



Split Notes

Volume 1

A collection of posts
from the IBEW Blog

2011-2019

<https://ibewbrass.wordpress.com>

Gavin Holman, September 2022

Introduction

The IBEW Blog was established in 2011 as an ad hoc collection of postings about some of the background, sources and news related to research in the history of brass bands, as collated in the IBEW website.

The IBEW website is the major reference source on the internet for the history of brass bands – as well as material and directories relating to the world of brass bands and brass musicianship today.

IBEW was founded in 1997 and the site now contains links to thousands of internet resources about brass bands. A comprehensive bibliography of brass bands is only one of many other resources freely available via the site.

There is an active Facebook group “The History of Brass Bands” where people can post and discuss any aspects of banding history. See:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/145016798904992/>

Various other documents, articles, and books about the history of brass bands are available for download from my Academia site – *<https://gavinholman.academia.edu/research>*

These blog posts, collected from the IBEW blog, are those that are unique to the blog, and not covered by any of my other documents available separately via the Academia website.

Netheravon bands

March 28, 2011

Had a very pleasant couple of hours discussing the Friendly Societies and associated brass bands of the area around Netheravon in the company of local historian Ann Pearce, who was visiting her sister nearby and kindly agreed to share her research with me.

I obtained pictures and details of two “new” extinct bands – the Figheldean & Netheravon Band and the Rushall & Charlton Band – details of which will eventually appear in the IBEW.

It was clear that, as was the case with the Temperance Societies, the various Friendly Societies not only made great use of the bands of the time in their parades and public works, but also in some cases provided direct patronage of bands.

Sadly, like most research into the past, the remaining material and evidence is patchy at best and rapidly diminishing as records and items are lost through accident or ignorance, and memories fade before being captured.



Figheldean & Netheravon Band – 1912

Crich Brass Band

May 16, 2011

Cliff Raven sent the picture of Crich Brass Band of around 1902, below. He and some others have unearthed some pictures and information about the band, which has been given its own page on the Crich parish website – see: www.crichparish.co.uk/webpages/crichbrass.html

Cliff's grandfather, George Hawksley, was one of the founders of the band in 1884 before he moved to Nottinghamshire and joined the Silverhill Coliery Band at Skegby.

Another fascinating photo which leads to two more bands being identified and added to the IBEW archive – though nothing more is known about the Silverhill band at present.



A Bolton Band mystery

May 16, 2011

I was sent a copy of a picture of Bolton Borough Prize Band from 1933 by Alison Ogden. Sadly the picture was very torn, but even as a part image it was a valuable record of the band and I added it to the IBEW. Some time later I received a complete picture of the band, and replaced the version in the archive online. I have since discovered that the original, torn, version contained an extra band member, actually Alison's grandfather, James Ogden, who had been "added" to an original copy of the picture. How, or why this happened is lost in the mists of time, but it is intriguing nonetheless.





Grundisburgh Brass Band

May 24, 2011

The earliest known press report is the Suffolk Standard of August 1892, when the band played at a local show. In June 1893 they played at an open-air concert in the grounds of Grundisburgh Hall, and it was reported that *“The programme was interspersed with items by the Grundisburgh Brass band, which shows considerable improvement since last year”* Evidently the reporter wasn't a fan!

Later that year, at a formal sit-down tea, it was reported that the band had 23 members, and the conductor, G. Walter Blackmore, (the village schoolmaster), and the bandmaster, Richard H Gladwell, were both presented with inscribed marble clocks, so the band must have been going longer than so far confirmed.

In September 1892 it played at a Sale of Work at Grundisburgh House, in July 1894 and also in 1896 is entertained visitors to the Wherstead and Belstead Cottagers' Show. July 1898 saw the band in action at the Clopton Flower Show and also the Winesham Cottagers' Show. In February 1900 it gave a concert for the *“Absent-minded Beggar Fund”*, raising £6 – this fund had been set up by the Daily Mail, using the popular poem by Rudyard Kipling as a focus for charitable fundraising during the Boer War. The band was still active after WW1.



Grundisburgh Brass Band



Grundisburgh Brass Band



Grundisburgh Brass Band

Illinois Band?

May 24, 2011

Jack Jones' great grandfather was a member of the band below. He has very little information about him other than he was born about 1874 in Indiana, lived in Illinois and died in 1913. There are no clues in the picture and, sadly, this is often the case with old pictures, nothing written on the face or back. Nevertheless it is a splendid picture. Two members, in the centre, appear to have chevrons on their sleeves – one is probably the bandmaster/band sergeant.



Unknown band from Illinois?

Varteg Silver Band

May 24, 2011

Jon Horlor's grandfather and various other members of his family were in the Varteg Silver Band. Varteg was a small mining village near Pontypool, Monmouthshire, Wales. The band was formed in July 1914, competed at Crystal Palace in the 1930s, were "C" class champions in the South Wales & Monmouthshire contest in 1944, and were still active in 1948. Other than the picture below, with named band members, which Jon has kindly provided, little else is known about the band.

There was a Varteg District Memorial Hall Band which competed at Belle Vue in May, 1940, conducted by J.H Tipton – whether this is the same band or not has yet to be determined. There was a Mr Tipton in the Varteg Silver Band in the late 1920s. He was an official at Lower Varteg Colliery, and also a committee member of Varteg Silver Band.

When Haydn Jones, as a lad, was walking around the village with some of his friends, Mr Tipton asked the lads if they were working, only to be told that they had tried for a job in the colliery but nothing was available. Mr Tipton assured them if any of them wanted a job in the pit, they just had to turn up at the Band Hall on band night, join the band and a job in the pit would be theirs. Haydn joined the band and he, in return, got a job. The job lasted up until his death in 1956 and he was a proud member of Varteg Silver Band for many years. (reported by his son, Grayham Jones)



Chorlton cum Hardy Band

June 13, 2011

Andrew Simpson has been researching the history of Chorlton cum Hardy, near Manchester, and uncovered some great detail about the brass band that existed in the village. There had been a brass band of sorts in Chorlton since 1820, the last one only ceasing to exist at the end of the last war.

Chorlton cum Hardy was a small rural community just 4½ miles south of Manchester. In 1851 there were just 761 people many working on the land. It was a place of farms and market gardens, providing food for the growing city.

The first band was formed in the 1820s by a young group of farmers and agricultural labourers many of whom were Methodists. It consisted of *“brass instruments, clarinets, and piccolos and it was made up of about 24 members, including William Chessyhre, William Moores, William Gresty, and George Lunt with John Axon as drummer.”* 1 All five men also played in the Methodist choir and it is possible that other choir members also played in the band. These included James Brundrett who played the flute, Thomas Williamson and Thomas Taylor who played clarinet. William Gresty and George Lunt played bassoon.

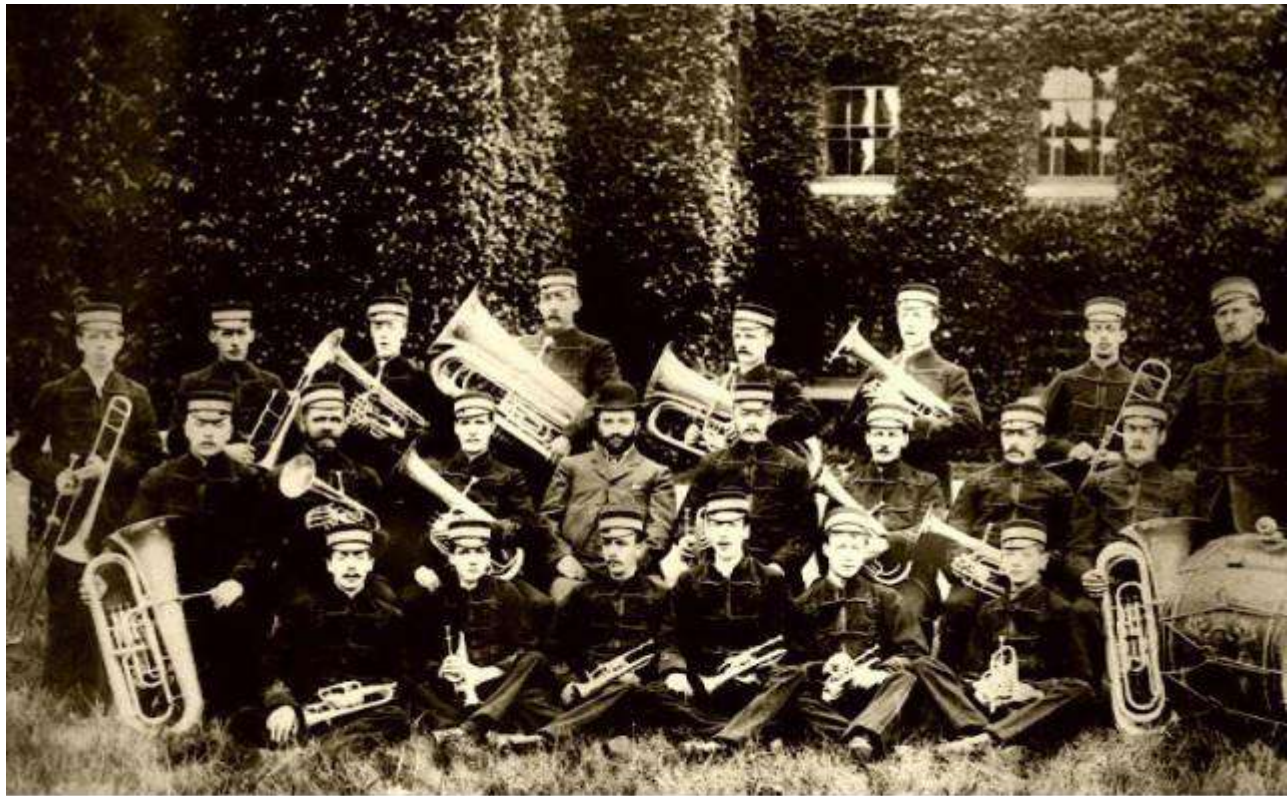
There is a delightful story that the drum was made by James Axon the brother of the drummer but was found to be too large to get out of the cottage. Little more is known of the band and it survived for only a few years.

