

**Early Harrogate Bands**

**Presentation at the  
National Association of Brass Band Conductors  
annual meeting**

17<sup>th</sup> February 2002  
Wetherby, West Yorkshire

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# HARROGATE SPA

Since the early 17th century the waters of Harrogate had been taken by locals and visitors to the area.



The chalybeate springs of High Harrogate were originally the more popular, but by the middle of the 18th century doctors had discovered a satisfactory method of using the sulphur wells of Low Harrogate for internal treatments and extended their use in baths.



A total of 87 springs arise within the town's boundaries. The town's peak of popularity as a Spa was during the late Victorian and early Edwardian period.



Much was said (and still is) about the particular taste and odour of the sulphur wells products!



**SPAWING AT HARROCATE.**

**AFTER taking the Waters !!**



**BEFORE taking the Waters !**

**SPAWING AT HARROCATE.**

# THE PRESCRIBED DAILY ROUTINE

A recommended length for the "cure" was at least three weeks for "permanent benefit to be gained".

- 7am-8am - Rise and visit Pump Room for first tumbler of water
- 7am-8.15am Walk about, **listening to the band**





- 8.15am Take second tumbler of water
- 8.15-9.00am Listen to the band and if prescribed take third glass of water
- 9.00am Breakfast. For some people it is advisable that they drive; either by omnibus, carriage, or bath chair but the walk home can be advantageous if it can be accomplished without undue fatigue. Care should be taken to avoid exertion.
- 10.00-11.00am Morning paper or letter writing
- 11.00am Shopping/Walk/**Listen to band**/or Bath

