

Cottingham Brass Band

A brief history collated from records of the band,
including historical notes prepared by chairman
Dennis Hills, c. 1998



Cottingham Model Brass Band – 1902

edited by Gavin Holman

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A Band has existed in Cottingham since early last century. Reference has been made to a band opening the Hull to Bridlington Railway at Cottingham station in 1846 and it was definitely at the Jubilee celebrations in 1887. It is also recorded that the Cottingham Band was at the opening of the Hull and Barnsley line in 1885. Who knows it may have been at the Coronation celebrations 50 years earlier. It has generally been accepted that 1859 was the magic date but now that is in doubt. The Band has existed under various names the following being the ones we know:

Cottingham Harmonic Brass Band
Cottingham Brass Band
Cottingham Model Brass Band
Cottingham Prize Silver Band
Cottingham Silver Band
The Cottingham Band

We assume from the limited knowledge we have, due to the lack of minute books etc. which have either been lost, misplaced or in the possession of others and not available to us, that the band has been virtually continuous over its life with the exception of the war years, so we can claim to be long established.

A list published in 1974 of bands that once existed in the immediate area shows 39 bands which now number 3 of which Cottingham is one. The majority were 'firms' bands and those connected with churches and have long been disbanded. In 1897 two bands existed in Cottingham, us and Cottingham Victoria, which is rumoured, based itself on the Tiger Inn as the leader was the landlord there. Some say that the bandroom still exists in the Tiger, now used as a store. Alas it only existed for two years not having the staying power of the Cottingham Band.

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

Our information is limited and has many large gaps. The earliest recorded note is from a letter written by a past President, Cllr. N. Bisby (deceased) which quotes a news cutting that outlines the opening of the Hull to Bridlington line in 1846 which states that the Cottingham Band played at the Cottingham Station for the occasion. A later press cutting tells us of the opening of the Hull to Barnsley line when the celebrations were headed by

the Cottingham Harmonic Brass Band, this was in 1885. The next cutting to hand is a re-print of the report on the Jubilee celebrations in 1887 which reads; "*The inhabitants of the village of Cottingham turned out in holiday fashion to commemorate the occasion of Her Majesty's Jubilee*" and goes on to list dignitaries who responded handsomely with funds and others who contributed mainly with food. An address of congratulations, beautifully designed and illuminated in various colours and engrossed on vellum by Mr. W.L. Assam of Hull was sent to Gen. Ponsonby G.C.B. for presentation to Her Majesty the Queen. The address had been displayed in Hull and Cottingham and much admired, it read; "*To Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India etc. most gracious sovereign, on behalf of the President, Vice Presidents and Committee consisting of representatives from the various religious denominations formed for the purpose of carrying out a celebration in the village of Cottingham in the East Riding of Yorkshire on this the auspicious occasion of your Majesty's Jubilee, we humbly tender our most sincere and loyal congratulations of the happy attainment of the 50th. year of your Majesty's prosperous and glorious reign, and earnestly pray that it may please almighty God to spare your Majesty to reign over your vast Empire and that his blessing may still attend your Majesty and the Royal Family. Dated this 21st. day of the year of our Lord 1887*" and signed by the presenter.

The report goes on to say that the celebrations got under way early in the morning with the ringing of the bells of the grand old Parish Church. The United choirs accompanied by the Cottingham Brass Band sang the national anthem from the top of the church tower. It does not state whether the choirs only were atop the tower or Band and Choirs. It goes on to list the local organisations, the Cottingham Volunteer Fire Brigade, the Cottingham Free Gardeners, the Cottingham United Friendly Societies and the Salvation Army assembled on the West Green to receive special medals to mark the occasion and the Cottingham Brass Band played a selection of music.

Our next reference comes from information written on the back of an old photograph which tells us that a Robert Hall, later to be Colonel R. Hall, Hull Artillery reformed the band in 1891/2 after a long layoff and names the bandsmen as:

J. Ness (conductor), T. Gibson, Ben Hatfield, G. Bilton, W. Brocklesby, T. Gibson, P. Stephenson, E. Maw, C. Gibson. H. Coverdale, W. Brocklesby, T. Dales and Mr Varny.

A local paper informs us of the existance of a balance sheet for the year 1899-1900 which reads: Total income £13 13s 6d, expenditure £5 10s 8d, due to the treasurer, £2 12s 9d, for music, shoulder lamps at £2 6s 8d, players fares from Hull and Beverley 10s 8d, books 4s 11d, repair to music stands 1s 3d, oil and bottle 5s 1d, springs at 6d, postage etc. 2s, which to my remembrance of old money comes to £12 4s 4d, not giving much profit.