A second band was formed in 1850 as a drum and fife band and this in various forms survived into the middle of the twentieth century.

It was a subscription band and in 1851 three of its leading members raised £28 towards purchasing instruments. Like the earlier band its members were engaged in agriculture. Sadly only three of the founding band members are known. These were Daniel Thomas, Thomas Chessyhre and Thomas Hill, of these Daniel Thomas was a gardener and Thomas Chessyhre a market gardener, who had been a Methodist but went on to be the respected Parish Clerk.

During its first year the band relied on a pensioner for instruction but in 1851 it turned to a Mr Kellsall who was the band master of the Stretford band who remained their instructor until a local policeman took over.

Over the years the band survived, finally reaching an end around 1945. For more details of the band (at least as far as is known at present) see www.ibew.co.uk/misc85.htm.



Chorlton cum Hardy Brass Band - Barlow Hall 1893

Stamford Brook Silver Band

September 7, 2011

The Stamford Brook Silver Band was active in the 1930s, based at St Mary's Church, Hammersmith. This photograph was taken at a concert for the Holy Trinity Church Music Festival on Saturday 4th June (probably 1932), at the Crabb Memorial Hall. This hall may have been in London, but the only reference found so far is to one in Tunbridge Wells. The interesting fact about this photo, other than its evidence of the band's existence, is the obvious later addition of the "scoutmaster" on the far right. Who was he? Why was he added later? Why is he in army or scouting uniform?

I suspect we will never know, but this picture has parallels with that of the Bolton Borough Prize Band (below), which also had a person added to the photo.



Cornet prize won by Joseph Hyde in 1861

July 27, 2013

Nickie Preston has a silver cornet in her family, owned by Joseph Hyde, her great, great grandfather. This was won at a contest at Peterborough in 1861 for the “best soprano or solo cornet player” in the competing bands. A newspaper report of the contest is given below

Hyde was born in January 1847 at Hayfield, Derbyshire, and died between 1901 & 1911. He lived in Doncaster in 1861, and would have been 14 when the prize was won. He was a “surgeon dentist” in the census of 1871. Before he became a dentist, he possibly worked on the railway like his brothers and father. His address is next to the railway station in 1871.

The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury, Friday September 6, 1861

Brass Band Contest – The third annual band contest at Peterboro’ came off on Monday last, in a field adjoining the Great Northern Railway Hotel, the entrance to which was In St. Leonard street. This ground was not by any means so well adapted for holding a fete of this sort as Touthill field, where the contest was held the Last two years, as it is touch smaller, and has not anything attractive about it, being surrounded on all sides by houses. Notwithstanding this we believe there were quite as many people present as on the former years. The prizes offered were: first prize, £15; second, £8; third, £4; fourth, £2; and fifth, £1. In addition to these prizes a silver medal was presented to the conductor or leader of each of the winning bands ; and an electro silver plated cornet, value 15 guineas, to the best soprano or solo cornet player. For these prizes the following bands competed : Farnley Ironworks, 20th West Riding Yorkshire Volunteer (Doncaster), South Yorkshire Railway, Mexboro’, Nene-side Ironworks, Thrapstone, Whittlesea, Raunds, Kettering, and 6th Cambridgshire Volunteer Rifle Corps. The first five of these bands took the prizes in the order they are placed above. The only band which did not attend as announced was the Baildon. The prize cornet for the best soprano or solo cornet playing was awarded to Master J. Hyde, the leader of the Doncaster Volunteer Band. This caused a little dispute, Mr. Large (the leader and conductor of the Ely band) being without doubt the best player, but Mr. Large belongs to the Cambridge University Band, and was not the person announced as the conductor of the Ely band, and therefore the judges decided that Hyde was entitled to the prize. The decision of course gave great satisfaction to the members of the band to which the boy belonged, and he was carried triumphantly round the ground and loudly cheered immediately the decision was announced.



Frank Wright

July 2, 2016



Frank Wright dinner menu

I was sent an interesting dinner menu by Geoffrey Hosier celebrating the 78th birthday of John Henry Iles, and in honour of Frank Wright on his departure to Australia and New Zealand. The dinner was held at Manchester on 17th September 1949, on the occasion of the Daily Herald National Brass Band Championships at Bell Vue.

Frank was a friend of Geoffrey Hosier, teaching him music, cornet/trumpet, conducting, arranging etc. When Frank died in 1970 had no next-of kin so all his possessions were left to Geoffrey and his brother. Later, much of the material was donated much to the University of Ballarat, Australia, including unpublished works, boxes of programs photos etc.

Frank Wright, born in Smeaton, Victoria in 1901, was tutored by Percy Code and became a composer, music educator, conductor, publisher and cornet player. He was the conductor of the City of Ballarat Brass Band and Soldiers' Memorial Brass Band, and Australian Cornet Solo Champion. As a cornet soloist he went to England in 1933, where he became a member of the famous St Hilda Brass Band.





Ballarat City Band

A hymn by Frank Wright

He became one of the foremost figures in the sphere of brass banding, turning his hand to almost every aspect of band management with great skill, and also serving as professor at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. As a celebrated adjudicator, he travelled worldwide. Today he is best remembered for the many transcriptions of 19th and 20th century overtures he made in later life.

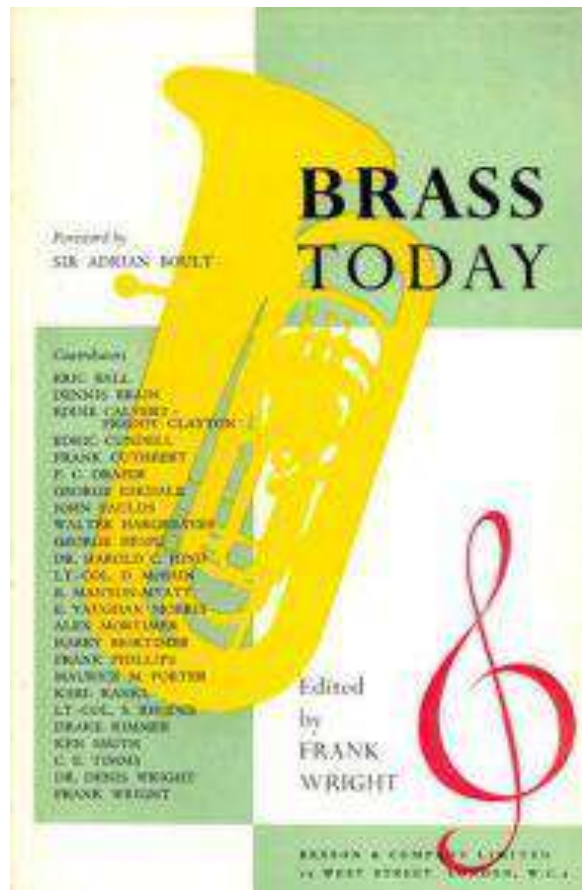
To access the Frank Wright archive in the Victorian Collections, go to: victoriancollections.net.au and search for "Frank Wright"



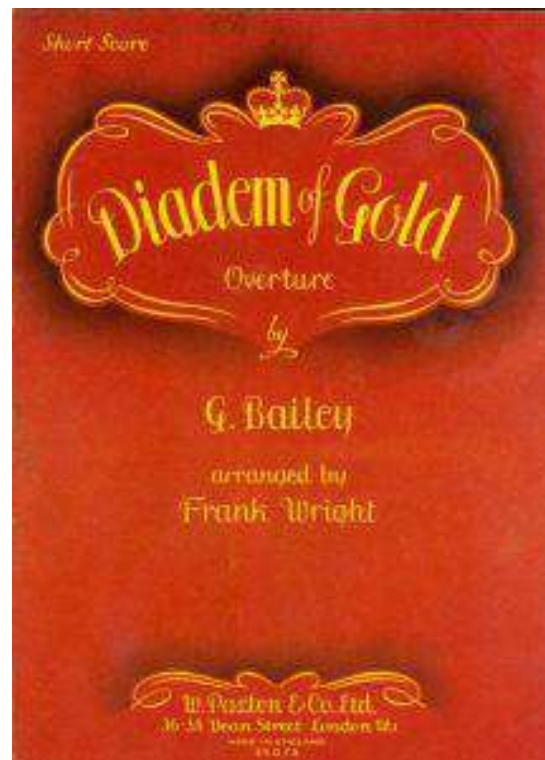
St. Hilda's Band at Cardiff, Wales – Frank Wright conductor



St Joseph's Orphanage Brass Band 1924



Book edited by Frank Wright



Diadem of Gold, arranged by Frank Wright

The first American band contest?

February 2, 2019

A brass band contest was held at Indianapolis in February 1853.

Was this the first such contest in the USA? Do you know of any earlier competitions?

“A musical State Convention was held at Indianapolis, on Tuesday of last week [22nd February 1853]. Nearly a score of brass bands turned out, besides a large concourse of spectators. An address was given by Lieut. Gov. Willard, and a grand concert of the United Bands was given in the evening. The performers numbered one hundred and thirty persons. The competition for a prize banner, after a very exciting struggle, between the Bloomington and New Albany Bands, finally terminated in the success of the latter.”

A contest between three bands (although there were three others on the ground) was held at the Highland County Fair, Hillsboro, Ohio in October 1858. Rainsboro Brass Band took first place, Hillsboro second and Lynchburg third.

