

Daisy Squelch (1885-1965) – cornet soloist and music hall star

Gavin Holman, 12 November 2021

Daisy was a cornet soloist from Blackpool, the self-styled "*Champion Lady Cornetist of the World*". She was born Agnes Mary Squelch, in summer 1885, at Saltaire, to parents William Squelch and Mary Hannah (née Redman). William (originally from Kendal) had been a wool-combing machine overlooker at the mills in Saltaire, and Hannah was from Pateley Bridge. Daisy (as she was familiarly known) had three older siblings, Frederick Redman, Israel (a.k.a. Jack/John), and Margaret Ellen. Fred was a 'professional musician', aged 20, in 1891, whilst Jack (16) and Margaret (15) were working at the mill.

From 1881 to 1891 the family lived at 11 Herbert Street, Shipley. In 1892 the family moved to Blackpool, living at 38 Vance Road, where William and Hannah ran a boarding house. Both Daisy's parents were great lovers of music, and taught her the piano. Even at that tender age she was no mean performer on that instrument.

She had long had a strong desire to take up some other instrument, and in 1899, at age 14, the cornet suggested itself. John Paley, being a friend of the family, was consulted. John Paley was the son of Joseph Paley, bandmaster of the Saltaire Band, and an accomplished cornet player himself, being principal cornet of the Black Dyke Band from 1883 to 1901. Paley, knowing Daisy's musical abilities, saw no reason why she should not become a fair performer. Under his tuition she made rapid progress and he predicted great things for her.



Daisy Squelch, 1906

Guest soloist and contesting

Her first recorded performance was at the Primrose League Social, held at the Wainwright Conservative Club, Victoria Street, Blackpool, on Wednesday 7 March 1900, where she played cornet solos as part of a programme of entertainment for the evening which included a patriotic scene with the boys from the Stanley Road Sunday School, led by Daisy.

In the 1901 census brother Fred was a 'professor of music' and Jack a clerk at a local printing firm. Daisy's occupation was given as 'musician/solo cornetist'.

Her first known competitive performance was at the Cumberland Music Festival at Workington on Thursday 1 January 1903. In the cornet solo class, playing the set piece *Give Me Back My Heart Again*, Daisy scored 40 points, achieving equal fourth place. The adjudicator, Dr. McNaught, praised Daisy saying she, aged 15, gave a marvellous performance for one so young, and he had to admire her talent. His remarks on her performance were:

"A good, but heavy tone; high notes missed at opening. Took low version of 1st cadenza in the cantabile, and notes of phrase much too long - kept rhythm back. Long cadenza not quite successful as to correctness. Theme: Played with feeling; heavy rather, and not always certain in execution. Still cantabile, but not striking merit. 1st Var.: A creditable rendering; a good pace well maintained. Bolero: Execution good - tone heavy again - wanting in light and shade. The repeated notes satisfactory. At the piu stretto there were one or two slight failures, and the rhythm was a little broken. On the whole a most praiseworthy performance. Marks: Correctness 9, tone and tune 8, technique 8, general effect, 17, total 40."



John Paley



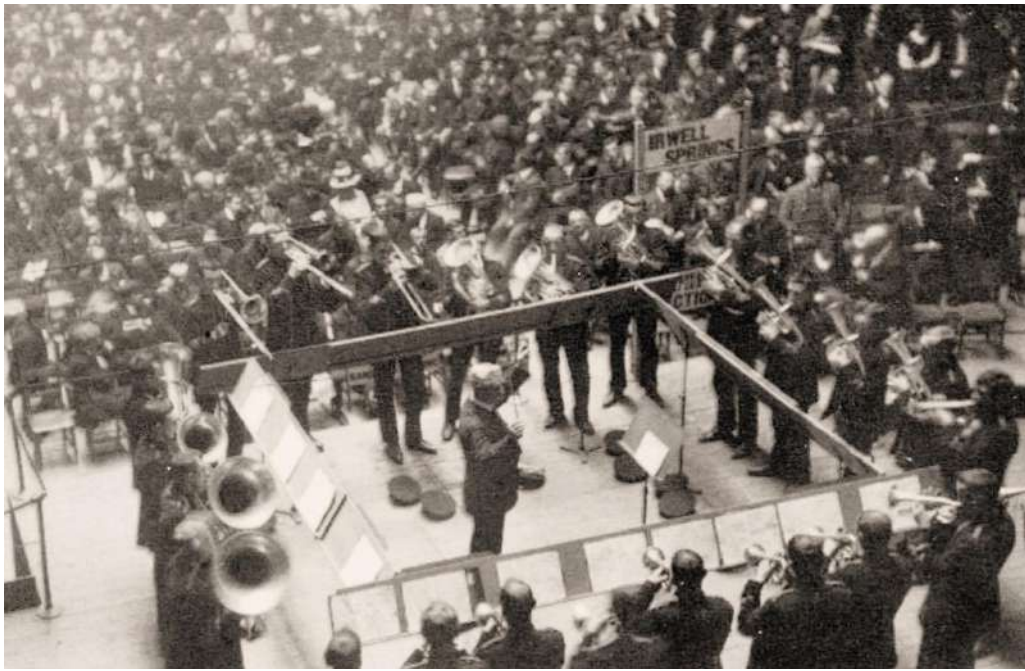
THE SHIPLEY BAND. Conductor, Mr. JOHN PALEY.

Daisy gave two cornet solos, together with other invited performers, at the Shipley Brass Band concert, conducted by John Paley, on Tuesday 17 March 1903, Victoria Hall, Shipley. She played *The Lost Chord*, *The Arbucklenian Polka*, and *Killarney* as an encore. By this time Daisy was being reported as “the finest lady cornetist in the world”. The band were splendidly attired in their new uniforms, an imitation of that of the 16th Dragoon Guards Carabineers – dark cloth, with a profusion of white facings and cordings with a scarlet head-dress of the forage cap order. John Paley wore across the front of his tunic a number of medals which he had won at different times.