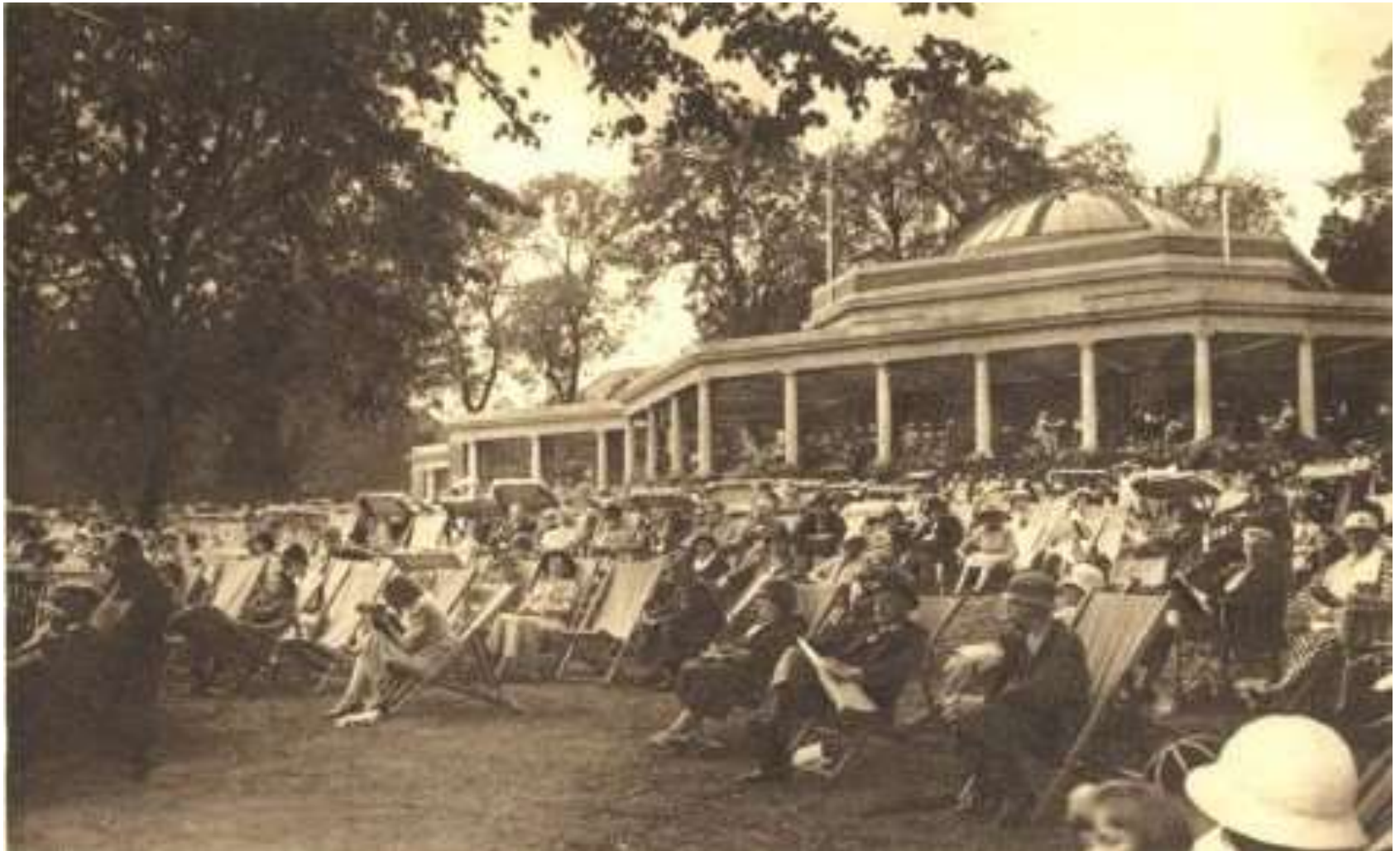


Harrogate. Big Valley Gardens and Bandstand.

- 11.30am Second visit to Pump Room
- 1.00pm Rest for half an hour



- 1.30pm Lunch to be followed by one hour of rest  
Afternoon Driving, Walking, Cycling, Golfing or third visit to Pump Room. Afternoon tea in Gardens **listening to the band**



