

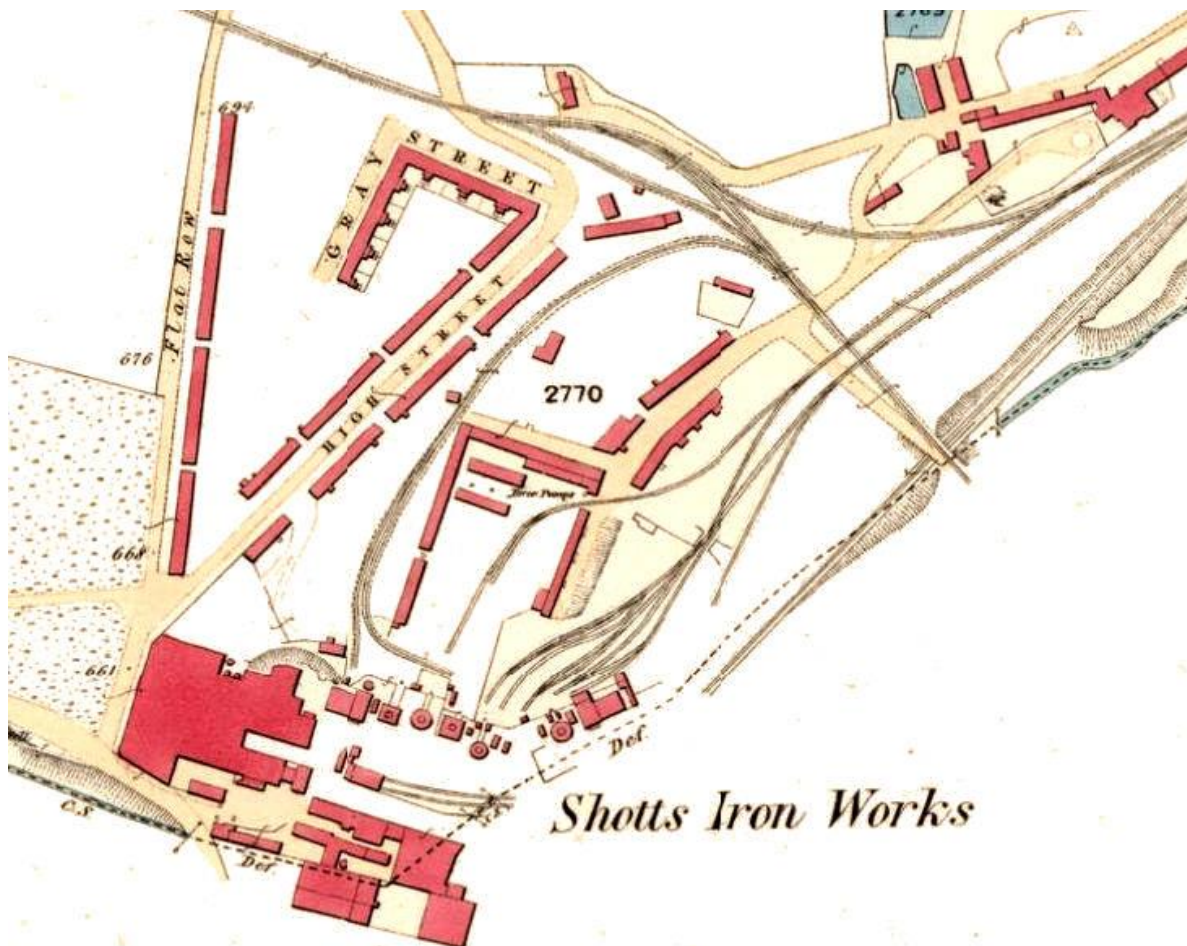
Shotts Foundry Brass Band - 1829 to c. 1960

Gavin Holman, February 2020



Shotts Foundry Brass Band

The Shotts Iron Works was established in 1801. Large amounts of coal, ironstone and lime in the Shotts area enabled the mass production of pig iron. The iron works and associated mines were the main source of industry in Shotts for over 150 years.





An ingot of Shotts pig iron

The Shotts Foundry Brass Band was founded in June 1829, with workers from the iron works. It acquired its first sheet music and band instruments from the Orbiston Community – six clarionets, a bag of flutes, two serpents, two bassoons, two keyed bugles, two French horns, a trumpet, a bass horn, a trombone and a drum. The Owenite co-operative community at Orbiston was the result of an experiment in social and utopian communities according to co-operative principles – following the philosophy of Robert Owen.