Another photograph shows the band in the grounds of Kingtree House in 1902 - it was then known as the Cottingham Model Brass Band.

Again a newspaper informs us that a minute book of 1903 states that the Cottingham Village Brass Band was re-organised on October 22nd of that year with a constitution containing 12 "Commandments". No. 10 read, *"That bad language, intoxication, insubordination to the Bandmaster shall be deemed a gross breach of the rules and liable to instant dismissal"*

Next, we have records of achievements recorded by the Bandmaster W. Brocklesby it reads:

June 10 th	1905	Barton	Selection	2 nd Prize
August 14 th	1905	Goole	Selection	2 nd Prize
September 23 rd	1905	Beverley	Selection	1 st Prize
Cup and Euphonium Medal			March	2 nd Prize
June 23 rd	1906	Scunthorpe	Selection	1 st Prize
Cup and all medals			March	1 st Prize
September 29 th	1906	Crystal Palace		4 th
September 28 th .	1907	Crystal Palace	Consolation Cup and £30.	1 st Prize

The cup was a magnificent trophy and before its return the village had a replica made which we have to this day. It was also the practice to present the winning Band or Bandmaster with an instrument supplied by a sponsoring firm, we hold a cornet and a trombone all suitably inscribed. Around this time we have a story, passed by word of mouth from bandsman to bandsman and therefore embroidered somewhat that says that the Band on returning from a very successful Crystal Palace, alighted from the train at

Cottingham station and decided to celebrate by marching back to the bandroom. It was the early hours of the morning and someone pointed out that the sleeping residents may not appreciate much noise so it was decided that they would remove their boots and march in stockinged feet, it does not relate whether they played or not.

From this point the gaps in our research are wide. There is a programme of an event, a sports day, run by the Royal British Legion on Saturday 9th. July 1927 that records the Band are playing, no doubt doing their village bit. Then we have a photograph of the Cottingham Prize Silver Band winning the Hull Musical Festival, a first of its kind on May 30th. 1932.

Our research now jumps to 1940 when a cutting states that the Bandroom as we know it now, exists due to negotiation with the Hull Brewery Company through Col. Cooper, for the use of a loft, originally Thurlows Malt Store above the Old Brewery. This was a derelict shell and the bandsmen of the day refurbished it and provided access via a staircase all in the space of two months and at no expense to the brewery.

The Company inspected the work and were so impressed that they granted the sole use of the room for as long as the band exists. A small rent was charged, £3 and this arrangement has continued through the years with the various incumbents of the 'King Billy'. The rent was discontinued a few years ago when the Brewery ceased to exist.

Towards the latter end of the 1940's the Band were fairly active and enjoyed a relationship with the mighty Black Dyke Mills This came about through a bandsman called Joe Wood. It was told to me by old bandsmen that the relationship was an annual event which was a form of training and friendly competition and it is rumoured that Cottingham actually beat Black Dyke in one of these contests. Black Dyke were of course under their illustrious conductor Arthur O. Pearce so the events must have been momentous.

Records of Mr. Brocklesby show that catering was laid on for these concerts/contests and goes on to state that on Sunday 24th August 1947 catering for 231 people cost £23 18s od. On Sunday 3rd July 1949 he again catered this time for 221 people at a cost of £14 0s od. The events took place at Elmfield House.

Now to the 1950's. In 1952 at the Band's AGM a new president was elected - Cllr. N. Bisby, and a new Bandmaster Mr. Sam Walmsley a very well respected and experienced man. The band had just gained 2nd place in the areas at Huddersfield so were eligible for the 'Finals'. These took place at Belle Vue, Manchester, on September 20th and they got 2nd place.

1953 saw them have to relinquish their entry to the nationals because of their drive to buy new uniforms. The band now had a new bandmaster with the appointment of Alf Stephenson. Alf didn't allow the band to vegetate but took them to a contest in Ossett in September of that year. They drew no. 9 in an entry of 16 and were reported as giving a truly inspired rendering of the test piece gaining them 3rd place, beating some of the best bands in the area such as Leeds Model and Bentley Colliery. No doubt the proudest man on the day was Alf who said, by virtue of their high placing, they now had to play against some of the best bands in Yorkshire. They hoped that with the generosity of the village they could liquidate their uniform debt and bring more honours to the village.