- 7.00pm Dinner. Concert room



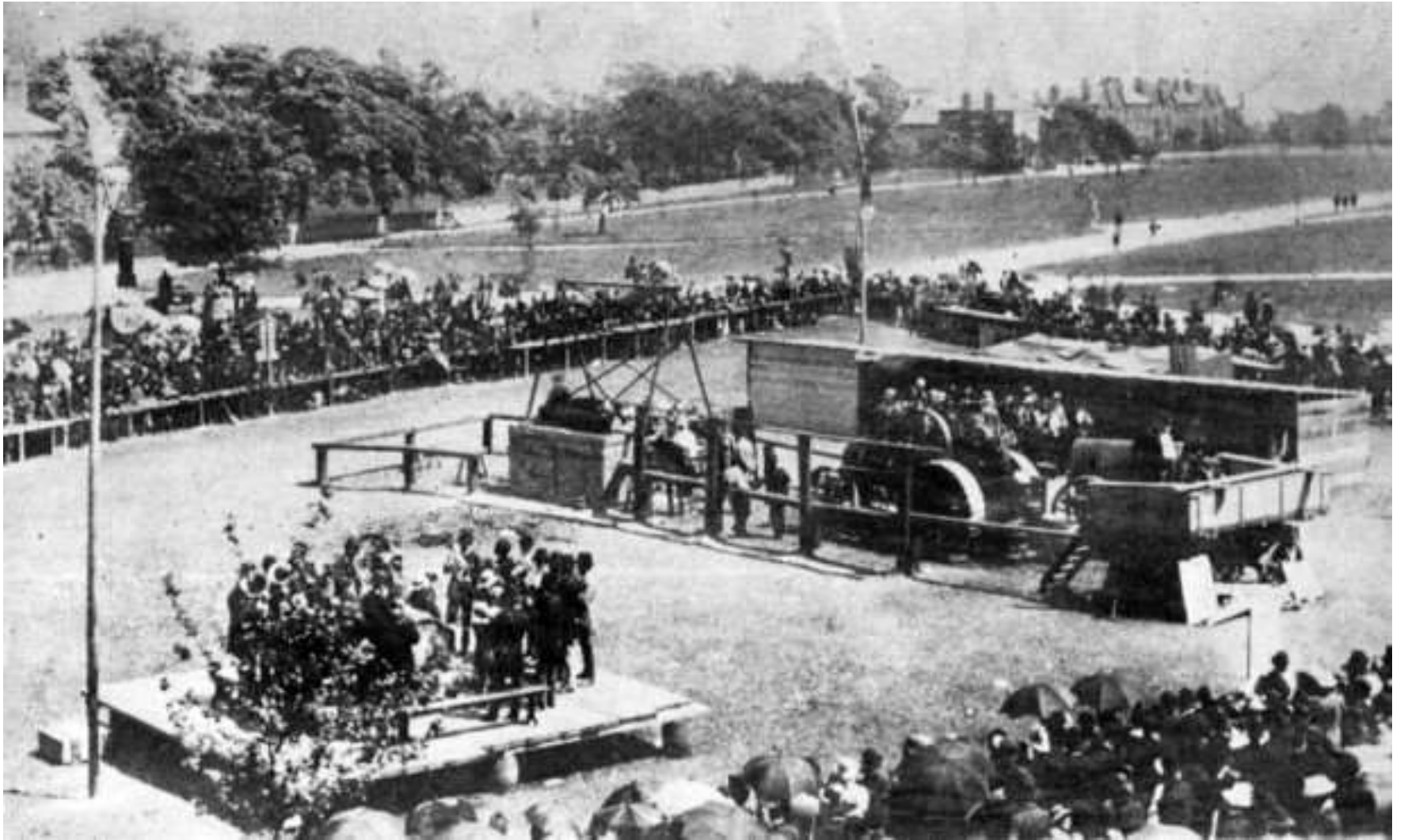
*The Kursaal, Harrogate*





- 10.00pm Bed

# Harrogate Bands



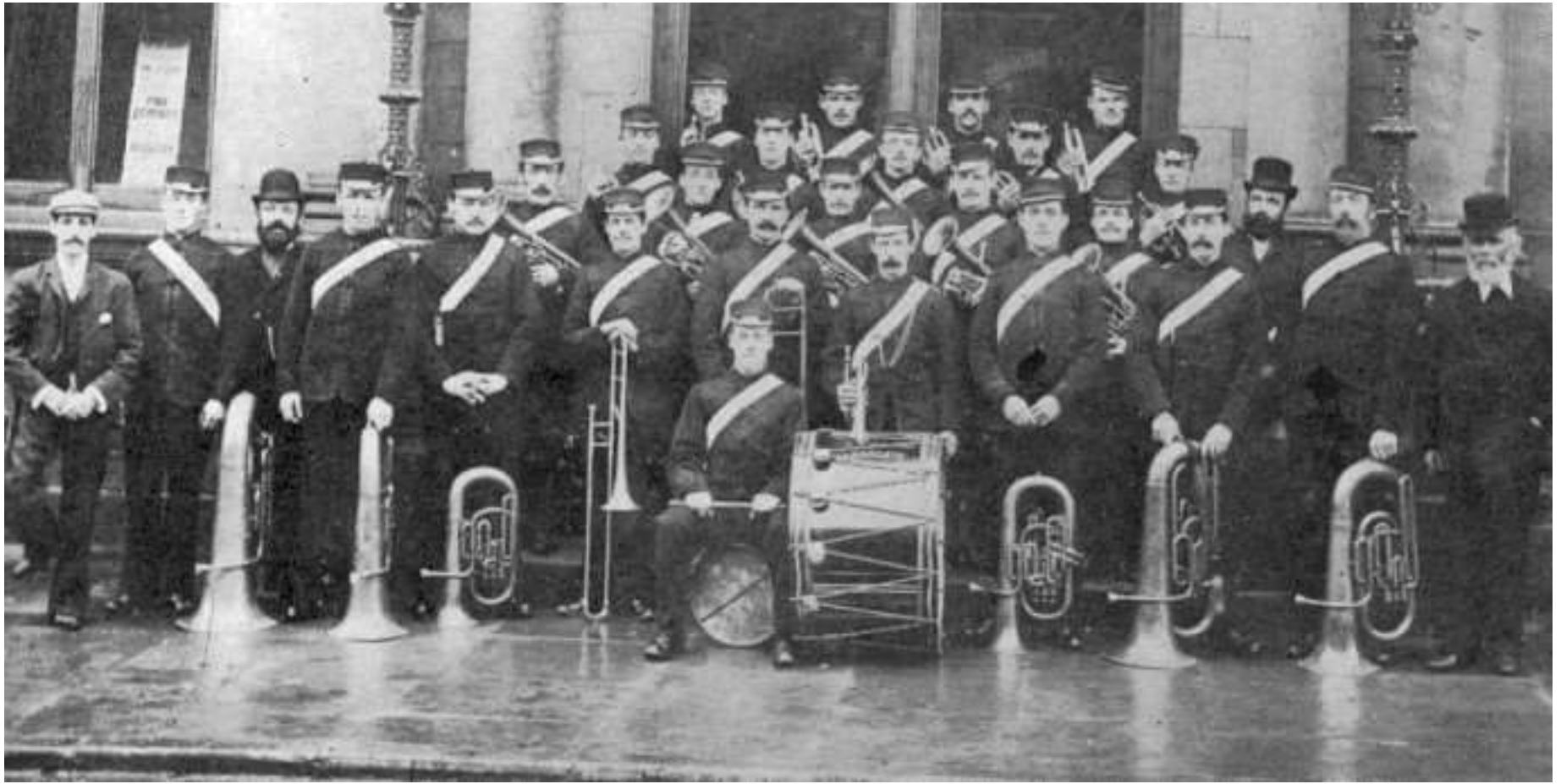


At a Town's meeting on 8th June 1888 it was decided to have a subscription band in Harrogate. Subscriptions flowed in and J. Sidney Jones, bandmaster of the Leeds Rifles, was appointed as its conductor.



Their opening concert was given in the Montpelier Gardens on 16 July that year. Jones was an itinerant child musician in his native Suffolk. He trained at Kneller Hall after enlisting in the Dragoon Guards and qualified as a bandmaster. Moving to Yorkshire he coached brass bands before moving from Leeds Rifles to Harrogate.