One of the band's first teachers was William Chalmers of Cambusnethan. Conductors included James Gilchrist in 1867-1887, J. Somerville in 1900, John Radcliffe in 1902-1907, William L. Smith in 1933. James Campbell Shearer played solo trombone in 1933. The band was also known as Shotts Iron Works Silver Band and Shotts Foundry Silver Band.



A group from the Shotts Foundry Band, with James Cairns on far left

Some activities of the Shotts Foundry Band over the years:

- Took part in the Academy Procession (Newlands) at Bathgate on 16 April 1869 together with the Falkirk Iron Works Band, Bathgate Chemical Works Band and the Bathgate Volunteer Band.
- Took part in the Newland Procession at Bathgate on Monday 18th April 1870 together with the Chemical Bathgate Band and the Newmains Band.
- Performed at the Shotts Cattle Show on Wednesday 3 July 1878.
- Paraded through the village at the head of the Shoots Sabbath Schools Annual Picnic on Saturday 27 July 1878.
- Took part in the Grand Musical Demonstration at Houldsworth Park, Wishaw on Saturday 17 August 1878, playing overture *Knight Templar*, fantasia *A Night at Sea* – together with other bands: Carluke Thistle, Crofthead, Hamilton Battalion, Britain's First I.O.G.T. (Cambusnethan), Kirkmuirhill, Dykehead, and Morningside I.O.G.T.
- Took first prize at the Bathgate Academy Procession in spring 1879.
- At its jubilee celebrations on 7 June 1879 it held a musical demonstration in a field adjoining the Bowling Green at the Shotts Works, with other guest bands being Dykehead, Carluke, Crofthead, Forth, Bathgate Chemical, West Calder and Whitburn.
- Performed at the Shotts Cattle Show on Wednesday 2 July 1879.
- Performed at the Shotts Horticultural Society Flower Show on Saturday 3 September 1881.
- Performed at the Shotts Horticultural Society Flower Show on Saturday 1 September 1883.
- Performed at the Shotts Games, at the village of Stane, on Wednesday 1 July 1891.



Shotts Foundry Band, 1933

- Performed at the Shotts Cattle Show (Shotts Calderwaterhead Farmers Society) on Wednesday 27 June 1900.
- The band held a sports tournament on Saturday 28 June 1902.
- Competed at the contest at Livingston Park, Portobello on Saturday 16 July 1904, guest conducted by Frank Mellor, played “Poliuto” - unplaced.
- Competed at North End Park, Cowdenbeath on 17 June 1905, taking 5th prize (two sovereigns), conducted by John Radcliffe. They played the selection “Poliuto” and were drawn number 4 to play.
- Took part in the Fauldhouse Gala Day procession which included 1,100 children on Saturday 1 September 1906.
- Gained 3rd prize in the Scottish Championships at Waverley Market, Edinburgh on 6 October 1906, playing Il Barbiere [Rossini, arr. Winterbottom].
- The following year, on 5 October 1907, they took 4th prize, playing Echoes of England.
- The band promoted a grand open-air concert at Stane Farm on Saturday 26 June 1909, which also included the Clydebank Prize Band and the Hallside Steelworks Prize Choir.
- Sunday 4 July 1909 saw the band lead the parade of the 8th L.H.L.I. Company to a service at Shotts Parish Church.
- In January 1915 it was reported that the Foundry Band had been down for several years, indeed there had been four or five bands at one time, but only the Pipe Band survived. Attempts were being made by the folk of Shotts and Stane to resuscitate the Foundry Band. .
- There is a gap in the band’s history from 1911 to 1920, when it once again it is performing and competing.