7 October 1858 – “A novel feature of the Hillsborough County Fair, held at Milford, N.H., on Thursday, was a contest for premiums by seven brass bands. The committee was made up, with one exception, of editors, who made the following awards: 1st premium, \$30 to Manchester Cornet Band; 2nd, \$25 to Nashua Band; the Hudson Brass Band, Brookline Brass Band, Peterborough Cornet Band, were awarded equal premiums of \$5. The Goffstown Brass Band the last prize of \$5. The bands played one after the other from the stand, and their performances were highly relished by a large crowd.”

The Greenfield Fair, Highland County, Ohio was held on 20-22 October 1858. Two brass band contests took place – 1. bands over 1 year old: 1st (\$30) Tarleton Brass Band, unplaced Hillsboro Band and Rainsboro Band. 2. bands under 1 year old: 1st (\$30) Greenfield Band, unplaced Lexington Band, Centerfield Band, Chillicothe German Band.

A State Band Convention was held at Mansfield, Ohio on 26 May 1859 – 75 bands were anticipated. In the event the number of bands was much less – only 13, although some 12,000 people attended. The music did not seem to be of a soothing, peaceful character, according to a report: “Several disgraceful fights occurred, and the jail being insufficient to accommodate drunken and disorderly persons arrested, a barn was brought into requisition for that purpose. In endeavouring to arrest one of the rowdies, the officers were ‘pitched into’ by his comrades, and in the melée the person sought to be arrested was killed.” At 5 p.m. the bands were still playing and the musical contest undecided. Eventually the first class prize went to Yager’s Band of Sandusky, and the second class to the Monroeville Brass Band. The event was widely reported as the “Great Musical Bore” and most people were disappointed if not angry at being misled.

A brass band contest was held at Chillicothe, Ohio on Thursday 4th August 1859. Seventeen bands competed (although only 13 were named in the newspaper report).

A second contest was held at Chillicothe the following year, with Hillsboro Cornet Band taking first prize out of 19 bands.

Here is the newspaper report of that event – from the *Meigs County Telegraph, Pomeroy, Ohio, 9 August 1859*

“Harvest Festival” at Chillicothe

It had been very generally announced, by posters, and “small bills”, all along the Marietta and Cincinnati R. R., for a week or two previous, that such a festival was to be holden on the 4th inst.; but as Pomeroy has the misfortune to be located in the “rural districts,” it was not known, and consequently not attended by many that would otherwise have gone.

It was our good fortune, however, to be in the locality of the Railroad the day previous, and “run a-foul” of a barn-door ornamented with one of these posters. The consequence was, we were taken with an inclination to go, and go we did.



A later incarnation of the Goshen Band – one of the competitors

By the way, as many of our citizens go to Athens to take the cars, we would state for their benefit and convenience, that, seven miles north of Albany, there is a station called “Marshville,” which is a much more eligible point, especially for the western portion of Meigs, inasmuch as it is nearer, and the cars do not arrive till 1½ P.M., and then wait 20 minutes for dinner. The trains pass each other here. On arriving at Chillicothe at 5 P.M. on Wednesday, we found nearly all the rooms in the spacious “Valley House” already occupied, and guests constantly arriving. The prospects were truly encouraging.

The morning, however, was lowery, and it was feared the affair would “fizzle,” but vehicles of all possible kinds, loaded to their utmost capacity, soon began to arrive, and by twelve o’clock the city was literally swarming.

The *feast* was to commence at two, in a beautiful grove a short distance from the city. At the time appointed the crowd was pretty generally there, but it was discovered that not a basket of

provisions had been brought to the ground. It was soon ascertained, however, that the feast was of a different nature. The epicures soon arrived, and immediately commenced serving up the “sweetest of all sweets,” in brass instruments! It was to be a “feast of music,” and seventeen bands were there to serve it up. There were four prizes offered, and the following bands competed:

Lebrand’s National Band of Tarlton, Ohio; Martinsville Band; Brennon’s Band of Marietta; Beverly Band; Montgomery Band; Goshen Band; Waverley Band; Rainsboro’ Band; Lynchburg Band; New Market Band; Level Band; Lexington Band; and Centrefield Band. Each band executed two pieces of music.

The committee was equally divided between Lebrand’s Band of Tarlton, and the Beverly Band of Beverly, Washington county, Ohio, for the award of the first prize, of one hundred dollars. They finally decided the matter by giving the award to Lebrand’s Band, they judging that the pieces performed by that band were more difficult of execution than those performed by the Beverly Band. The second prize of fifty dollars was awarded to the Beverly Band; the third prize of thirty dollars to Brennan’s Band of Marietta, and the fourth prize of twenty dollars to the Rainsboro’ Band.

Menter’s celebrated Cornet Band of Cincinnati, was present, but as it is universally acknowledged to be superior to others in Ohio, did not complete for the prizes. It gave a concert in the evening.

Wooster, Ohio, Band Convention – 1st June 1860. First Class: 1st – Akron Band; 2nd (shared) – Millersburg Democratic Band & Millersburg Republican Band; 3rd (shared) – Massilon Band & Waltz Brothers Band; 4th – Mt Eaton Band. Second Class: 1st – Ragersville Band; 2nd – Maysville Band; 3rd – Fitchville Band. Third Class: 1st – Richfield Band; 2nd – Wellington Band; 3rd – Mansfield Band. Judges Henry Kleber, T.P. Baumgardner, N. Young.

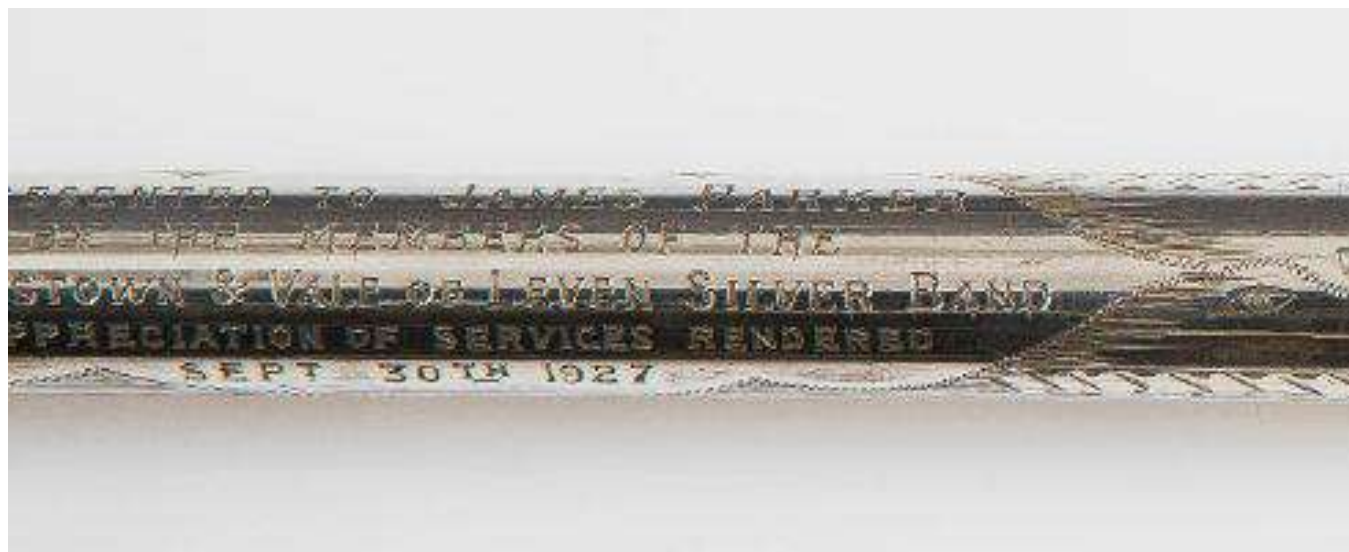
Highland County Agricultural Society – Eleventh Annual Fair, Hillsborough, Ohio, September 18-21 1860. Class Z: Best Brass Band – 1. Hillsborough Cornet Band, 2. Newmarket Band

Another contest was held in September 1861. A report announcing it stated:

“Band Tournament – *For the purpose of encouraging the Amateur Brass Bands, of this State and that Musicians from different sections may be brought together and become acquainted with each other, and interchange views of the popular branch of music, it is proposed to hold a Musical Festival of Brass Bands, at the county Fair Grounds, in the city of Marshall, on the 12th day of September next [1861], to which all the Amateur Brass Bands of the State of Michigan are respectfully invited. As a further inducement the citizens of Marshall through their committee, will offer the following premiums to be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3d best Bands, in attendance on that occasion. 1st premium: 1 silver E flat cornet and purse of \$40; 2nd premium: purse of \$60; 3d: purse of \$40. Three judges, skilled in music, will be appointed by the Mayor of the city of Marshall, in no manner connected with any band in this State, and we trust free from any prejudice for or against any Band. Each Band will be called upon to perform three pieces of harmony of their own selection. ‘The Marshall Cornet Band will not compete for premiums’*”

Conductors' batons of the past

April 8, 2019



Do you know of any interesting or historic batons? Particularly those associated with brass bands? Ebony and other hardwood batons, often adorned with silver embellishments, were just the thing for conductors – particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Given as tokens of appreciation, or bought as status symbols, few still exist, and even fewer have an inscription or detailed provenance, although those with silver can usually be dated through their hallmarks.

I have been corresponding with Joanna Gul at the University of Wroclaw, who has been working on establishing a database and website for the collections of conductors' batons in Polish museums. The "Baton in Polish Collections" is now available (see: <http://batons.instruments.edu.pl/en/>) and this provides a fascinating insight into the conductors of a range of ensembles, from orchestras to brass bands (mainly from Europe) through their batons. These are often presentation batons, inscribed as gifts from the relevant band, orchestra or sponsor, and are made from a variety of materials, ranging from the plain to the ornate in style. The two batons shown here, from the Polish collections, are those of James Parker (*Jamestown & Vale of Leven Silver Band, 1927*), and John Pemberton (*Catford Diamond Jubilee Band, 1901*)



Joanna hopes that a project to collect similar records for the historic brass instruments in Polish museums will take place sometime in the future.