On 14 November 1903, Daisy appeared in a variety concert at the Town Hall, Todmorden, as a special engagement, where she first made her challenge to any other lady cornetist to play against her for a prize of £500 (over £40,000 today). She played *Fantasia Concertante* (Weber) and *Fairy of the Waters* (St. Jacome).

In 1905 Daisy played *The Lost Chord*, before the announcement of the results at the National Championships at Crystal Palace (won by Irwell Springs Band), on Saturday 30 September, and had earlier repeated her £500 challenge to any other lady cornetist to play against her. None did. She also performed in the contest’s evening concert, with ‘very effective triple-tongueing’, performing Sullivan’s *The Lost Chord*, once more, [noted in the programme as ‘Sullivan’s great song will always be known as a masterpiece for cornet’], and Jacome’s *Fairy of the Waters* [‘This solo, selected by Miss Squelch, is in direct contrast to the previous solo, and will demonstrate her powers of execution’]. This concert also featured individual performances by Hebburn and Besses o’ th’ Barn bands; David Clegg organist; Max Darewski, the nine-year old boy composer and conductor, leading the massed bands of Besses o’ th’ Barn, Abertillery, Batley Old, Goodshaw, Hebden Bridge, Irwell Bank, Irwell Springs, Lee Mount, Royal Oakeley, Wingates Temperance, Wyke, and Hebburn Colliery; and a new piece by Samuel Cope, *A Sailor’s Life*. It was directed by Henry Iles, and had an audience of some 20,000, with a further 5,000 turned away at the doors.





Irwell Springs Band on the contest platform



IRWELL SPRINGS BAND, Crystal Palace & Belle Vue Winners, 1905

Tuesday 12 December 1905 saw Daisy as a guest soloist with the Wombwell Temperance Band at their concert in the New Schools, Darfield. She performed '*Fairy of the Waters*' (Jacome) and '*Fantasie on Weber's Last Waltz*' (Hock).

She had planned to enter the Workington Musical Festival again, on 1 January 1906, but did not attend, for some reason. She did, however, win a prize at the Scottish Championships in March 1906.

She won first prize at a cornet solo contest, playing '*Carnival of Venice*' (Arban), at Lister Park, Bradford, on 30 June 1906, winning a cornet valued at 9 guineas. She competed against six other cornetists, including Edwin Firth, who was starting to make his own impact on the cornet soloist scene.

On 20 October 1906, she performed as a guest soloist at a concert of the Burnley Temperance Band at the Burnley Mechanics' Institute.

Wingates Temperance Band invited Daisy as a guest soloist for their concert at the Temperance Hall, Bolton, on Wednesday 19 December 1906. She was slightly 'indisposed', and in her duet with Mr W. Pollard, *'Ida and Dot'* (Losey), she was unable to sustain the triplet passages. However, she fully regained her capability with *'The Carnival of Venice'* and *'The Lost Chord'*.



Wingates Band, 1906

Returning to the Workington Music Festival, on 1 January 1907, Daisy took first place in the cornet solo competition, winning a cup and a cheque.

She won her next cornet competition at St Martin's Hall, Liverpool on Saturday 2 February 1907, receiving a cheque and a valuable silver cup, beating a young Arthur Laycock into second place [he did get his revenge at the Workington contest in 1909]. Later that month she took first prize in a soloist competition at Doncaster against twenty-five other, male, competitors, taking home her prize of a silver spirit lamp and kettle.

The Band of the Yorkshire Hussars was the next to feature Daisy as an invited soloist, at their concert at the Montgomery Hall, Sheffield on Thursday 21 February 1907, where she played *'Fee des Eaux'* (Jacome), *'The Trumpeter'* (Hartmann), and an encore *'Sing Me To Sleep'* (Green).

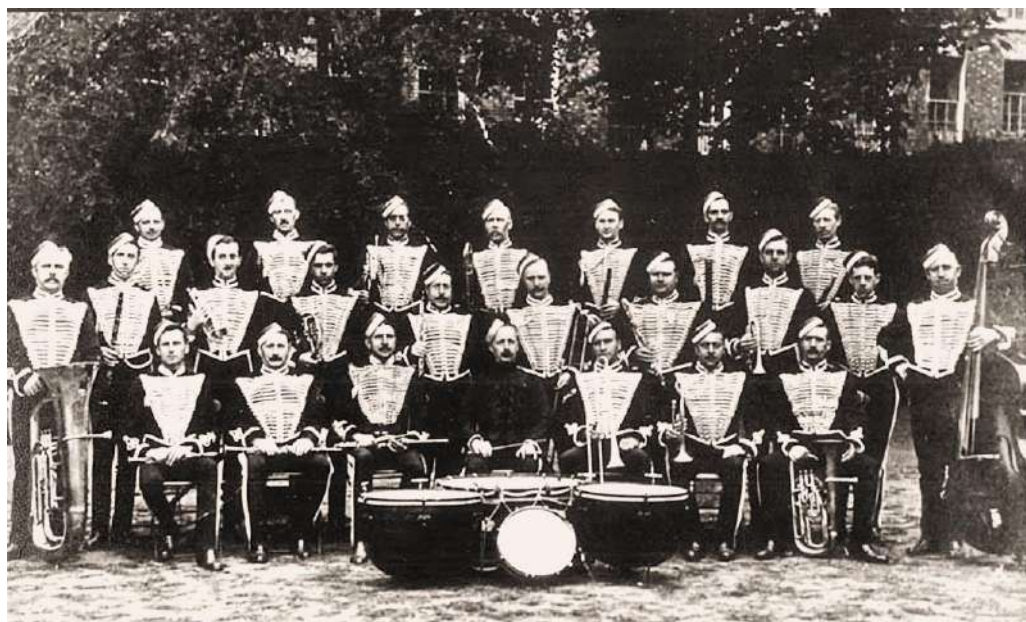
Daisy took part in an instrumental solo contest, organised by the Stanton Hill and Sutton St John Ambulance Band, at Sutton Town Hall, Nottinghamshire, on Saturday 23 March 1907. She won second prize, losing out to E.P. Kerry, a euphonium soloist from Hucknall Torkard.

