Lord W. —, Sir R. —, Mr. W. —, Sir C. —)

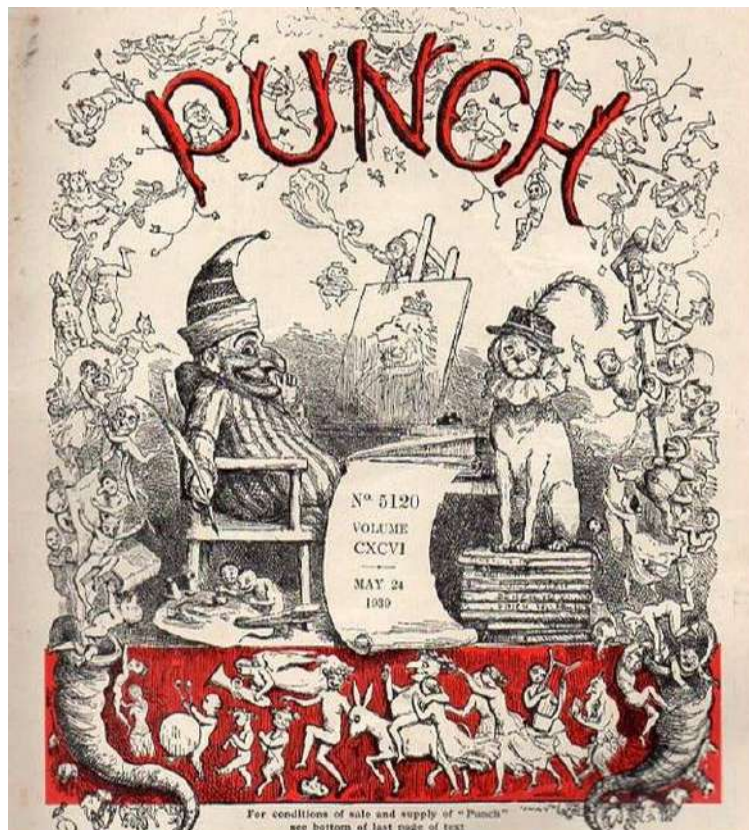
"WE DREAMT THAT WE DWELT IN MARBLE HALLS ..."

3 June 1936 – *A Band of Hope*. “We dreamt that we dwelt in marble halls.”
Featuring Messrs. Chamberlain, Winterton, Home, and Churchill.



"We're sure, me boys—we've been and played the Refreshment Tariff!"

17 February 1937 – "We be sunk, me boys – we've only been and played the refreshment tariff!"



Punch cover from 24 May 1939



The Woodbury Series. No. 548. **Humors of History. The Bards. A.D. 500 onwards**

(Arthur Moreland.)

"In the time of the Saxons itinerant musicians, calling themselves Bards, travelled about the country and gave entertainments in the houses of the nobles. The custom still obtains, but the patronage of the peerage has been withdrawn."—*The New History of England.*

"In the time of the Saxons itinerant musicians, calling themselves Bards, travelled about the country and gave entertainments to the houses of the nobles. The custom still obtains, but the patronage of the peerage has been withdrawn." [The New History of England]



Unknown date. Messrs Osler, Parker, Johnstone, and Sullivan



A Discordant Band

Unknown date. *A discordant band.*



Unknown date. *The German band.*



"PREVENTION'S BETTER THAN CURE."