Ever curious, I found an inscribed baton for sale on Ebay, presented to J.E. Reynolds of the *Sheffield Comrades of the Great War Band*, at the Blackpool Contest on October 30th 1920. A little research shows this to have been a military band contest promoted by the Blackpool Comrades of the Great War. Bands that competed (presumably all under the COTGW banner – there were quite a number of these formed after WW1 by returning veterans of the conflict – most were military in format/instrumentation, but there were a few

all-brass bands) included Manchester, Staveley, Carlisle, Derby, Pontypool, Nottingham, Wallsend (3rd place), Sheffield (1st place), York (2nd place) and Middlesbrough – adjudicator was Colonel J. Mackenzie Rogan – the test piece was a selection from Verdi's Aida and the march "Colonel Ward" by Cheeseman.

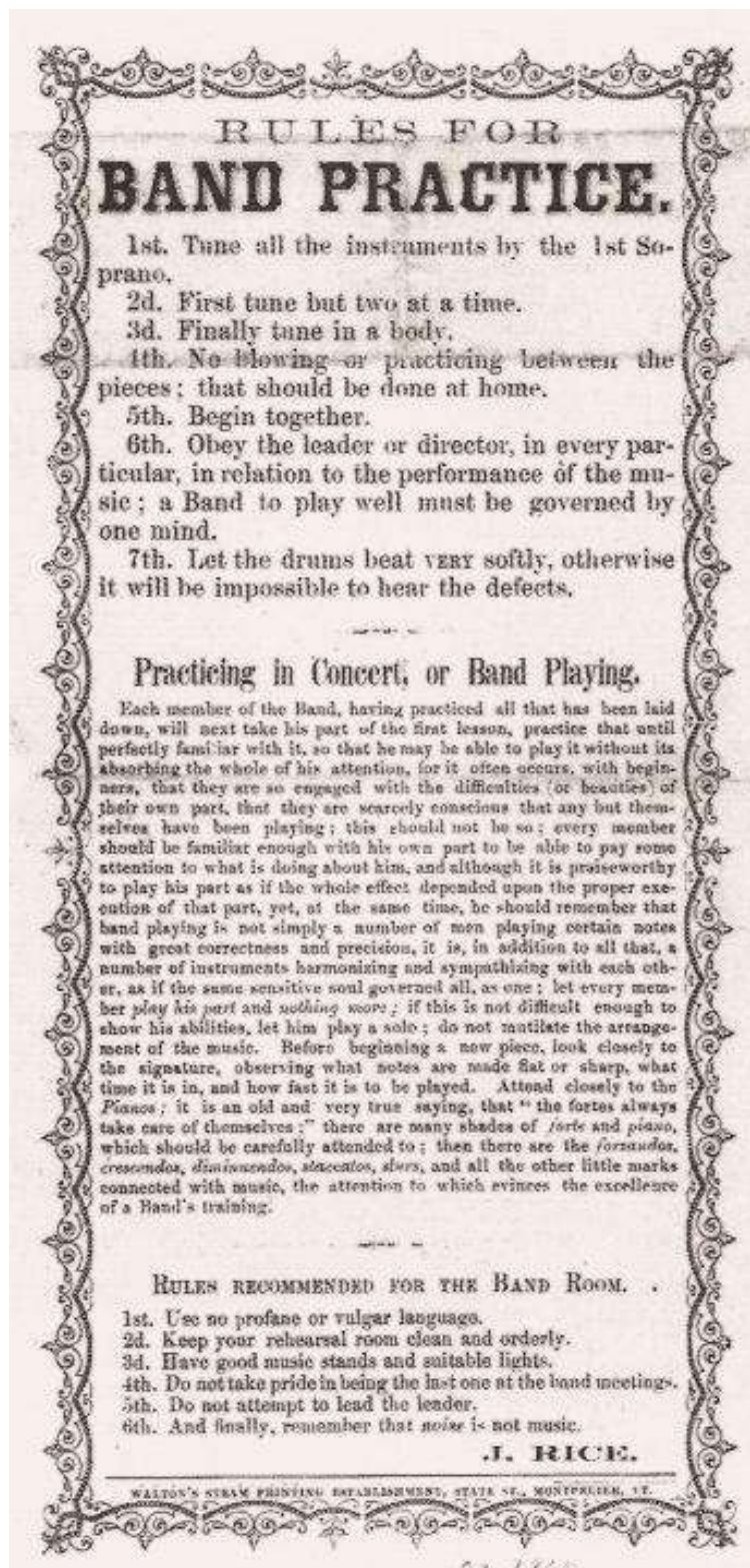


More brass band rules – from the USA in 1853

June 19, 2019

Rules for Band Practice – Allen Dodworth's Brass Band School 1853

Written by James Rice – "Teacher of Brass Bands"



- 1st – Tune all instruments by the 1st Soprano.
- 2nd – First tune but two at a time.
- 3rd – Finally tune in a body.
- 4th – No blowing or practicing between the pieces; that should be done at home.
- 5th – Begin together.
- 6th – Obey the leader or director, in every particular, in relation to the performance of the music; a Band to play well must be governed by one mind.
- 7th – Let the drums beat VERY softly, otherwise it will be impossible to hear the defects.

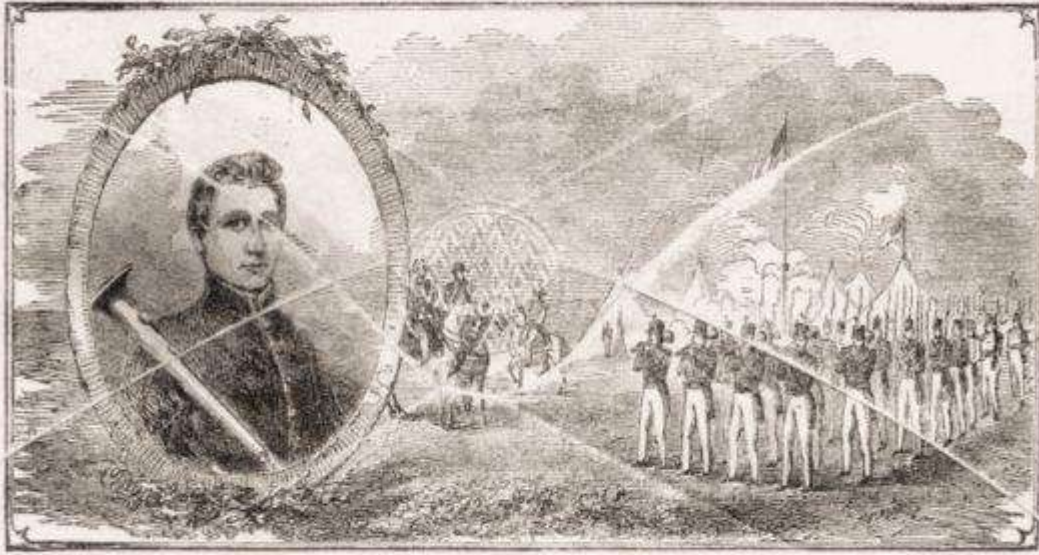
Practicing in Concert, or Band Playing

Each member of the Band, having practiced all that has been laid down, will next take his part of the first lesson, practice that until perfectly familiar with it, so that he may be able to play it without its absorbing the whole of his attention, for it often occurs, with beginners, that they are so engaged with the difficulties (or beauties) of their own part, that they are scarcely conscious that any but themselves have been playing this; this should not be so; every member should be familiar enough with his own part to be able to pay some attention to what is doing without him, and although it is praiseworthy to play his part as if the whole effect depended upon the proper execution of that part, yet, at the same time, he should remember that band playing is not simply a number of men playing certain notes with great correctness and precision, it is, in addition to all that, a number of instruments harmonizing and sympathizing with each other, as if the same sensitive soul governed all, as one; let every member *play his part* and *nothing more*; if this is not difficult enough to show his abilities, let him play a solo; do not mutilate the arrangement of the music. Before beginning a new piece, look closely to the signature, observing what notes are made flat or sharp, what time it is in, and how fast it is to be played. Attend closely to the *pianos*; it is an old and very true saying, that “the fortes always take care of themselves”; there are many shades of *forte* and *piano*, which should be carefully attended to; then there are the *forzandos*, *crescendos*, *diminuendos*, *staccatos*, *slurs*, and all the other little marks connected with the music, the attention to which evinces the excellence of a Band’s training.

Rules Recommended for the Band Room

- 1st – Use no profane or vulgar language.
- 2nd – Keep your rehearsal room clean and orderly.
- 3rd – Have good music stands and suitable lights.
- 4th – Do not take pride in being the last one at the band meetings.
- 5th – Do not attempt to lead the leader.
- 6th – And finally, remember that noise is not music.