A different type of band concert featured Daisy as a soloist, on Saturday 7 April 1907. The Mexborough Concertina Prize Band held a Grand Sacred Concert at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Mexborough, having recently won first prize in the concertina band championships at the Crystal Palace. Daisy played *'Carnival of Venice'* (Arban) and *'Fantasie on Weber's Last Waltz'* (Hock).

Saturday 4 May 1907 saw Daisy performing at the Otley Agricultural Show with Colonel Dawson's (Otley) Band, giving her renditions of 'Fee des Eaux' (Jacome), 'O Dry Those Tears', 'Ida and Dot' in duet with John Curtis, and 'I'll Sing Those Songs of Araby'.

The Yorkshire Hussars invited Daisy back for their concert on Saturday 19 October 1907 at the Public Hall, Barnsley, where she played of 'Fee des Eaux' (Jacome), 'Kathleen Mavoureen', and 'Sing Me To Sleep'.

Similarly, the Mexborough Concertina Band repeated their invitation to play at their concert at the Mexborough Theatre, on Sunday 22 December 1907, playing 'Fee des Eaux' (Jacome) and 'Sweet Spirit, Hear My Prayer'. It was noted at this time that she had been associated with the Wingates Temperance Band at one time (more than just her single appearance reported above), and also that it was rumoured that she was planning to go out to America on a tour. She had had several invitations to do so, but she refused them all. Daisy's activities between April and December 1908 are not known.



Band of the Yorkshire Hussars

Returning to Workington, on 1 January 1908, Daisy once more took first place in the cornet solo contest at the Musical Festival, with Edwin Firth taking second.

Northampton Temperance Silver Band engaged Daisy to perform at their dual concerts on Sunday 5 April 1908, at the Corn Exchange Northampton.

1 January 1909 saw Daisy lose her winning position at the Workington contest to Arthur Laycock (78 marks) and Edwin Firth (75) – Daisy coming third (72). The test piece was 'The Farewell' (Wright & Round). This was only the third time that Daisy had been beaten in a solo contest since her competitive debut in 1903.



Edwin Firth

An article in the *Blackpool Gazette & Herald*, 27 April 1909, gave some further insight into Daisy's past:

“Following a long list of successes and the capture of many handsome trophies, Miss Daisy Squelch, a talented local young lady, only just out of her teens, who has won a great reputation as a cornetiste, is shortly to make her appearance on the music halls. And this is only another illustration of the fact that the music hall is capturing for its patrons much of the best in the musical and histrionic world, and the gain of the music hall is the loss of the theatre and the concert platform. She comes of a musical family - the members have often made up a bijou band for the entertainment of their friends - and in a chat with Miss Squelch and her mother, who is justly proud of her daughter's achievements. Miss Squelch is quite an idealist in the matter of cornet playing. Properly handled, she strongly urges the cornet as a pleasing instrument for ladies, and she intends, as far as she can, to popularise it, and also to popularise the right kind of music. Miss Daisy Squelch commenced her studies with the instrument at quite an early age, and has now had seven years' experience. From the start she was an enthusiast, and assiduous study brought its reward. In March, 1905, she made her first appearance on the competitive platform, when she entered for the Scottish Championship at Glasgow. A somewhat ambitious effort! It is rather curious to note that when she sent in her entry form it was returned Later, the committee must have heard more of her, for letters came begging her to re-enter. After some persuasion she consented, and her appearance was the surprise and sensation of the competition, more so when she carried off the second prize - a fine silver cake stand - against 34 male aspirants. Another funny incident is told in connection with this competition. Miss Squelch and her mother had to leave Glasgow soon after she had played in order that the young lady might fulfil a concert engagement in Darlington. Hearing of her success, her relatives in Blackpool wired her, and the telegram reached the hotel after she had left. The landlady opened it and read "Allison first, Daisy second", and was much perturbed to think that her lady guests had been indulging in transactions on the "turf" until the matter was satisfactorily explained. The Glasgow success was the first of many triumphs, and the silver trophies Miss Squelch has succeeded in winning make a splendid array. At Bradford, in the following June, she successfully competed for a handsome nine-guinea cornet, all the other entrants being men. In 1907, she was again fortunate enough to win the three principal competitions of the year. Her first success was at the Cumberland Eisteddfod, on January 1st, where she won a cup and cheque; at Liverpool, on February 2nd, she also won a valuable silver cup and cheque. At the latter contest, it should be mentioned, the organising committee reserve the right to choose their own players from the entrants, and of the twenty selected Miss Squelch came out on top. Later, at the Doncaster open competition, where all other entrants were men from all the crack bands in the country, she came out first, winning a silver spirit lamp and kettle. Amongst other successes, she has also won the contest in connection with the Workington Musical Festival for two years in succession. During these years Miss Squelch has had an extensive concert platform experience, and has appeared in all the large towns of England and Scotland, and has refused several offers to go to America. Surely such a record as this must be a phenomenon in the musical world. Miss Squelch has accepted her successes with the most charming complaisancy, and it was with difficulty that one overcame her natural modesty and diffidence to talk about her conquests. Everyone who knows her will most cordially



Daisy Squelch, 1909

wish her every success in her new venture. It is only fitting that Blackpool, which has done so much for many budding variety artistes, should do its share in giving the music-hall world a performer of the very first order, which Miss Squelch's career already promises.”

Around this time another report gave a further insight about her:

“In her own mind, it has always been Miss Squelch's ambition to play the cornet a perfectly as it is possible to be played, and all her endeavours have been towards attaining that end. She does not desire her playing to be criticised from the fact of her being a female performer, but for the playing of the instrument itself, irrespective of the sex of the performer.”

Treading the music hall boards

On 24 May 1909, Daisy made her music hall debut at the Manchester Hippodrome as part of the variety bill, and set off afterwards to tour the Moss and Stoll halls. A report in the *Music Hall and Theatre Review*, of 27 May 1909, stated:

“Daisy Squelch, barely out of her teens, has made a promising debut at the Manchester Hippodrome as a cornetist. She comes of a musical family at Blackpool, and has been carefully trained in that art, having won many prizes. Miss Squelch was promptly retained for the Moss Empires tour.”