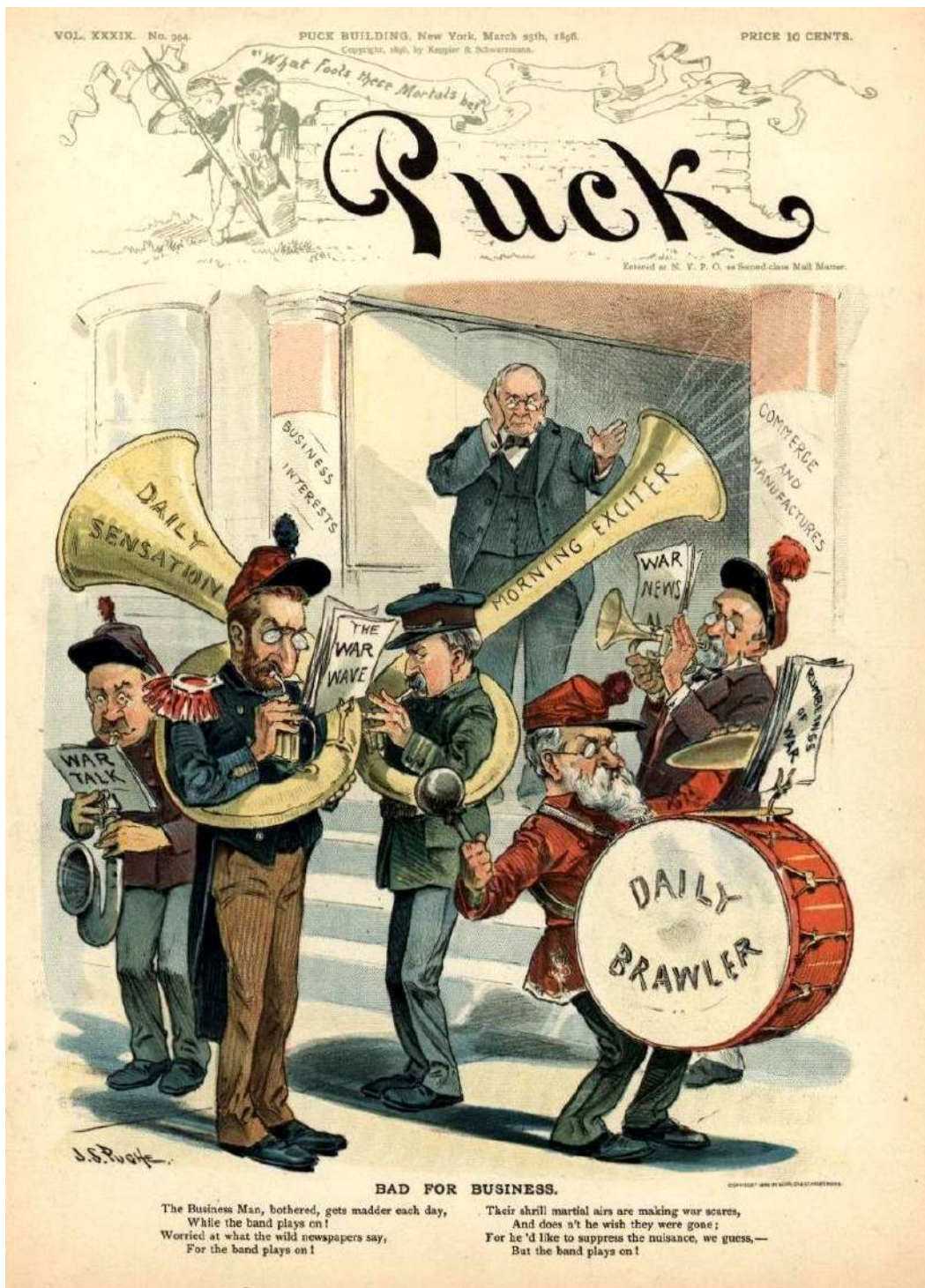
Unknown date. *Prevention's better than cure.*



PROM-ING AT TENBY.

"The commencement of the Promenade Concerts' Season at Covent Garden has not been lost on Poor Papa, for he has started what he calls his 'Al Fresco Proms' at Tenby. Papa has hired a Local German Band, and the way in which he conducts convinces everybody that he has missed his vocation. Up to now, the selection has certainly been a bit Music Hall-y. Poor Papa's 'Gin-gin Waltz,' which, by the way, he got someone to compose for him, is a great favourite, the company waltzing while singing the words. A Classical Night is promised, but I hear that the town is emptying fast in consequence."—TWISTLE.

Unknown date. *Prom-ing at Tenby.* "The commencement of the Promenade Concerts' Season at Covent Garden has not been lost on poor Papa, for he has started what he calls his 'Al Fresco Proms' at Tenby. Papa has hired a local German Band, and the way in which he conducts convinces everybody that he has missed his vocation. Up to now, the selection has certainly been a bit Music Hall-y. Poor Papa's 'Gin-gin Waltz', which, by the way, he got someone to compose for him, is a great favourite, the company waltzing while singing the words. A Classical Night is promised, but I hear that the town is emptying fast in consequence."



25 March 1896. The cover of 'Puck' magazine, from New York. This imitator of Punch was originally published in Germany in 1871, gaining an English edition, in New York, from 1877.

Bad for Business.

*The Business Man, bothered, gets madder each day,
 While the band plays on!
 Worried at what the wild newspapers say,
 For the band plays on!
 Their shrill martial airs are making war scares,
 And doesn't he wish they were gone;
 For he'd like to suppress the nuisance, we guess,
 But the band plays on!*