Meanwhile earlier in this the year of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the band had been approached to play concerts during 'Coronation Week', these to commence on 31st May with an evening concert to be held in the grounds of Elmtree House. Another concert was required on Coronation Day to take place in the King George Field. Incidentally, does anyone recall, during the opening of King George Playing Fields, the planting of trees ceremony? It is recorded that a tree was planted for each organisation in Cottingham, which one is the Cottingham Band tree? I presume that the trees are the 'Cherries' on the approach to the field.

Following on with 1954 saw the band come 2nd in the areas at Huddersfield, which qualified them for the London Finals. The band had left Cottingham for the areas at 7-00 a.m. on Saturday March 13th by motor coach, stopping for lunch at Brighouse and rehearsing in B & R bandroom. Here they had received news of their draw being last in a line up of 18. On arrival they realized, from reports, that they had to pull something out of the bag to have a chance at all. They played their piece and the applause was tremendous they knew they had done their best. The results came: 1st Linthwaite, 2nd Cottingham, the two bands to represent Yorkshire at the 'Finals' in London.

They now face the task of raising the money to go to London - £150, in 1907 it was £30. They tried everything, concerts, whist drives, beetle drives, you

name it - they tried it, eventually raising the necessary funds. London came and they achieved 7th place.

The next record we can find is a programme of the 1955 British Open Spring Brass Band Festival at Belle Vue. The band entered the Junior Trophy, the test piece was Mignonne Suite, Beethoven and the adjudicator was E.C. (Ted) Buttress. The band was drawn no. 5, scored 192 points, and came 1st. For this they received the Besson Challenge Cup, £12, and a voucher for £2 2s od.

1959 is our next date which saw areas results at Huddersfield of 3rd and the visit to London producing 9th. At this point information dries up once more.

Here it is opportune to point to another era of the band, the introduction of ladies. The first we know of is one Frances Foster who at the age of 12, after being in the band 1 year, made her appearance in the Armistice Day Parade celebrations in 1957. Later in the 1960's we saw the arrival of Jean Stables followed by Shirley Levitt, who of course is still a member today.

A photograph of 1961 tells us the band entered a contest in Flamingo Park. 1963 was another benchmark when the band organised and ran its own contest, this took place at the Harland Way School, the participants being, Bridlington Excelsior, Hull Railwaymen's Silver, Hessle Royal British Legion, and the Band of the Queens Own Yorkshire Yeomanry - and lasted some 2 or 3 years.

Information is missing again until 1971 when a feature in the Hull Times of October 1st gives us an inside view of the bandroom in all its 'glory' and features the then bandspeople showing that families are involved as well as young and not so young. Three generations of the Leason family appear under the baton of Jock Fryston. Jock was a man of wide experience with some 30 years in banding, 11 of them with the 'Gordons' and time with local Dance Bands.

Progress from here on is slow and the band seems to exist just for a 'blow' although they actively trained youngsters in the leamers class. In 1976 I "joined" the band as secretary, conned in to might be a better phrase, so from now on I have first hand experience.

Highs and lows followed throughout the 1970's and 1980's at one time the band was reduced to four and that included me, but it rallied and came up to strength again. It is strange, but you cannot put a finger on why bands fluctuate so, possibly down to personalities and itchy feet.

The band started to contest again due mainly to my nagging, locally at first with some success and then back to the nationals. Since this point the band has rocketed up the ladder to their illustrious position to date. The results from that re-introduction are;

1989	Areas	Bradford	Section 4	23 rd	
1990	Areas	Bradford	Section 4	14 th	
1991	Areas	Barnsley	Section 4	10 th	
1992	Areas	Bradford	Section 4	1 st	
1992	Finals	Wembley	Section 4	17 th	
1993	Areas	Bradford	Section 3	2 nd	
1993	Finals	Wembley	Section 3	8 th	
1994	Areas	Darlington	Section 3	11 th	
1995	Areas	Darlington	Section 3	4 th	
1996	Areas	Darlington	Section 3	1 st	
1996	Finals	Cardiff	Section 3	4 th	
1997	Darlington	1st.	Section 2	1 st	
1997	Finals	Birmingham	Section 2	4 th	
1998	Areas	Darlington	Section 1	1 st	

As can be seen the rise started off as a pussycat and finished as a tiger, what now?

The Accolade

1994 saw the bands appearance on TV in the Palm Sunday programme, *Lead Kindly Light*. The band had been on the radio in the 1980's now they could be seen as well as heard. It was an early start for the band, rehearsing in the church even before the streets were aired, but the result was good and no doubt well worth the effort.

As you can see the Band is now a force to be reckoned with and long may it be so.

Appendix 1

The following is a list of Bands that existed in Hull and District.