Daisy next appears as a guest soloist with the Huddersfield Permanent Orchestra at their opening concert of the 1909/1910 season at Huddersfield Town Hall on Sunday 3 October 1909:

“... this young cornet player, who so far surprised the audience with her playing that when she had finished, they broke out into long continued applause. The piece she played was ‘*Nordische*’ (Th. Hoch), and soon after she started it was evident that she was an accomplished player. She produced a deep tone and executed the runs with a facility which could only come of long practice and she was equally at home in the sustained parts. The most brilliant part of the work, however, was in the last movement, a presto, in which there were some double tonguing and triplets, as well as chromatic passages and trills, all of which were executed with marvellous clearness and skill. Miss Squelch received an enthusiastic recall from parts of the hall, members of the band included, and the gifted cornetist came back and acknowledged the compliment.”

Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 4 October 1909

Her next recorded performance was when she appeared the Middlesbrough Town Hall, on 30 November 1910.

She returned to Middlesbrough to take part in the sixth annual concert promoted by the Middlesbrough Branch of the Operative Bricklayers’ Society, at Middlesbrough Town Hall, on Tuesday 21 November 1911, during which she received repeated plaudits and was twice recalled for encores.

The Workington Musical Festival, on 1 January 1912, once again saw Daisy compete, but she had to be content with third place, with 56 marks, losing to Arthur Laycock (68) and R. Sutton (64), playing the polka



Daisy Squelch, c. 1911

'*Titania*' (W. Rimmer). The remarks on her performance included:

"... the andante was fine, the polka seemed laboured, but the breathing was good."

Middlesborough drew Daisy to its Town Hall once more, for the seventh Bricklayers' Charity Concert, on 15 October 1912.

The Big Brass Ten

Later that month, Daisy embarked on a new venture. She joined with nine male brass performers, six of whom were expert trombonists. The troupe called themselves the '*Big Brass Ten*', and they made their first appearance at the Alhambra Theatre, Glasgow, on Monday 28 October 1912. The act was described as a 'gargantuan feast of melody' which included everything from operatic to ragtime music, set in three elaborate scenes. They then took the act on tour, heading the bill at the Birmingham Hippodrome on 4 November; the Victoria Palace Theatre, London, from 25 November, where it was noted:

"The whole of the company wear effective uniforms, and the act is finely staged, a cathedral set and an Italian scene being much admired. All the instrumental work is performed in first-class style, and the selections rendered vary from grand opera to ragtime. All the items are good, but calling for special mention are the excerpts from the *1812 Overture* for five trombones, with orchestral accompaniment; the intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which is started by one euphonium player and continued by another; and an effective solo rendering of *The Lost Chord*, with organ accompaniment and an inspiring full brass finale. Various original ideas are introduced in the course of the show, and the ragtime finish sets the seal upon an attractive and very successful act. The turn is presented under the direction of Mr. Joe Morrison."

The company then moved on to the Newcastle Hippodrome, from 2 December 1912; the Dublin Theatre Royal Hippodrome, from 9 December 1912:

"Miss Squelch in her solos showed that she was an artiste of rare skill, and her conception of the composers' ideas indicated her ability as a faithful interpreter."

Next stop was the Royal Hippodrome, Great Victoria Street, Belfast, opening on 16 December 1912.

Daisy Squelch and her Big Brass Six

A reduced troupe, the '*Big Brass Six*', spent a week in Blackpool, Daisy's hometown, from 10 January 1913, before departing on tour to South Africa on 18 January. The members of the ensemble were Daisy herself, her fiancé Joseph Morrison, D. McAllister, F. Page, A. Wadsworth, and H. Nixon. Among the various venues they performed at was the Empire Theatre, Johannesburg, in March 1913, and the Hall-by-the-Sea, Durban, on 29 March 1913. An interview with Daisy also appeared in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*:

"The bracing air of Saltaire in Yorkshire was responsible for the marvellous lung power which enables Miss Daisy Squelch to compete successfully on wind instruments with masculine musicians, and in competitions to "win out" in what is usually considered a speciality of manly strength. But it is not only lung power that has brought this clever lady to the star poster line of the halls, but also her love of music, and in a brief chat which we had she informed me that she could play the piano when only four years old, and she can also perform on the trumpets and the trombone, and is a cultured vocalist. Miss Daisy began practising on the cornet when she was thirteen years old, and was brought under the notice of John Paley, the finest cornet player in the world, who

realized the wonderful power of this little maid, and at once interested himself in her career. Daisy wasn't at all keen in those days for a public career, having simply taken to cornet playing as a hobby, but soon the desire to excel inspired her to enter competitions, and in nearly all of them she came out first winner. On one occasion, at Bradford, all the other competitors were men, but she won the first award, and was so small that she was lifted over the barrier to receive it. A big compliment to her powers was given to her in 1905 at the Crystal Palace competition, when brass hands were competing for the 1,000 guinea challenge trophy, and the most noted bands of the world, including the Bess o' th' Barn Band, competed. After the affair had taken place the massed bands gave a concert, and Miss Daisy Squelch was engaged to play the cornet solos. One can picture the little maid, with her hair of sunny gold, standing in front of the serried ranks of the finest wind instrumentalists of the world, producing those wonderful tones which have placed her in the foremost ranks of musicians. It must have been a triumph to woman's power! Messrs. Boosey and Co., of London, presented her with the instrument she is using now – another tribute to her powers. "What happens to you if you catch a cold?" I queried. Miss Daisy laughed merrily, "I start practising the cornet," she replied, "and keep on playing until it goes away." A new method of curing influenza! On the occasion when Miss Daisy Squelch was competing at Glasgow, she had to leave to fulfil an engagement at Darlington before the awards were announced, and she gave her landlord's address as the place to which the telegram should be sent of her success or failure. The landlord opened the wire and read, "Daisy won first prize", and he took this up to Miss Squelch and asked if it had anything to do with her: had she had a dog running called Daisy at a Glasgow show? He was very much surprised to find it was the little lady herself who had been securing trophies. When I asked her if she felt exhausted after playing, she looked surprised. "Oh dear, no; it is quite easy to use and I never feel tired," she replied, and then she told me that she had a repertoire of eighty solos!"