JAMES RICE,



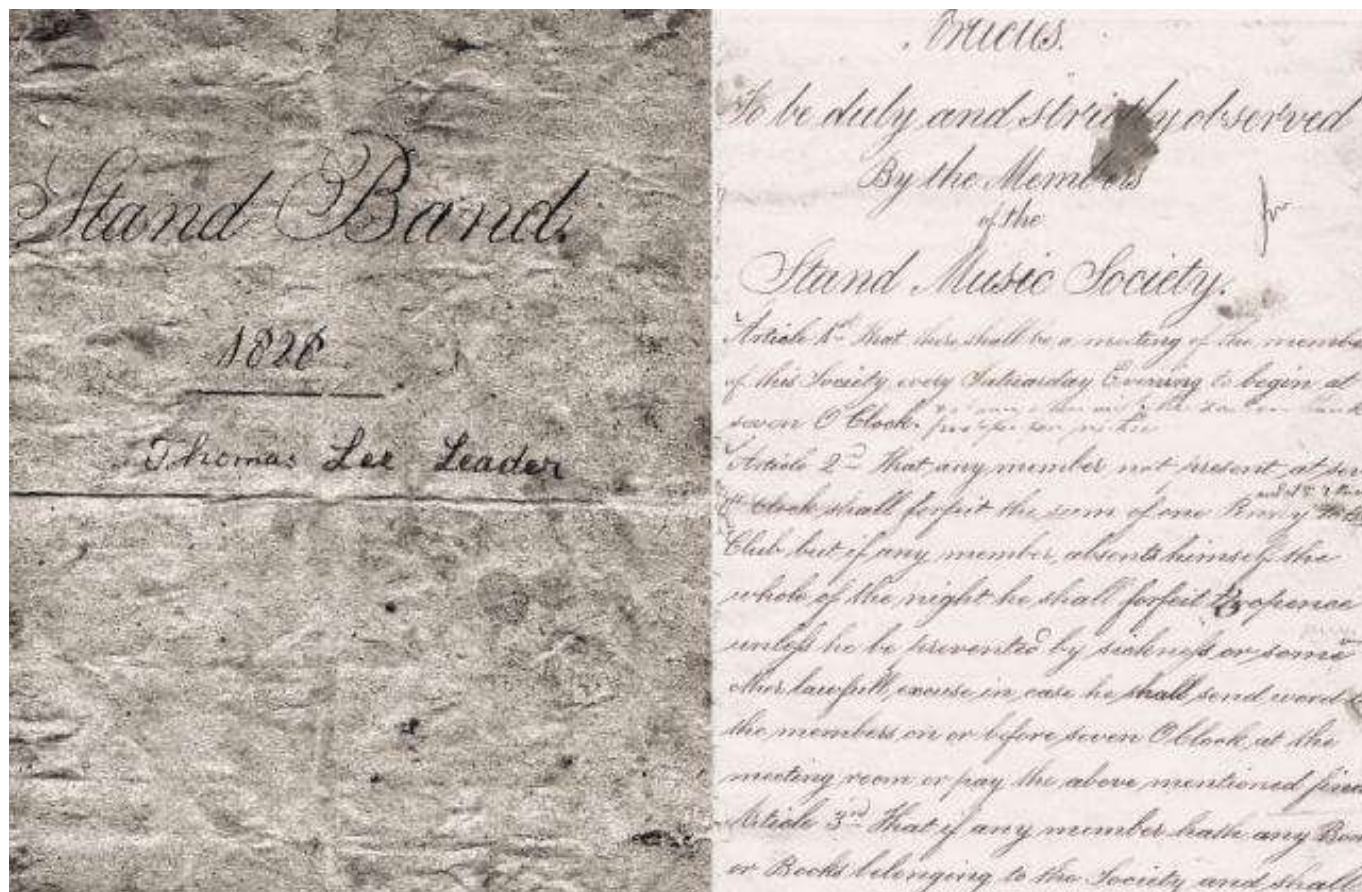
TEACHER OF BRASS BANDS.

More rules – Stand Band (Lancashire) 1828

June 21, 2019

The band was formed in 1828, with Thomas Lee as its leader. It established a set of 16 Articles (rules) that members should abide by, with various monetary forfeits if they did not. Some additional rules were added after the original members signed the document.

A scanned version of the document is available here: www.ibew.org.uk/misc-Stand-18280101.pdf



Rules

To be duly and strictly observed by the Members of the Stand Music Society

Article 1st – that there shall be a meeting of the members of this Society every Saturday evening to begin at seven o'clock, and at any other time the Leader thinks proper for practice.

Article 2nd – that any member not present at seven o'clock shall forfeit the sum of one penny, and at 8, 2 pence, to the club, but if any member absents himself the whole of the night he shall forfeit threepence unless he be prevented by sickness or some other lawful excuse in case he shall send word to the members on or before seven o'clock, at the meeting room, or before seven o'clock at the meeting room, or pay the above mentioned fines.

Article 3rd – that if any member hath any Book or Books belonging to the Society and shall neglect to bring or send them before seven o'clock to the meeting room he shall for every Book forfeit the sum of one penny.

Article 4th – that every member shall contribute one penny each week for the support of this Society in Books, Candles, etc.

Article 5th – that if any member suffers his contributor money and fines to run in arrears four nights he shall pay one penny extra, and one penny extra for every night after till the eight night, and if all arrears are not then paid off, such member shall be excluded all share of benefit of this Society, unless he can give some satisfactory reason to the Committee.

Article 6th – that there shall be five in number chose from out of this Society to act as a Committee, the first 5 shall serve 6 months and then 2 of them shall retire and 2 fresh one elected in their stead, and so on every 6 months.

Article 7th – that there shall be a Treasurer appointed to keep the Money Books etc., in his possession and he shall keep a regular and plain account of every member's fines and of the whole of the income and expenditure of this Society. Any of the members may inspect his Books to see if the accounts are kept regular and plain.

Article 8th – no books to be bought without the consent of the Committee.

Article 9th – any member using any abusive language to any of this members saying anything that may injure or depreciate his character using any immoral or indecent language, taking God's name in vain, offering to lay wagers or promoting gaming of any kind whatever in Club room, during Club hours, shall for every such offence forfeit the sum of one penny to the Society.

Article 10th – no member to take any Books from the Club room without acquainting the Treasurer first, in order that he may know where it is should he absent himself the following meeting night, any member taking books without leave shall pay one penny of a forfeit to the Club for every Book.

Article 11th – if at any time more than one half of this Society has an opportunity of hiring themselves to thereof, and if cannot all agree those that goes shall pay to those members who stays away as much as shall make their share equal to one fourth of those that goes.

Article 12th – that there shall be a President chosen whose business it shall be to call to order and if any member raised a dispute, sounds any other of the members instruments or his own betwixt times in any way so as to disturb the peace and order of the meeting and refuse to keep silence, after he has been a second time requested by the President, for every such offence he shall forfeit the sum of one penny to the Club.

Article 13th – any person wishing to become a member of this Society may attend any of the meeting nights and signify his intention to the Society, the Leader, or some other member shall then read over the rules and then if the members are willing to accept him he may, on paying if it be before the 9th of January 1s 3d, but if it be after that time 2s 6d for his entrance become entitled to a share of the books etc., the same as the rest.

Article 14th – should any dispute arise at any time respecting any of the above mentioned fines it shall be put to the Committee and decision shall be final.

Article 15th – that this Society shall not be broken up as long as there is 5 members willing to carry it on, any member withdrawing himself from this Society shall forfeit all claim to the Books or other effects belonging thereunto.

Article 16th – any member refusing to comply with any of the above mentioned articles after having signed his hand thereto, shall forfeit all claims whatever upon this Society. Anyone that's out of this room 15 minutes during Club hours must forfeit one penny.

We whose names as hereunder mentioned do fully agree to the above mentioned articles. So witness our hand this day.

James Farrar; John Collier; Hiram Riley; John Lomas; Richard Bourton; Jack Foyle; James Melling; William Thornley; Richard Taylor; James Snape; John Alton; James Head; Peter Alton; Thomas Buckley; Thomas Riley; John Kirkman; Arthur Alton; Samuel Holt; John Sandiford; William Lomas; Robert Hilary; Moses Butterworth; Charles Cranshaw; William Davenport; Thomas Lomas; James Hollander; William Booth; Henry Rothmans; Jonathan Prestwich; John Ramsbottom; Charles Entwistle; John ?; Sam ?; John Priest

Rule 17 – any member of this Society striking any of his the other members he shall be fined 2/6d. Should his pupil attack him he shall be fined 1/- and then left to the Leader.

Rule 18 – any member being absent from the body at large 15 minutes, 3d, or 30 minutes, 6d, without the consent of the leader

Rule 19 – that the band walks out every monthly night and at any other time when the majority think proper.

Rule 20 – that if the Chairman does not attend his fine will be double, and when out, fourfold.

Rule 21 – any one upbraiding another person with over playing him and not playing his own part shall be fined for the first offence 1d, and for the 2nd, 3d.

The Committee which was chosen August 2nd 1828 was John Collier, William Thornley, James Taylor, James Melling, John Lomas.

The Committee which was chosen November 1st 1828 was James Melling, John Lomas, Richard Taylor, Nathan ?, Hiram Riley.

A Musical Prize Fight at Loftus, 1859

July 2, 2019

In September 1859 a “Grand Village Band Contest” was held in Loftus, a village on the North Yorkshire coast. John Hollingshead reported the event in “All the Year Round” later that year. A transcription of the report, together with some pen & ink drawings illustrating the characters, provided the basis for a couple to get married in 1978. The tale, told by their son Bob Nicholson, is recounted together with report and the illustrations, in the Digital Victorianist – <https://www.digitalvictorianist.com/2014/02/musical-prize-fight/>



Alternatives to marching & hazardous journeys

July 2, 2019

As it is the marching season – with Whit Friday, various march contests, Durham Miners’ Gala, local parades, walking days etc. I’m sure that many players (especially bass players) would like to revert to the old days when bands processed in their bandwagons, which were quite often brightly decorated – especially those involved with circuses and travelling shows. There are historical precedents for some alternatives in the absence of a wagon – roller skates or bicycles! Of course these would probably be even worse for the teeth going over cobbles, but it would certainly save on the shoe leather. Perhaps we could have Chris Froome or Bradley Wiggins as department judges for the “marches”...