Beverley Borough	Hull West Excelsior
Beverley Silver	Hull Wilson Line
British Oil & Cake Mills	Ideal Radiator
Brough	Kings Hall Mission
Cottingham	N.E. Railwaymen's Silver
Driffield	N.W. Railwaymens
East Rowton (Beverley)	Newland Orphanage
Hedon Town	Queens Hall
Hessle British Legion	R. A. O. B.
Hessle Silver	Scott Street Mission
Holmes Tannery	Sissons Paintworks
Howden	Sitwell Street Mission
Hull Blundell Spence	Sons of Temperance
Hull City Police	Spring Bank Orphanage
Hull East Silver	St. Andrews Boys
Hull Ellery	St. Andrews Dock
Hull Flax & Cotton Mills	Stoneferry
Hull Postmen	Stoneferry Primitives
Hull Thornton Hall Mission	Thomstons Hull
Hull Tramways	Welton
Hull Waterloo	

41 in all, whatever happened to them and, what's more, where are all the instruments? As can be seen, only three have stayed the course, Beverley, Cottingham and Driffield.

Appendix 2

Conductors of the band

Mr Johnson	1869
A.J. (or A.G.) Brannan	1880-1882
John Ness	1887-1888
J.A. Kerr	1896-1898
A.W. Whitaker	1899
John Ness	1902
Herbert Withers	1903
W. Brocklesby	1905 - 1907
E.B. Maw	1932 - 1934
Sam Walmsley	1952
Alf Stephenson	1954 - 1966
M. Cawthorne	1979 - 1981
Kevin Bowman	1988 - 1989
James Gossip	1990 - 1991
Richard Grantham	1992 - 2003

Appendix 3

Lists of band members

G. Bruce bandmaster in 1899

1902

J. Ness (cornet, conductor), T. Gibson (cornet), Ben Hatfield (cornet), C. Bilton (cornet), W. Brocklesby (cornet), Mr Gibson senr. (horn), P. Stephenson, (horn), E. Maw (euphonium), C. Gibson (Eb Bass), H. Coverdale (Eb Bass), W. Brocklesby (BBb Bass), T. Dales (bass drum), Mr Varey (side drum).

1903

H. Withers (cornet and conductor), W. Ashton (cornet), Mr Stiles (cornet), W. Sinclair (cornet), J. Wilson (horn), W. Hatfield (horn), H. Ness (baritone), E. Maw (euphonium), W. Brocklesby (euphonium), H. Coverdale (bass), P. Gibson (bass), A. Grantham (drum).

1905

S. Harvey (cornet), Mr Sinclair (cornet), Mr Pickering (cornet), Mr Jennings (baritone), R. Holliday (cornet), Bob Grantham (drums), Jack Wilson (horn), Eric Downes (euphonium), David? Ness (euphonium), C. Gibson (bass), Billy Thompson (trombone), Herbert Withers (cornet), Wilf Brocklesby (euphonium), Timothy Maw (bariton), Len Bilton (bass), Harry Evans (bass), Teddy Maw (cornet), Clary Gibson (side drum), Arthur Brocklesby (horn).

1907

Band officers: president Henry Witty, secretary C.E. Naylor, assistant secretary J. Wilson, conductor W. Brocklesby, vice president Fred Ennis, treasurer Rev. A.J. Agard Butler, committee: Roberts Smith, A. Harvey, A.B. Moorby, H.W. Holmes, H. Evans, H. Withers and William Thompson.

Appendix 4

Band Inventory Records c. 1952

Appendix 5

General notes

The band folded in 2010

A booklet about the history of the Cottingham Brass Band was produced in 1997

For details of the band's contesting record see the Brass Band Results website - <https://brassbandresults.co.uk/bands/cottingham-band/>

Hull Packet - Friday 31 January 1862

Cottingham Brass Band played at the Queen's Theatre, Hull, on the occasion of Mrs Wolfenden's benefit, on the evening of 31 January

Hull Advertiser and Exchange Gazette - Saturday 20 August 1864

Cottingham Brass Band and East York Rifle Volunteer Band performed at the Cottingham Flower and Poultry Show on Thursday 18th August, with excellent renderings of operatic selections, dance music, &c.

Hull Packet - Friday 10 January 1868

Richard Hays, Joseph Johnson and Henry Varey were charged by Robert Donkin, landlord of the Railway Tavern, of that place, with assaulting him on 24th December. The case was dismissed with each party paying their own costs.