The *Big Brass Six* arrived at Southampton from Natal, South Africa, on the ship *Balmoral Castle*, on 3 May 1913.

Shortly after their return in 1913, Daisy Squelch married Joseph Turner Morrison, at St Pancras, London. The *Big Brass Six* started off their British tours once more, at the Lewisham Hippodrome, from 19 May 1913, adding the scene "Cloches de Corneville" to their repertoire. A brief hiatus in June allowed the happy couple to take a short honeymoon.

Now billed as "*Daisy Squelch and her Big Brass Six*", the ensemble's works included Daisy's rendition of 'The Lost Chord' played on a keyed post horn, with organ and brass accompaniment, the Intermezzo to 'Cavalleria Rusticana', and 'The Rosary' by the full ensemble. The organ (if there was one in the venue) was played by Al Leon. They played at the Coliseum, Portsmouth, in August 1913; the Palace Theatre, Burnley, and the Palace Theatre, Blackburn, in September; at the Empire Theatre, Middlesbrough (the town where three of the male sextet members came from, including Joe Morrison), and the Hippodrome, Bedminster, in October; the Corporation Theatre, Chesterfield, and the Empire Theatre, Sunderland, in November. For this latter engagement, Daisy had (re)acquired an additional four musicians and was billed as the '*Big Brass Ten*'. December 1913 saw the troupe perform at the Brighton Hippodrome and the Northampton Palace Theatre.

The Birmingham Hippodrome featured Daisy on their variety bill in early January 1914, with her '*Big Brass Six*' (occasionally also referred to as the *Big Brass Seven*). For this new year their 'scenes' included an interior of a cathedral, a view of a battleship, and the interior of an Oriental palace, with the players all being appropriately garbed. Daisy was particularly praised in Birmingham for her performances of the cornet parts in the

'*Tannhauser*' overture, '*The Carnival of Venice*', '*The Lost Chord*' and '*The Rosary*', and the ensemble's rendition of '*Musical Memories*'. The troupe then moved on to the Sheffield Hippodrome and the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hippodrome later in the month, and at the Alhambra Theatre, Glasgow from 26 January 1914.



A promotional postcard, c. 1914

The *Big Brass Six* appeared at the Royal Hippodrome, Liverpool, the New Palace Theatre, Manchester, and the Loughborough Hippodrome, in February 1914. The Foresters' Music Hall, London, in March; the Rochdale Hippodrome, in April; the Stockport Empire Theatre, in May; the Empire Theatre, Camberwell, in July.

Daisy Squelch and the Patriot Band

In August 1914, Daisy renamed her ensemble as the '*Patriot Band*' and included '*Britannia's Realm*' as a new scene in their performance. This was first seen at their engagement at the Palace Theatre, Blackpool, at the end of the August and into September. This was followed by the Hulme Hippodrome and the Preston Hippodrome later in September, finishing that month off at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, followed by the Empire Theatre, Ashton-under-Lyne. October's engagements included the Accrington Hippodrome, the Pavilion Theatre, Newcastle, the Paisley Hippodrome, and the Hamilton Hippodrome. After a break in the first two weeks of November 1914, Daisy and her ensemble appeared at the Royal Hippodrome, Eastbourne, and the Nottingham Hippodrome. December 1914 saw the troupe at the King's Theatre, Longsight, Manchester, and the Chesterfield Hippodrome, finishing the year off at the Tivoli Theatre, New Brighton. During their stay in Chesterfield, Daisy and her group, together with others from the theatre, entertained the soldiers of the Lancashire Fusiliers, who were billeted in the Chesterfield Skating Rink, on Christmas Day. She also provided a 'musical montage' for injured troops, in Chesterfield, home from the Western Front.

Daisy and her '*Patriotic Band*' continued into 1915 at the Leigh Hippodrome, Lancashire, the Gaiety Theatre, Birmingham, and the Empire Theatre, Smethwick. February was at the

New Theatre, Maesteg, and the Grand Theatre, Aberavon. March 1915, at the Theatre Royal, Pontypool, the W.H. Theatre, Abercynon, the Town Hall, Brynaman, and the Palace Theatre, Llanelly. April saw the troupe at the W.H. Theatre, Mountain Ash, the Grand Theatre, Pentre, the New Hall, Bargoed, and the Dudley Hippodrome, continuing for a second week into May 1915. This was followed by the Lancaster Hippodrome, the Lyric Theatre, Glasgow, the Lyceum Theatre, Govan, and the King's Theatre, Greenock.

They moved to the Empress Playhouse, Glasgow in early June 1915, followed by the King's Theatre, Dundee, the Coliseum Theatre, Burslem. The Pavilion Theatre, Leicester, at the beginning of July, then on to the Coliseum Theatre, Kettering. August saw them at the Theatre Royal, Kings Lynn.

The Dream Girl

The next role for Daisy and her ensemble was as musical support for the new production of *The Dream Girl*, a touring musical comedy revue, which started at the Palace Theatre, Ramsgate, from 11 October 1915. The production was managed by Joe Morrison, Daisy's husband, and was described as a 'reverie in seven dreams'. The show moved to the Empire Theatre, Penge in November, then the Opera House, Wakefield, where mention was made of Joe Morrison's previous connection to the Belle Vue Prize Band of that town. The Grand Theatre, Oldham, completed the November bookings, with the Rochdale Hippodrome easing them into December 1915, which led to the Theatre Royal, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Kelly's Theatre, Liverpool, the Grand Theatre, Bolton, ending the year at the Altrincham Hippodrome.