Dunfermline Skating Rink Band



The perils of roller-skating while playing



Christchurch (New Zealand) Cycle Band c.1895



unknown Dutch band c.1910



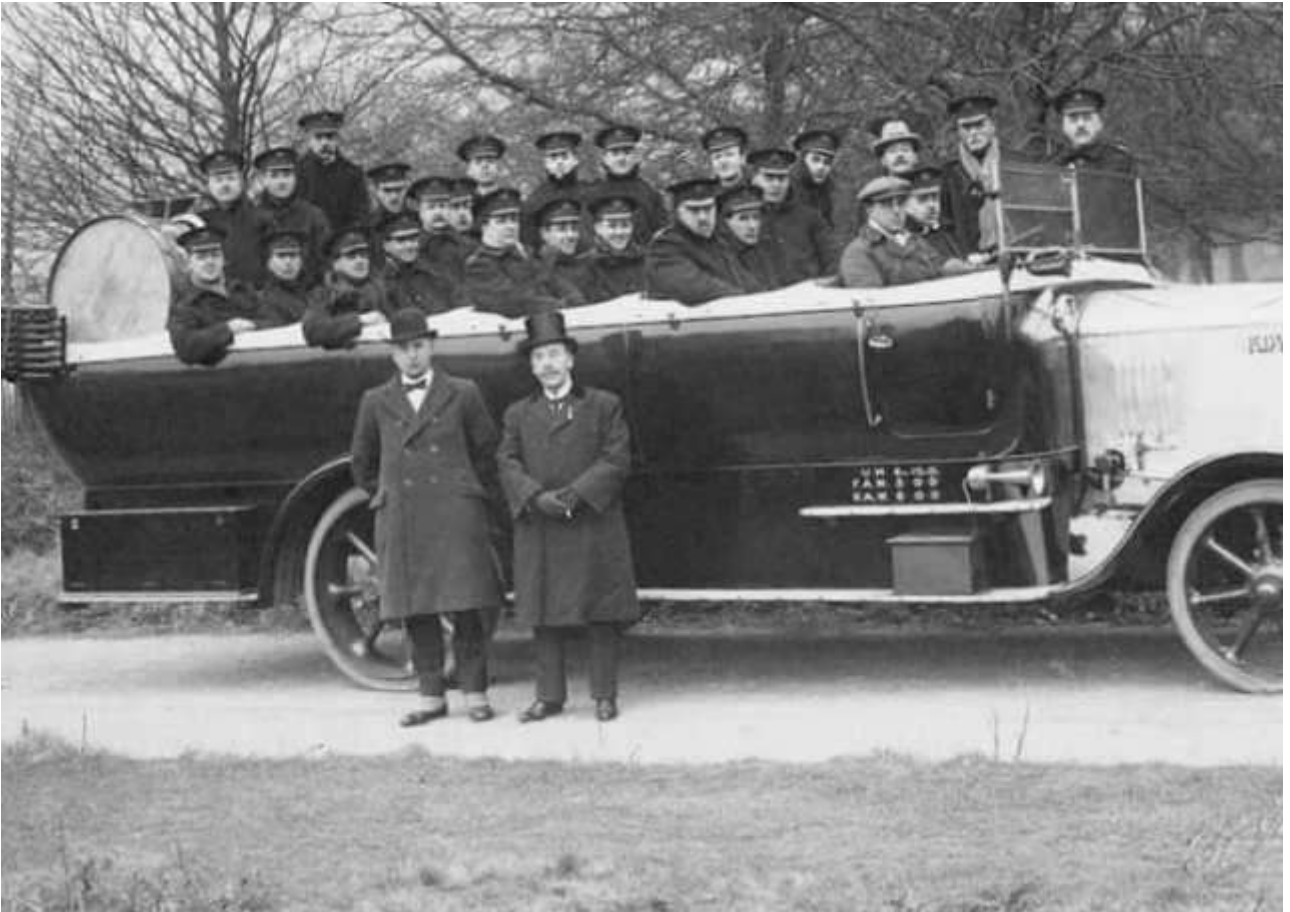
unknown penny-farthing band



another "cycle" band



who needs two wheels ?



Besses o' th' Barn Band preparing to travel in a charabanc to a concert at the BBC c. 1924.



Not all such trips are successful, as evidenced by the above picture of the Bristol (Connecticut) Band's bus when it ran off the road into the river.

There are many accounts of mishaps occurring to bands as they went about their business – a few examples are:

Forth Brass Band (Lanarkshire) – In 1893 a brake containing the members of the band met with an accident while passing through Motherwell, the vehicle split in two spilling the passengers to the ground – the back portion were left while the horse took fright and bolted down the street with the other portion. Several members of the band were injured and the horse ran down two children before being brought to a standstill.

May 1905 – On Saturday afternoon the members of the **Batley Old Brass Band** had an unpleasant experience. They were playing a lively march on the way to a contest at Linthwaite when they were run into by a gentleman on a motorcycle. The rider was accompanied by his daughter, who was accommodated with a seat in front of the machine. The result of the collision was that several bandsmen were thrown down, and their instruments scattered, while the motorist and his daughter were pitched on to the road with some violence.

Suckley Excelsior Band (Worcestershire) – On one occasion the band was returning from an engagement at Broadwas Court, and had to cross the River Teme, and when the whole band stepped onto the ferry boat it sank. The bandsmen grabbed the cords on the side of the big drum and sailed across under their own efforts, reaching the bank damp but undaunted.

While we are on a morbid note – the **Canadian Territorial Staff Band of the Salvation Army**, formed in 1907, consisted of around 40 members. In the early hours of May 29, 1914, while on its way to the Army’s International Congress in London, the ship on which they were travelling – **The Empress of Ireland** – was struck by the Norwegian collier **Storstad** and sank in 14 minutes. Only eight bandsmen survived. 1,012 people perished in the accident, which remains the worst maritime disaster in Canadian history.



Explain masculine & feminine rhythms

July 2, 2019

What is a “climax”? What is often the cause of sticky valves? Explain masculine and feminine rhythms? Name a common fault with trombone players?

No – these aren’t elements of a Cosmopolitan agony aunt’s page, but four of the 340 questions that make up “Viva Voce Questions for Brass Band Candidates”.

This is a booklet produced by Alfred Ashpole in 1936 to assist those preparing to sit theory exams on brass bands. A companion booklet “Model Answers to Viva Voce Questions” provides the suggested responses to each question.

In case you are wondering the answers to the above are:

- “The moment when the greatest intensity of sound effect is produced”
- “Pushing them out of alignment by faulty fingering”
- “A feminine rhythm starts on an unaccented beat, whilst a masculine rhythm starts on an accented beat”
- “They often try to make the mouth and slide do what should be done by the tongue, also the movement of the slide from one position to another is often too sluggish”

See the full set of questions here: <http://www.ibew.org.uk/VivaVoceQuestions.pdf>
and the answers: <http://www.ibew.org.uk/VivaVoceMAnswers.pdf>



Band minute books

July 2, 2019

Band minute books – a forgotten but valuable source of historical information. I am sure many current bands, especially those with long histories, will have minute and account books of their early years, but I suspect that most other bands' records are long since lost. A few have made their way into local or county archives, but the majority were probably dumped when the bands folded. If you know of any such documents that are orphaned (i.e. not belonging to a current band) I would be interested to hear, if only to see what steps can be taken to preserve them.

Many years ago I acquired two minute books of the Llangollen Town Band. Having recently unearthed them, in the process of digitising other historical band material, I felt they should be returned to the Band as it is still active (unlike most of the other items I have). Llangollen Silver Band, as it is now known, was formed in 1904, succeeding a previous Llangollen Brass Band that was active from the 1850's to the 1890's. I don't have any other information about the band's history other than what is in the two books, which cover a period from 1925 to the mid-1950's. The pages have been scanned to pdf files and a copy of the files has been sent with the physical books to the Band. Like most bands, Llangollen enjoyed and suffered the good and bad times, had players who were a challenge and dealt with the day to day issues of obtaining new instruments, maintaining the band premises and finding new and replacement players.



Committee Meeting held in the Bandroom
Wednesday July 22nd 1925. Present.
Messrs J. A. Davies (Chairman) A. Edwards, T. C. Davies,
Thos Roberts, Looe Howlands, W. S. Lwynn Williams,
T. Ellis and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting having
been read and confirmed.

The Secretary stated this meeting had been
called to consider the question of Uniform.

The Bandmen were desirous of securing
new Uniform and the sum of £36:9:1 had
already been raised for same. The Bandmen
were prepared to pay 10/- each at the end
of the Summer Season and submitted that
the £10 out of the Council Grant which they
late years gave towards Band room maintenance
should this year be devoted to Uniform.

Uniform was a great aid in
securing engagements and a letter was read
from Fleafyllin engaging Band for Show, and stressing
the point of the Band being in Uniform
by.

Unknown bandsmen (1)

July 21, 2019

There are thousands of photographs of bandsmen, and the occasional bandswoman, that are sadly totally anonymous. Most have no identifying features, either on their uniforms, instruments or the backgrounds, and only a chance comparison with another known picture can give a name. Sometimes a cap badge or other detail gives a clue, but even then it is usually not sufficient to identify the individual. Very few bands (current or extinct) have lists of their historical players to assist in this process, even should you be able to name the band. Here is a selection of British bandsmen, covering most areas of the brass band, and all unknown apart from the last one – Edward Taylor of Barton Hall Band – in a photo that dates from the late 1940's.