Shotts Iron Works Furnacemen, 1907

- The band competed in the Scottish Amateur Band Association qualifying contest at Motherwell on 11th November 1922, taking 3rd prize. However they were eventually awarded first place following the disqualification of Barrhead Band (1st place) for playing unregistered players, Greenfield Colliery Band (2nd place) for playing a player registered with a 1st Section band, and Beardmore's Works Band (4th place) for playing a member who was under suspension.
- Performed at the West Benhar and Eastfield Gala Day on Saturday 26 July 1924.
- Took 2nd prize (£10) at the Strathaven contest, on 18 July 1925, under the baton of Herbert Bennett.
- On Sunday 25 October 1925 the band performed at the unveiling of a memorial to Robert William Miller, a Shotts postman who was fatally injured in an unsuccessful attempt to save the life of a woman at Shotts Station on 23 April.
- Performed at the West Benhar and Eastfield Gala Day on Saturday 26 June 1926.
- Performed at a memorial service at the Fauldhouse War Memorial on Sunday 19th September 1926.
- Broadcast a concert on Glasgow 5SC (740Kc, 405.4m) on Monday 8 October 1928, at 7.45 pm.
- Broadcast a concert on Glasgow 5SC (752Kc, 398.9m) and Aberdeen 2BD (600Kc, 311m) on Saturday 15 February 1930, at 4.00 pm.
- The band organised a Music Festival, held on 28 March 1931, consisting of vocal and brass instrumental solo performers.
- Took part, together with Bo'ness & Carriden Band and Kinneil Military Band, in the Bo'ness Children's Annual Midsummer Festival at Ladywell Park.
- Performed at the Wishaw & Shotts District Association of Boy Scouts rally at Shotts on 30 August 1931.
- Broadcast a concert on Edinburgh/Dundee/Aberdeen (1040Kc, 288.5m) on Saturday 5 September 1931, at 4.15 pm, playing Herbert Bennet's own arrangement of "Beethoven" and two Ord Hume selections.



Workers' cottages in Flat Row behind the iron works

- In January 1933 Mr W.H. Gorrage was appointed bandmaster, replacing Mr W. Connell who had retired.
- Broadcast a concert on Scottish Regional (376.4m) on Saturday 4 February 1933, at 6.55 pm.
- Broadcast a concert on Scottish Regional (376.4m) on Saturday 9 December 1933, at 7.00 pm, conducted by Fred Rogan.
- William Cairns (who died in April 1934) joined the Shotts Foundry Band in 1880 and had held the positions of treasurer, secretary and president over the years. His father, David Cairns, was the first miner to be allowed to join the Foundry Band, in 1856.
- Broadcast a concert on Scottish Regional (376.4m) on Wednesday 24 October 1934, at 4.30 pm, conducted by Herbert Bennett.
- The band arranged a concert in November 1934 in the Empire Theatre, Shotts, which raised £41 10s for the Gresford Disaster Fund.
- In June 1938 the band found itself in a poor financial state. The firm which supplied its instruments took back £133 worth of their stock to clear the debt, which left the band somewhat lacking. They cancelled engagements for the foreseeable future until their instrumental problems could be resolved. However the local community rallied around and the band were soon on their musical feet again.
- At the band's AGM in November 1939 the following officers were elected: secretary William Roy, treasurer George Simpson, committee James Williams, George Lindsay, David Simpson, and John Williams.
- The band advertised for boys, aged 12 years or over, to learn all silver band instruments in May 1943, and had 19 boys learning under the guidance of Peter Stevenson in February 1945 – awaiting the end of hostilities when the band could return to full strength.
- It was advertising for young players to attend rehearsals, on Tuesday and Thursday nights, in March 1947.
- A similar situation arose in 1949 when the band appealed, via its new secretary Mr D. McLean, to old members or young people to lend a hand in putting the band on its feet again.
- The band's Ladies' Committee organised a Whist Drive in May 1954 to raise funds for the band's Uniform Fund.
- The band was still active in June 1960, but did not appear beyond that date, its last known contest appearance being in 1954.

A record of the Shotts Foundry Band's contest appearances can be found at

- <https://brassbandresults.co.uk/bands/shotts-foundry/>

Other bands in Shotts were:

- Shotts St Patrick's Brass Band - founded in 1878 and still active today. Also known as Shotts R.C. (Roman Catholic) Band. Shown here in 1921



- Dykehead Brass Band - active in 1864, conductor Mr Chalmers. Still active in the 1940s. Conductor Mr Knox in 1898.



- Shotts Salvation Army Band – active in the 1950's



The Shotts Town Brass Band was not actually located at Shotts. The Shotts Iron Company owned the Mauricewood pit near Penicuik and built houses beside the pit for their workers. The owners decided to name this village Shottstown after the company name. The band was active in 1879 to 1890. In 1890 the Mauricewood Pit disaster claimed the lives of most of the band members, including James Porteous, leader of the band and Thomas Strang the band instructor. Only two or three survived.