Working with Angus Holden

1916 opened with the *Dream Girl* at the Tivoli Theatre, Manchester, followed by the Keighley Hippodrome, the Empire Theatre, Longton, the Coliseum Theatre, Kettering. During this period, Angus Holden, himself a cornet soloist and professional tutor and conductor to many brass bands, including Hebburn Colliery Band in their winning performance at the 1904 National Championships, took on the role of the 'musical conductor' in *Dream Girl*. In February they played at the Grand Theatre, Mansfield, the Empire Theatre, Middlesbrough, the Chesterfield Hippodrome, and the Palace Theatre, Wellingborough. In March they appeared at the Picturedome, Ilkeston, and the Pavilion Theatre, Leicester.



Angus Holden, c. 1905

"The Dream Girl" delighted everybody. One does not expect - or care too many buttons for - striking originality of plot in a review. One expects new situations, dances, and songs with a due admixture of humour and sentiment. All these good things, with new costumes, lively music, a score or so of really charming "dream girls", is provided at the Pavilion this week. There are seven scenes in the revue (which is described as a "reverie in seven dreams") among which "Where the Roses Bloom" and the "Palace of Ishma" are outstanding for their charm. A much applauded feature is Daisy Squelch's brass band, which plays some popular selections in dashing style.

Leicester Evening Mail, 21 March 1916

Down towards the south coast in April 1916, at the Coliseum Theatre, Portsmouth, the Palace Theatre, Bath, the Empire Theatre, Swindon, and the Royal Palace Theatre, Ramsgate.

“Miss Daisy Squelch, whose cornet solos form one of the great attractions of the performance, plays with greater mastery of her instrument than ever, and, especially in the novel and effective church scene, rouses the house to enthusiasm. Miss Margery Moore, the fantastic dancer, performs with even greater diablerie and charm. The other features of the revue are all excellent. Miss Blodwen Butcher, as the heroine, is refined and manages a well-trained voice with excellent effect; the hero sings well, the humour is safe in the bands of Mr. Will B. Willby as "Flinders" and even more in those of Miss Lillie Soutter, an irresistible comedienne, who in each of her songs brings down the house. The scenes are many and varied and all pretty. The scene in the Indian temple makes an agreeable blend of beauty and humour; the costumes are throughout bewildering in their variety and number and combine to make the revue one of the most elaborate and pleasing productions on tour”.

Thanet Advertiser, 29 April 1916

JOE MORRISON
wishes to announce that he has specially engaged Miss

LILLIE SOUTTER
to play Principal Comedienne in the Magnificent
Spectacular Musical Comedy Revue, **THE**

DREAM GIRL
in seven elaborate scenes. Cast includes Miss

DAISY SQUELCH
And Her BIG BRASS SIX.

BLODWEN BUTCHER FRANK WIGNALL
EDWIN SYKES ALFRED LEON TOLDONO

WILL B. WILLBY
MARGERY MOORE THE LADYBIRDS
LARA RISSON WINIFRED WYNTER
DOLLY CAREW and

LILLIE SOUTTER
THE FINEST CHORUS IN
REVUE. 35 ARTISTES.

For further particulars of this Gigantic Attraction, apply
JOE MORRISON, c/o Pavilion, Leicester.

April 3—COLISEUM, PORTSMOUTH.

The *Dream Girl* opened at the Theatre Royal, Kings Lynn, at the start of May 1916, followed by the Osborne Theatre, Manchester, the Palace Theatre, Blackburn, the Coliseum, Southport, the Coliseum, Burslem, and the Empire Theatre, Barnsley. June started with them at the Royal Theatre, Worcester, the Opera House, Dudley, the Empire Theatre, Swindon, and Gillsmith's Hippodrome, Cheltenham. On Sunday 11 June, prior to them starting their show dates in Swindon, some of the company, including Daisy and her Big Brass Six, gave a special concert at the Empire Theatre, in aid of the Volunteer Training Corps. Other performers included the Swindon Volunteer Corps Band and the Empire Theatre Orchestra.

Daisy and her ensemble, together with a large number of other music hall artists, took part in another fund-raising concert at the Town Hall, Islington, on Friday 7 July 1916, in aid of the Islington Battalion Fund. After this the show returned on tour to the King's Theatre, Longsight, Manchester and the Empire Theatre, Burnley, taking them into August 1916.

"Never has a revue more versatile in its scope, more picturesque and gorgeous in stage settings, and richer in artistry than this production been staged in Burnley. *"The dream girl"* is aptly described as an exquisite reverie in seven dreams. It follows largely the lines of legitimate musical comedy, and embraces all those elements that make for popularity with the modern audience. The "book" by Norman H. Lee, is extremely smart and original, the story lending itself admirably to the revue, and great scope is given to comedy in its most pleasing portrayal. A young man named Allan Gordon is engaged to Wendy Russell, a Revue girl, but Allan is the victim of foolish Fancies, having come under the spell of an Indian wizard. His dreams of a previous life on earth in which, as the son of an Indian ruler, he loved a beautiful maiden, Annita, become a vivid reality so real, in fact, that a vision of Annita occurs to him on the cathedral altar, and Wendy is a disappointed bride. Allan, however, is not to be lost and a "process" of humouring him ensues with happy results. Lord Gowty, a wealthy aristocrat, Allan's uncle, finances a yacht cruise to the East. Wendy duly appears in native costume as Annita in the Palace of Ishma. The disillusionment of Allan follows. Mr. Joe Morrison has brought a splendid company, and the efforts of the artistes on Monday evening sent the audience into rapturous enthusiasm. All the principals possess undoubted talent and in their respective roles were equally successful. Miss Blodwen Butcher, plays "Wendy", a revue girl, with charming grace and caprice, and was ever a favourite, possessing a sweet soprano voice she renders several numbers, and Mr. Cyril Thomson, as "Allan" shared with her the greater part of the vocal honours. Mr. Thompson used his fine baritone voice to rich effect in *"Garden of your heart"* and *"In all my dreams"*, and was especially popular in the duets with "Wendy". Miss Margery Moore who appears as Annita, "the dream girl", is an accomplished terpsichorean artiste, and her displays of toe dancing, and other graceful forms of rhythmic movement, were thoroughly artistic and won for her an excellent reception. The bulk of the work in the fun department devolves upon Mr. Will B. Willby, who proves himself a comedian of the first water! As "Flinders", Allan Gordon's valet, he is allowed full scope and his clever witticisms and originally humorous style are most entertaining and refreshing. Not the least enjoyable feature of the revue are the specialities by Miss Daisy Squelch and her Big Brass Quartette, gifted instrumentalists, whose contributions greatly enhance the musical value of the revue. Miss Illain Squelch play cornet solos with variations in brilliant style, and earned vociferous recalls. Very impressive was her rendition of *"The lost chord"* in the cathedral scene, which was a triumph of stage-craft. She appeared as Britannia in a final patriotic scene representing England and the Allies. The other principals who sustain their parts admirably are Mr. Edwin Sykes, as Lord Gowty, Miss Zara Risson, as Mary Melody; Messrs. Will Simpson and Harry Watson. The staging of the revue is on a most elaborate scale, and the fare is of superb quality all round, affording a really fine entertainment."