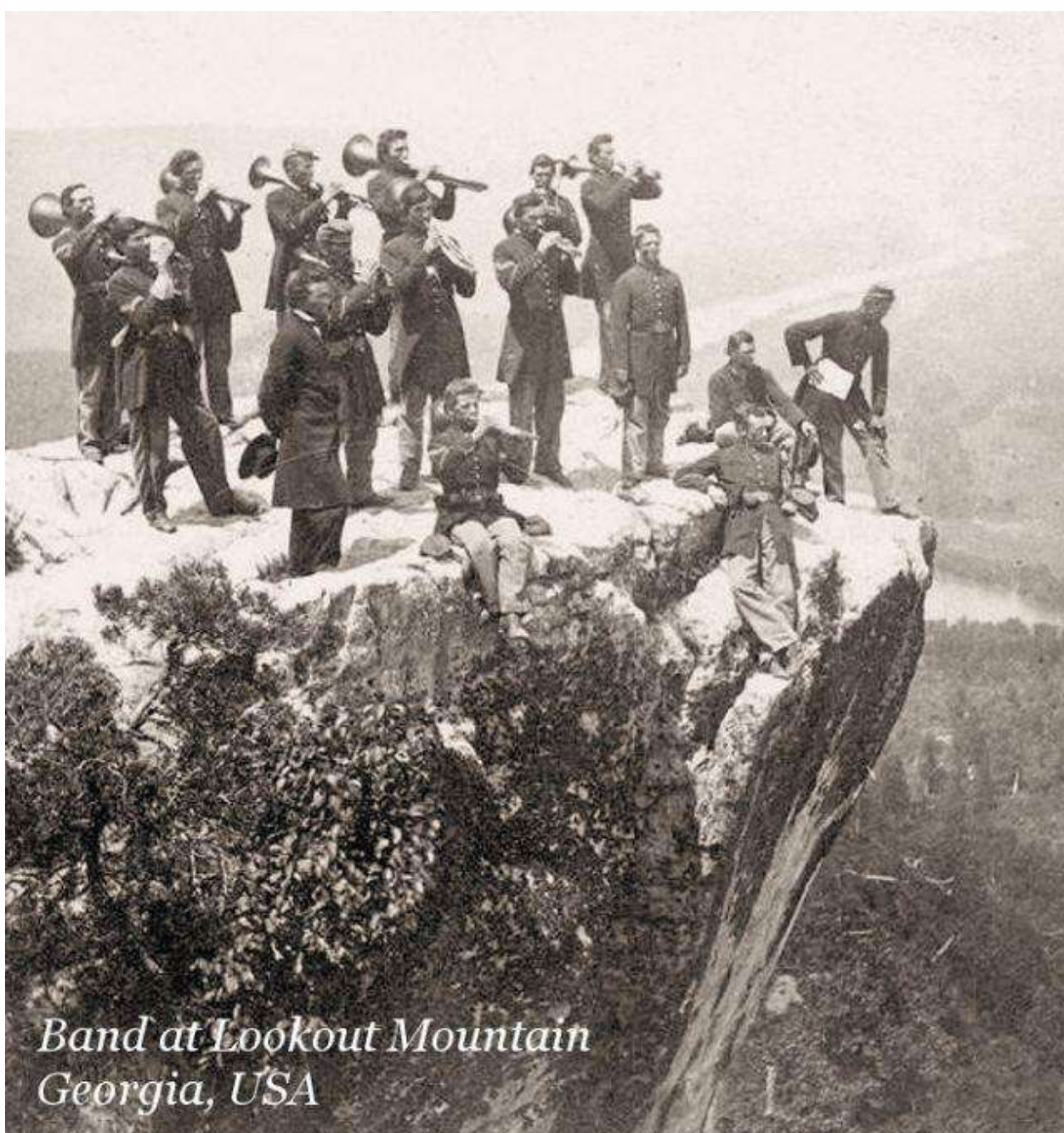
*

Climb every mountain ...

July 25, 2019

In August 1858, 12 men, including 7 members of the Yreka Brass Band (John Murray, leader; I.G. Murray, W.I. Mayfield, John Garner, A.J. Starling and Louis Detarre) walked to (50 miles or so) and then ascended Mt Shasta, California, with their instruments, playing “Hail Columbia” and other patriotic tunes on the summit at a height of 16,700 feet. The trip, there and back, took three days. Not something the bands of today would take on easily! The picture below is of another, unknown, mountaineering band, c.1870 on Lookout Mountain (a mere 2,389 feet high) on the Georgia/Tennessee border.

For the full story, see: [Ascent of the Butte \[Chronicling America\]](#)



Punishments

September 18, 2019

Punishments for banding infractions were harsh in the 19th century. Rules were common, strict and often involved fines and other measures. These three cornet players had split notes during a contest, losing the band their first place. As you can see, the bandmaster is standing guard with his extended baton (shillelagh), while the local mill owner (and band sponsor) sits behind on a gravestone to ensure justice is done. Euphonium soloist George is in the background, enjoying the suffering of his colleagues who dashed his hopes of another winner's medal for his collection.



Below is the band before the infamous split notes/stocks incident mentioned above. The band is waiting for the charabancs to convey them to the contest. As you can see, the bandmaster, in his ceremonial poncho, still wields his ritual baton (shillelagh).



[Sadly this is actually a picture of an unknown band, from an undated postcard – so if anyone recognises the location...?]

Seriously though, the first sentence above is only too true. I have previously posted about the Wylam Colliery Band, Stand Band and Dodworth's Band School rules here, in June 2019, but I couldn't resist this image and the "story" it conjured up!

There are many tales of bandsmen and their escapades and the resulting consequences, ranging from fines to expulsion to court cases (even death in one case when a brawl got out of hand). The rules were there to protect the band and its members (even from themselves) from inadvertent, careless or malicious acts. However, I have not encountered any "punishment" meted out for bad playing!

Strange and head-scratching

October 4, 2019

There are some pictures that make you wonder “Eh?” or “Huh?” or “WTF?” (whichever you prefer). For example, this European (possibly German) cornet player is holding a dead duck/chicken? What is the story behind this?



Following on, when our musical director states we are going to be guinea pigs for a new piece he wants to try out, you don't immediately get a mental image like this below (or do you?). This is at the same time cute but macabre. Sadly the Victorians and Edwardians commonly placed stuffed animals in staged dioramas like this.



Similarly, when the same MD accuses the band of playing like a load of wooden-tops or robots, maybe he isn't aware that a) researchers have been looking at automating the embouchure for brass instruments [see: "*Artificial buzzing lips and brass instruments: Experimental results*"], and b) automaton brass players do (or at least did) exist and might do a better job than the flesh and blood versions. Mr Maskelyne obviously made a living out of his two brass playing robots "Fanfare" and "Labial".



There is always someone who has to go one better than everyone else. He has to have the newer car, the latest tech toys, and so on. In the brass world this manifests itself thus – though how he's going to get that tuba into the back of a Mini...



I suspect this drum is not a marching drum – or perhaps it is? We are quite often reminded that Americans do things bigger & better (particularly in Texas) so perhaps this is for the use of one of their Texas students?



Finally, these last two defy description – clearly band members, but is it “dress down Friday”? Likely to be costumed for a carnival type event, one hopes this is not their normal appearance!



Circus bands (1)

October 7, 2019

I had some discussions earlier this year with some members of Windjammers – the US Historical Circus Music Society – seeking details of some of their articles on the history of circus bands in the USA. Their journal “Circus Fanfare” is a fascinating repository of information about music old and new and the players and bands of the past. The organisation is also actively involved in recreating



and keeping alive the music of the travelling circus and sideshow bands. The photo below is of the Starnes Stock Company Band at St Petersburg, Florida – they were an under-canvas theatrical troupe that carried a band with them, based in Worthington, Indiana, active during the 1913 season.



As part of my research into the bands of the USA, I currently have details of nearly 80 such bands – and there would have been many more – supporting the various travelling entertainment shows. This list was shared with Windjammers.

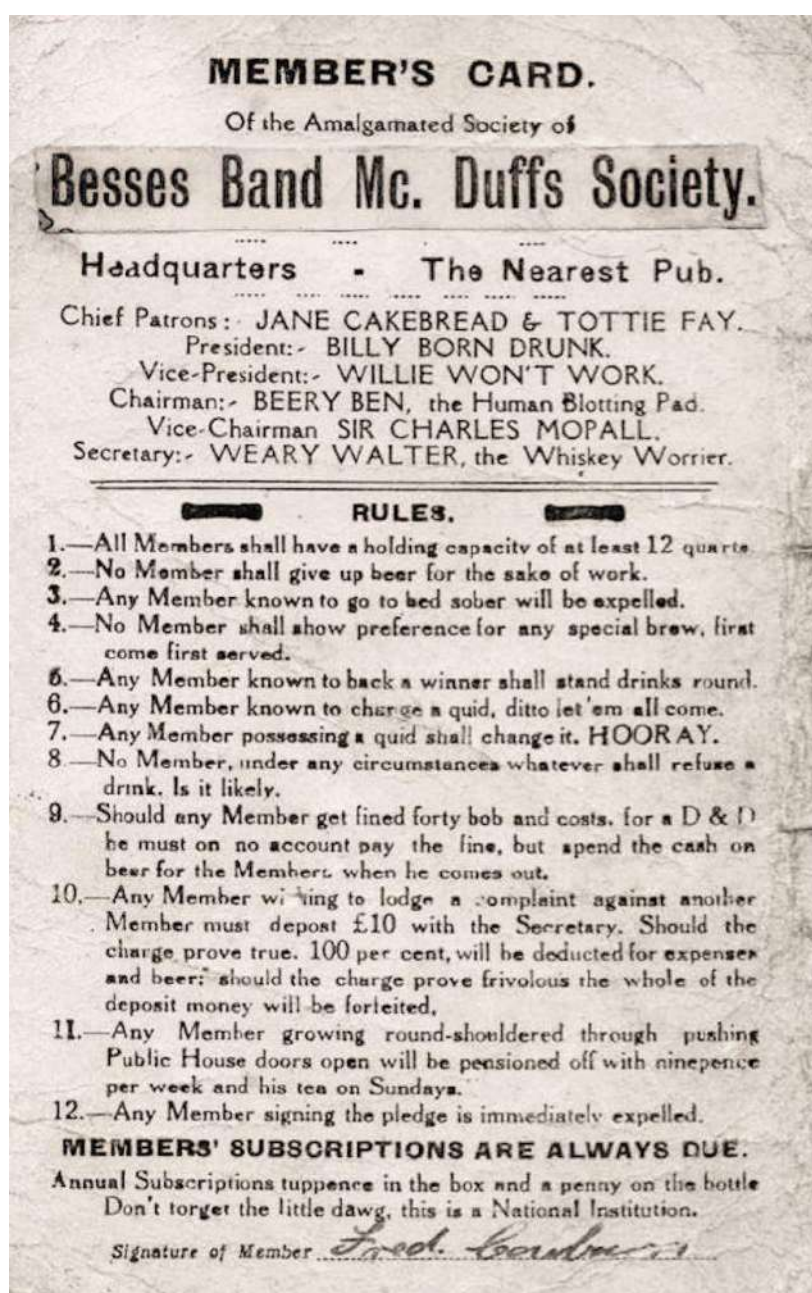
For the circus bands list, see: <http://www.ibew.org.uk/uscircusbands.pdf>