The demands on the band were great in the heydays of the Spa. Each day at 7.30, a performance was given to arouse the ailing ones to take the "waters" and to shake off their early morning fatigue. Tall hats were de rigueur headgear for the bandsmen in their four performances a day - for a wage of not more than £1 a week. Other performances followed throughout the morning and afternoon. A whole selection of bands and musicians played in the Valley Gardens and the Crescent Gardens, opposite the Kursaal (now the Royal Hall).



In 1908, the Harrogate Temperance Prize Band reported expenditure of £108 2s. 9d and income of £97 10s 10d, which included the purchase of a new set of uniforms at £54.

During that year the band played at Bilton Grange School Sports, Burton Leonard Friendly Societies' Sunday Parade, Railway Servants' Orphans' Sunday Parade and Meeting, Modern College Sports, Cricket Club Charity Match, Harrogate Agricultural Show, Co-operative Society's Children's Gala, Roundhill Sports, Kirkby Overblow Horticultural Show, Primitive Methodist Sunday Meeting in the Bogs Field, Friendly Societies' Hospital Sunday, six times at Kursaal, three times for the British Women's Temperance Association, and have given Free Sacred Concerts for Friendly Societies' Council in aid of the Gala Funds for Harrogate Infirmary, Grove Road Brotherhood, Citizen's Temperance League, Harrogate Football Club, Pleasant Saturday Evening Concerts, and alternate Sundays in the Valley Gardens and Bogs Fields.

In addition, this year the band had some 180 subscribers who gave a total of of £33 to funds, equalling the income from engagements (excluding collections), and a figure of £18 was paid to the Conductor.





By the early 1930s, it had changed its name to the Harrogate Silver Prize Band. Highlights of this time were the band's two visits to the Crystal Palace in London to compete in the National Brass Band Championships Finals in 1929 and 1930.

The Band broke up at the start of World War Two and never reformed. Members of the Committee safeguarded the instruments which were ultimately used by other bands.

The Band's sheet music was acquired by the Dacre and Summerbridge Band, where it still resides. Indeed, the last surviving member of the Harrogate Temperance Band still plays with Dacre and Summerbridge Band. Bill Jewitt, originally euphonium now baritone, is 93 and reputedly Britain's oldest active bandsman.



Harrogate Borough Band was Harrogate's second brass band and was roughly contemporary with the Harrogate Temperance Band - being in existence from the start of the century until it too disbanded at the outbreak of World War Two.



In 1901, the impending County Council election resulted in some colourful exchanges between the supporters of Harrogate's Conservative candidate, Samson Fox, and Liberal candidate JH Wilson. Although both men exercised punctilious politeness to each other in public, their supporters were less fastidious, and the newspapers reported that respective public meetings were being interrupted with "unseemly behaviour". The two men argued mightily about who actually had been the inspiration behind the building of the Royal Baths. Before the election, JH Wilson's plan to give a big outdoor speech had been thwarted by the sudden appearance of the new Borough Brass Band which, by coincidence, had just been provided with smart uniforms by Samson Fox, who had also given the band the large and valuable music library of the late Leeds Forge Brass Band. Apparently the band played the national anthem, Rule Britannia, Hearts of Oak, and other patriotic airs, whenever Wilson tried to begin his speech.



In 1926 a song was composed and sung (to an unknown tune) extolling the virtues of the Harrogate Band.

### **The Harrogate Band Song - *Cumberland Clark - 1926***

Did you ever hear the Harrogate Band?  
Although it's so awful they think it grand,  
You can hear it as the day is dawning,  
When you take your waters in the morning.

There once was a man, I understand,  
Who said that he liked the Harrogate Band;  
I thought him the strangest man on earth,  
'Till I found out that he'd been deaf from  
birth.

The instruments all creak and wheeze,  
They wander off into various keys,  
It may suit some, but it's not my taste,  
For it gives me pains below the waist.

Did you ever hear that awful Band?  
There's nothing like it in all the land,  
Its' strains of music are so sad,  
It makes all good people feel quite bad.

Did you ever hear that curious band?  
The Band and the Cure go hand in hand,  
As the music is not at all too pure,  
No wonder the visitors need a cure.

They played last night for a good half-hour,  
'Till I turned pale, and the milk turned sour,  
The lights burned dim and the air went blue,  
Then the gas went out, and the cat went too.

And when they're marching through the town,  
The noise that they make really wears you  
down,  
The dogs join in, with all just cause,  
And citizens wane behind locked doors.

To Stand that Band you need great nerve,  
If the members got what they deserve,  
They'd be taken out to a quiet spot,  
Where the visitors could shoot the lot.

The Internet Bandsman's  
Everything Within



[harrogateband.org](http://harrogateband.org)



[ibew.co.uk](http://ibew.co.uk)