Burnley News, 2 August 1916

Next stop was the New Pavilion Theatre, Liverpool, and the Hulme Hippodrome. September 1916, the show was at the Birkenhead Hippodrome, and the Salford Hippodrome. The Pavilion Theatre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was their first October engagement, followed by the Empire Theatre, Middlesbrough, the Queen's Park Hippodrome, Manchester, and the Tivoli Theatre, New Brighton. November 1916 had the troupe at the Preston Hippodrome, during which stay the company entertained the inmates and staff at the Fulwood Military Hospital, sadly Daisy herself had been indisposed all week, having to keep to her bed in the daytime. This month ended with the revue delighting audiences at the Public Hall, Runcorn. December 1916, opened with the show at the New Empire Theatre, Burnley, then the Empire, Wakefield, and ending the year at the Grand Theatre, Mansfield.

1917 started with the production moving south again to the Portsmouth Coliseum in January, followed by The Grand and Hippodrome, Leigh, Lancashire. The Wrexham Hippodrome started their February engagements, with the Royal Court Theatre, Warrington starting in March, followed by the Rotunda Theatre, Liverpool, the Wigan Hippodrome, and the Nuneaton Hippodrome.

“... But Daisy Squelch and her Big Brass Six are a more important feature, and they wander in quite inconsequentially on the rather precocious "Cathedral" scene and on the Eastern scenes without any pretention as to having a share in the story. But that does not minimize in any way the skill of their playing on their brass instruments, and Daisy Squelch, herself, is a fine performer on the cornet.”

Runcorn Examiner, 10 March 1917

In April 1917, the troupe visited the Pavilion Theatre, Leicester, the Coventry Hippodrome, the New Hippodrome, Hyde, and the Royal Hippodrome, Rochdale.

“The company, an excellent one in every respect, has been organised by Mr. Joe Morrison, and while the singing is much above the average and the dancing particularly pleasing, the humour is rather of the quiet than the boisterous type, with the result that it is all the more enjoyable and welcome. The leading role, so far as the ladies are concerned, is filled by Miss Daisy Squelch, a pretty and sprightly comedienne, who is always in evidence and who is, indeed, one of the mainstays of the revue.”

Coventry Evening Telegraph, 17 April 1917

Further engagements that year included the Tivoli Theatre, Hull, in May; the Chesterfield Hippodrome in June; the Theatre Royal, Guildford, and the Empire Theatre, Swindon, in July; the Palace Theatre, Bath, and the Gloucester Hippodrome, in August; the Town Hall, Pontypridd, and the Grand Theatre, Aberavon, in September; the Temperance Hall, Merthyr, in October; the Tivoli Theatre, New Brighton, and the Queen's Theatre, Leeds, and the Theatre Royal, Aston, in December.

Dream Girl's run continued into 1918, commencing at the New Empire Theatre, Burnley, the Grand Theatre, Mansfield, and the Mexborough Hippodrome, in January; the Tivoli Theatre, Hull, in February; the Olympia Theatre, Glasgow, the Alhambra Theatre, Leith, and the Empire Theatre, Barnsley, in April; the Palace Theatre, Barrow-in-Furness, in May; the Gloucester Hippodrome, and the Theatre Royal, Merthyr, in June; the Palace Theatre, Bath, and the Cannock Hippodrome, in July; the Accrington Hippodrome, in August.

There is now a gap in the record, with no appearance of Daisy Squelch or the *Dream Girl*, until spring 1919. We can assume that they had been working on the 'second edition' or 'new version' of the revue, which now consisted of six scenes.

**WANTED—JULY 21 and 28 ; AUGUST 25 ;
SEPTEMBER 8 and 22 ; and OCTOBER 6.**

THE DREAM GIRL.

First-class Company of 40 Artists.

Readily conceded by all Managers who have seen the
NEW EDITION, to be THE Premier Revue Touring.

Cast includes HAROLD BAKER (Comedian),
CYRIL THOMPSON (Baritone),
CARMINA CLIFF (the New Zealand Soprano),
MASIE TERRISS (the "Jazzy-Om-Pom Girl"),
and
DAISY SQUELCH and her BIG BRASS SIX
(Vaudeville's Greatest Musical Combination).

Powerful Chorus and Augmented Orchestra.

WARNING. — The "JAZZY-OM-POM-POM"
is my own composition and is fully protected.
Five pounds (£5) reward will be paid for
information leading to judgment being given
against any infringement.

Wire for JULY 21 and 28.

Wire, JOE MORRISON, T.R., Leamington ; next, Empire, Rotherham.

The 'new version' Dream Girl, 1919

The tour was picked up again at the Town Hall, Pontypridd, in April; the Empire Theatre, Barnsley, the Pavilion Theatre, Leicester, in May; the Royal Court Theatre, St Helens, the Theatre Royal, Scarborough, and the Palace Theatre, Barrow-in-Furness, in June; the Grand Theatre, Mansfield, the Empire Theatre, Rotherham, and the Theatre Royal, Leamington Spa, in July; the Palace Theatre, Bath, and the Tynemouth Palace, in August; the Tivoli Theatre, Hull, in September; the Royal Theatre, Wolverhampton, and the Bordesley Palace Theatre, in October; the Empire Theatre, Barnsley, and the Nuneaton Hippodrome, in November; and the Theatre Royal, Blyth, in December.