For further details of Windjammers and Circus Fanfare, see: <https://www.circusmusic.org>

Intemperance bands

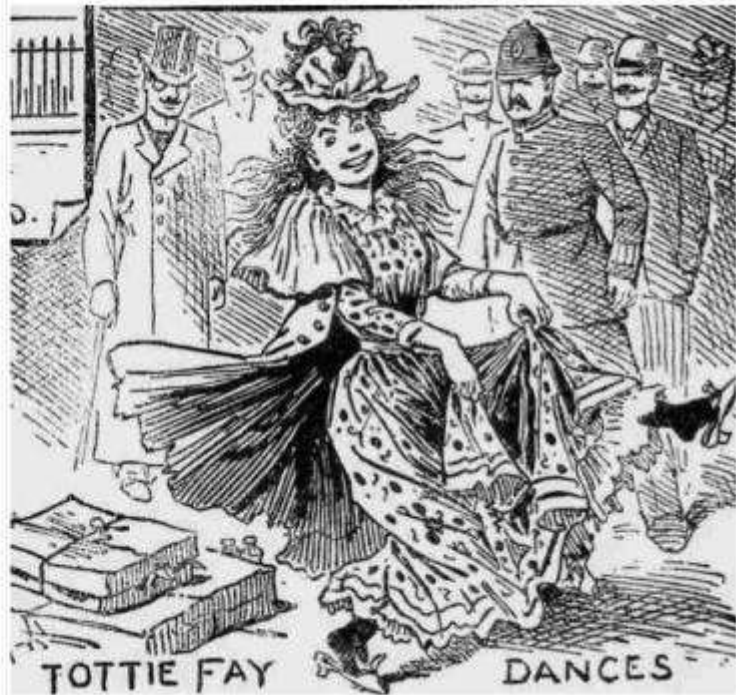
October 7, 2019

Having produced an article on temperance bands last year, *“Thirsty work – brass bands and the temperance movement in the 19th century”*, it is clear to me – and to most brass players – that abstinence from intoxicating liquids is not the norm for brass bands. Many bands had links with local breweries (formal or informal) or had their “band club” with bar and “refreshments”. Even some of the temperance bands slipped and had to excuse themselves from the anti-alcohol movement, or were sacked by their sponsors. I recently came across this image of “Besses Band McDuffs Society” membership card, which actively promotes the consumption of thirst-quenching drinks. Though headed “Besses Band” it appears to be a stock card from either another band’s society or a generic card, which has had the Besses title pasted on top. Nevertheless it is still a fascinating small piece of banding history.



Most of the officers' names are self-explanatory, giving away the spoof nature of the society. I wasn't sure about the Chief Patrons, but a little bit of research established that **Jane Cakebread** was allegedly the "Drunkenest Woman in the World" – a record holder in the the Olympics of Disorderly Intoxication. That dubious distinction was based on at least 281 convictions in London for drunkenness or disorderly conduct.

Tottie Fay was another lady whose drunken outrages fascinated the public in the late 1880s – see the links below.

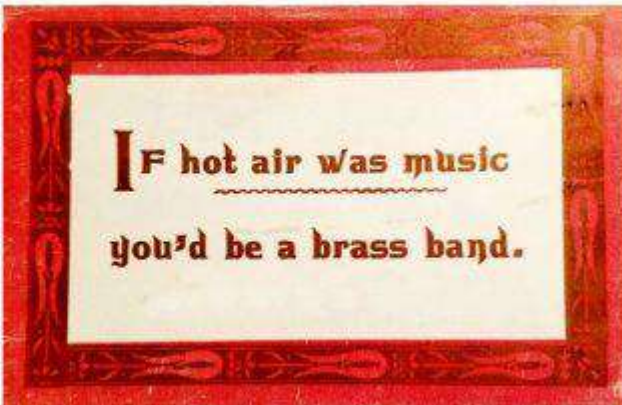
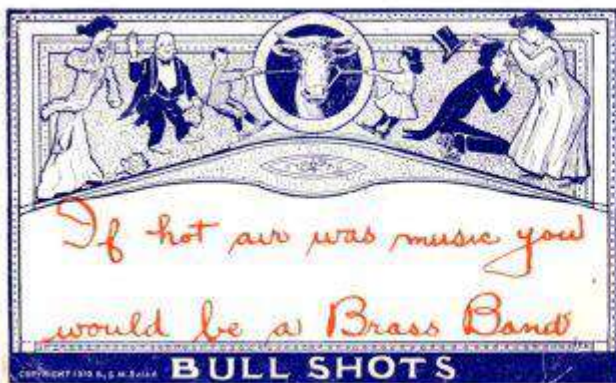


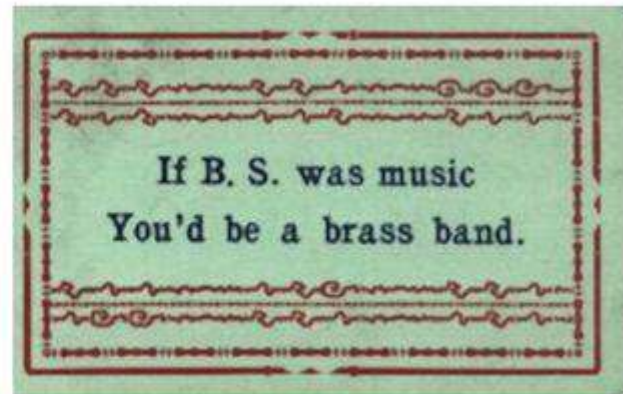
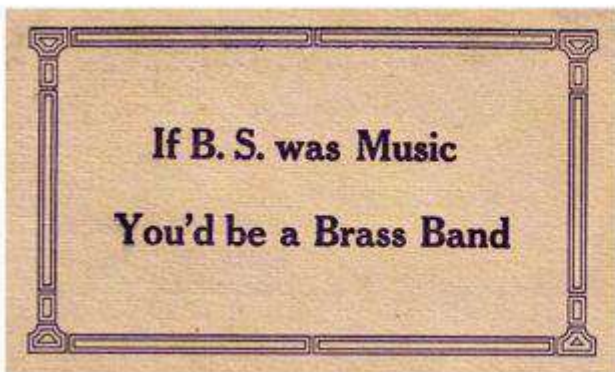
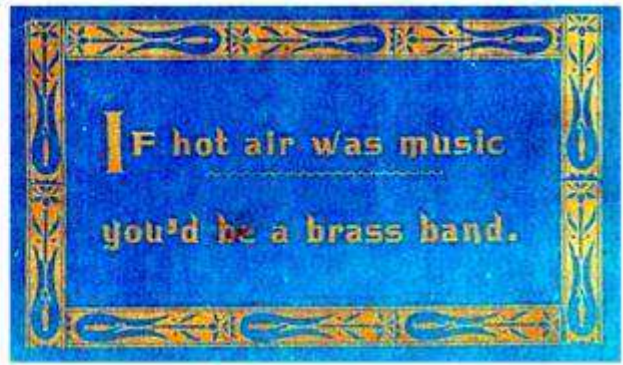
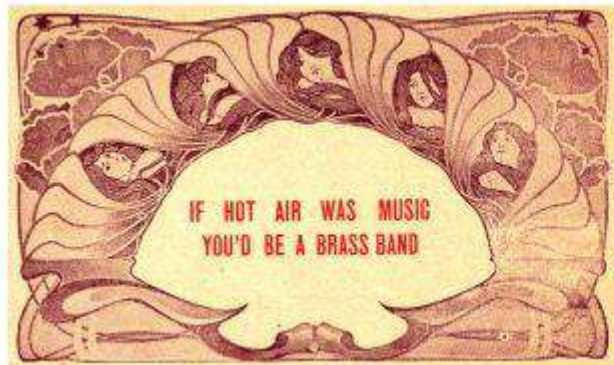
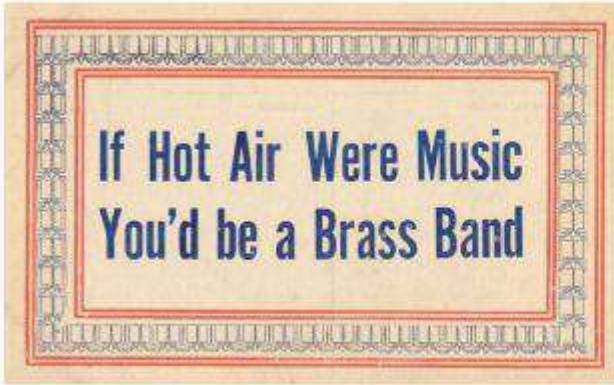
- <https://www.alcoholproblemsandsolutions.org/jane-cakebread-drunkenest-woman-world/>
- <https://www.jack-the-ripper-tour.com/generalnews/tottie-fay/>

Hot air and brass bands

October 17, 2019

A number of postcards were produced in the early 1900s which would have been insulting to the recipient – likening their verbal utterances to an extreme amount of hot air – i.e. a “brass band”. One assumes, like the later “smutty” seaside postcards, that these were meant to be taken humorously and not to take offence! Various designs were produced and a slight variant is also seen, replacing “hot air” with “B.S.” (supply your own words) – but that does not work as well.





One can only assume, based on the assertions of the above cards, that the band below is being kept aloft by the exertions of its brass players!