Hull Packet - Friday 15 January 1869

The band played selections, under the able leadership of Mr Johnson, at the Penny Readings, in the Newland Schoolroom, on Tuesday 12th January 1869

Hull Packet - Friday 13 August 1869

The band performed at Cottingham Flower Show, together with the Band of the 15th (King's) Hussars

Hull Packet - Friday 05 August 1870

The band played at the Hull Art, Industrial and General Exhibition, on Saturday 6th August, conducted by Mr Johnson, bandmaster J.W. Tidswell

Hull Packet - Friday 14 July 1871

The band performed in a procession of the Cottingham United Society, with their leader William Wright, conductor J.W. Tidswell (bandmaster of the 4th East York Artillery Volunteers at Hull)

Musical Times, April 1, 1862 – “Cottingham (near Hull), The second annual concert of the Cottingham Brass Band was given on Monday evening, March 10th, in the School Room. It consisted of vocal and instrumental music; the former was represented by Mrs Lotherington, Mr Temple, and Mr Peach. Mr W.J. Petty accompanied on the piano.”

1887-1888, when it was known as Cottingham Model Brass Band. Revived in 1891-1892 as Cottingham Model Brass Band by Robert Hall (later Colonel in the Hull Royal Artillery).

Later known as Cottingham Prize Silver Band, then reverted to Cottingham Band. In 1895 it was reported that "the band has come to a standstill. It requires re-organising, and thus placed on a sound basis. Of late the instruments appear to have fallen into the hands of outsiders, who have been on begging expeditions".

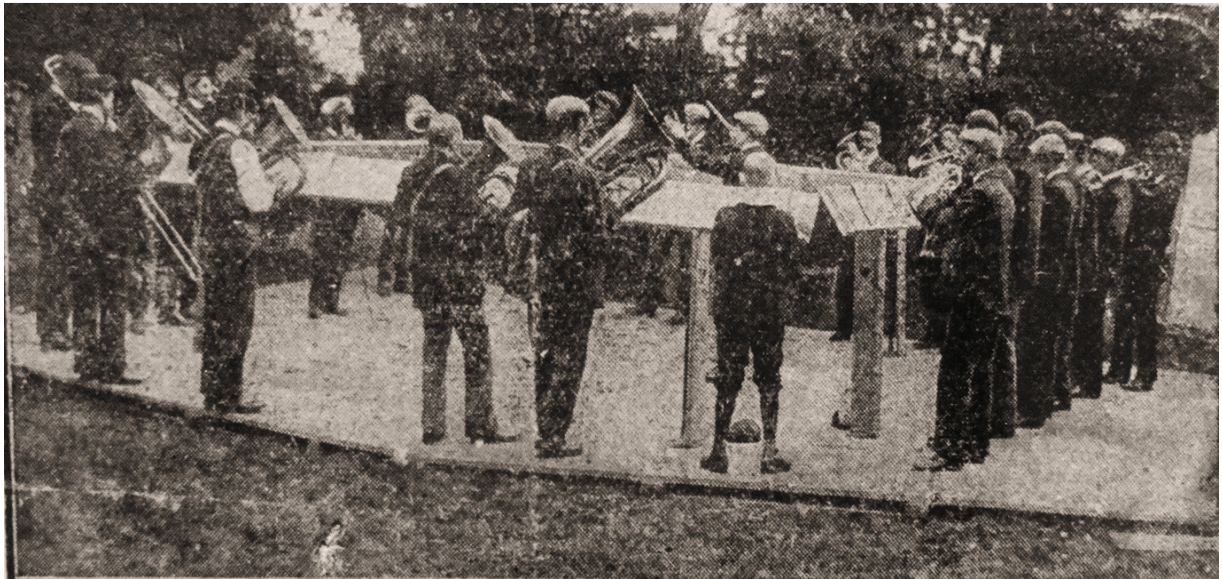
The band was re-organised in 1896, under the baton of J.A. Kerr. In March 1898, with 12 players, the band was making an effort to clear an adverse balance of £15

Cottingham Harmonic Brass Band
Active in 1880

Cottingham Subscription Brass Band
Active in 1875, conductor Mr Tidswell

Cottingham Wesleyan Band

It boasted an extensive repertoire. One of the highlights of their year was leading the annual Sunday School outing that continued right up until 1939. The band reformed for a short time after World War II.



Cottingham Brass Band – 1907



Cottingham Brass Band – 1922



Cottingham Brass Band – 1928



Cottingham Brass Band – 1946



Cottingham Brass Band – 1959



Cottingham Brass Band



Cottingham Brass Band



Cottingham Brass Band



Cottingham Wesleyan Brass Band –
in front of Wallis & Linnell's Clothing Factory



Cottingham Salvation Army Brass Band – 1915



Cottingham Salvation Army Brass Band – 1931