Dream Girl rolled on into 1920, starting with the Gloucester Hippodrome, in January; and the Metropole Theatre, Manchester, in March.

Daisy Squelch and the Romany Maid

In March 1920, Daisy left the *Dream Girl* revue company and developed her own show. Joe Morrison continued touring with *Dream Girl*, using "The Brass Six, featuring Joe Morrison" as the instrumental musical element, without Daisy. It is not known if this split was a personal one as well as a professional one.

Meanwhile Daisy worked on her own new musical comedy revue, "*The Romany Maid*", based on a script by H. Kenneth Barton. This would include, of course, Daisy herself, with her 'famous brass band', and 'magnificent scenery, gorgeous dresses, and a full chorus of ladies and gentlemen'. Daisy, at this time, was living at 16 St John's Street, Longsight, Manchester. One advertisement, seeking personnel for her show, read:

"Wanted, for The Romany Maids Revue. First class leading lady, young and pretty, must be dramatic, full of go and actions, also fine soprano voice, with good range. Apply with photos, age, height, and references, to Miss Daisy Squelch."

The Stage, 7 April 1921

Daisy's initial cast included her 'Blue Dragoon Band' of eight performers, Harry Beasley (comedian), Michael Lenow, H. Clinton Carew, Lewis Gray, Dillion and De Alroy (specialty dancers), and Miss Mamie Worth.

The Romany Maid opened at the Bury Hippodrome in May 1921, followed by the Royal Osborne Theatre, Manchester. The Empire Theatre, West Bromwich, and the Empire Theatre, Peterborough, in June; the Theatre Royal, Stockport, the Queen's Park Hippodrome, Manchester, and the Hulme Hippodrome, in July; the Royalty Theatre, Barrow, the Theatre Royal, Castleford, in August; the Queen's Theatre, Leeds, and the Tivoli Theatre, Hull, in September;

"On the whole, "The Romany Maid", which is staged at the Queen's Theatre this week, is an entertaining little production of the revue type. It is adorned with elaborate scenery, pretty dresses, and plenty of bright and tuneful music. One of the best bits the show has to offer is a delightful rendering by Miss Daisy Squelch's brass band "The Blue Dragoons", of a number of popular of melodies. Mamie Worth wins much applause, her acting and vocalism alike being imbued with remarkable feeling and talent. Bob Beatty, the principal comedian, gets as much fun as it is possible out of his part. A very fine interpretation of a gypsy chief is given by Ernest Tilbury."

Leeds Mercury, 6 September 1921

Daisy's show next went to the Victoria Theatre, Stourbridge, the Rotherham Hippodrome, the Empire Theatre, Dewsbury, in October 1921; the Palace Theatre, Radcliffe, the Mexborough Hippodrome, in November.

"It is a real merry show, offering a rich treat to lovers of music, vocal and instrumental, supplemented by a wealth of rattling comedy. Miss Squelch displays all her well-known brilliance on the cornet and the French horn, and is supported by a company of finished artistes, in the Blue Dragoons Band. *Nights of Gladness*, and *Omaha*, were two popular items."

South Yorkshire Times, 12 November 1921

They finished off the year at the Grand Theatre, Doncaster, in December 1921. They started the New Year of 1922 at the Theatre Royal, South Shields, and the Palace Theatre, Aberdeen, in January; the Grand Theatre, Lancaster, the Huddersfield Hippodrome, and the Grand Theatre, Halifax, in February; the Pavilion Theatre, Leicester, the King's

Theatre, Manchester, the New Empire Theatre, Burnley, and the Royal Hippodrome, Salford, in March.

"As the name suggests, *The Romany Maid*" is written around a band of gypsies, but more especially does it deal with a delightful musical combination in Miss Daisy Squelch's Blue Dragoons. A large audience on Monday expressed the heartiest approval – not only of the work of the principals in the revue, but also of the instrumentalists, whose chief item, *Tales of Hoffmann*, stamped them as artistes of exceptional merit. They gave several selections during the course of the evening, and in all they produce an excellent tone as well as maintain a pleasing balance of strength. Miss Squelch's inclusion of a brass Sextette in a revue is a novel feature which adds to the drawing power of the production."

Burnley News, 15 March 1922

PALACE
BATH.
6.50 **8.50**
TWICE NIGHTLY.

NEXT WEEK:

Miss Daisy Squelch Presents her
New Comedy Revue:

THE ROMANY MAID

Josiah Goldsworth LEWIS GREY
Harry, his Son HAL MACK
Diddle, Valet to Harry BOB BEATTY
James, a Footman JOHN WELSH
Israeli, Gipsy Chief JOHN BEECHING
Zarrag, a Bandit TOM JONES
Maggie, a Scotch Lassie ... MAGGIE McKENZIE
Lucy, Myra's Friend WINNIE WYNNE
Myra, the Chief's Daughter ... MAMIE WORTH
Guests, Bandits, etc.

SPECIALITIES BY MISS DAISY SQUELCH'S
FAMOUS BAND,

THE BLUE DRAGOONS.

PALACE BIOSCOPE.

April 1922 saw the show open at the Palace Theatre, Bath, followed by the Empire Theatre, Swindon. The Palace Theatre, Lincoln, in May; the Royal Theatre, Kings Lynn, and the Norwich Hippodrome, in the first two weeks of June. Other planned bookings in 1922 had included York, Grimsby, Doncaster, Shrewsbury, Peterborough, Keighley, Barnsley, and Dudley. However "*The Romany Maid*" tour was cancelled in mid-June 1922, for an unknown reason, with the various artists suddenly seeking new engagements.

At this point, the evidence for Daisy's activities, and life, dries up. We know that Joseph Morrison died in 1944, and that Daisy outlived him, dying in 1965. There is no record of any children from their marriage.