

## **Last, by a country mile – a British adjudicator’s remarks explain the Oddfellows Band’s placing at Rockhampton, Queensland**

*Gavin Holman, 5 August 2020*

On Saturday 16 June and Monday 18 June 1906, a band contest was held at the Rockhampton Agricultural Grounds, Queensland, as part of the Rockhampton Carnival. The contest included selection, march, and waltz competitions. There were also prizes for a quartette contest and soloists.

The bands that attended were: Wide Bay Regimental Band, Rockhampton Oddfellows Military Band, Gympie City Band, Bundaberg Citizens Band, Gympie Model Band, Rockhampton Foresters’ Band, and Mount Morgan Band. The various performances were mixed throughout the days.

The selection test piece was “*The Rose of Castille*” by Balfe, arranged by Harry Round. Gympie City took first place with 140 points (out of 150), followed by Wide Bay (134), Gympie Model (130), Mount Morgan (129), Bundaberg (127), Rockhampton Foresters’ (125), and Rockhampton Oddfellows (92).



*Albert Wade (1869-1938)*

The Oddfellow Band were clearly out of their league and the remarks of the adjudicator, Mr Albert Wade, of Ballarat, Victoria, do seem to give substance to the placing. Albert Wade was previously conductor of Idle & Thackley Band, Wyke Temperance Band, Gravesend Town Band and then Royal Oakeley Band (in 1903) before leaving for Australia in August 1905, initially to adjudicate at the Ballarat contests. [See a profile of him, below]

[Contest details from the *Rockhampton Morning Bulletin*, June 18 & 19, 1906 – available at <https://trove.nla.gov.au>]

### **Remarks - Test piece: The Rose of Castille** *Rockhampton Oddfellows Military Band*

“Not clean at opening: tongues want smartening up very much. From A, bass and horns were very bad at tonguing. A tempo: Soprano had a nasty accident, which did not encourage him very much I am sure.

Andante sostenuto: Horns badly out of tune, bass very much across at bar 8. Horns are very poor from D on. Cornet does well, but is badly supported by band.

Allegro giusto is very moderate. Band is evidently very young at contesting. The rall. bar after G was badly across. I don't think you could have done it worse if you had tried to.

Andante: Trombone sounds very nervous, everything is too stiff and formal, no life in it. Allegro: Far too slow and only moderate. Euphonium cadenza very nicely done.

Allegretto moderato: Tenor horn was late at starting. I suppose he thought it did not matter much, he came on later.

Moderato: This was fair, and it was phrased properly: the first band to do it. I compliment you. Cornet cadenza a good show. Allegro too slow. Lento: Those horns are badly out of tune, Mr. Conductor.

Andante: Fair. Soprano made a moderate attempt, many wrong notes, though. Cornet was very uncomfortable from S to T. From bar 26 to end of movement baritones, trombones and basses were terribly across, so you can imagine what it sounded like. That could be vastly improved by taking each section separately.

Allegro moderato: Euphonium solo was nicely given, but the accompaniments were very scattered. Finish of selection was very poor, the semiquaver runs being very indistinct.

As I said before, evidently not up to contesting form. But plod on. Nil desperandum.

Marks 92 (out of 150)”

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Sadly, I have not been able to find a picture of this losing band, but here are three of the other competitors



*Gympie Model Band, 1906*



*Bundaberg Town Band*



*Rockhampton Foresters' Band, 1918*

## **Albert Wade**

*Profile written in 1900, when conductor of Gravesend Town Band*

“He will talk about anything in the world, except himself. He cannot see where he has any special merit. When he conducted Wyke Temperance at some of the biggest contests and concerts in the land, he never pretended to know any more than any member of the band. As a matter of fact, what Albert Wade does not know about brass band scoring and brass band playing, is not worth knowing. He has not been trained in the best brass band in the

world (Wyke Temperance). He has not been a favourite pupil of the best brass band teacher in the world (Edwin Swift),

For the past ten years Albert has passed practically, as his leisure time, in scoring music for brass bands - not only in scoring it, but in studying it, comparing it with the original - in fact, he has followed minutely every hint in the "Amateur Band Teacher's Guide," and is "thorough." He is proud, and ever will be, of his connection, with Wyke Temperance. and they feel sure that they will never have reason to be otherwise than proud of him. His last engagement with them was at York, November 17th, 1849. On that day he left his grand Wyke Band (with the many good wishes of the bandsmen) to take up his newly appointed position as resident bandmaster to Gravesend Town Band.

Mr. Wade was born at Kirkstall, near Leeds, May 21st, 1869, so he is 30 years of age. At nine years of age his parents removed to Idle, near Bradford. Soon after he commenced the study of music he studied for a few years - and when the Thackley Brass Band was formed in 1889, he accepted the euphonium as his instrument, but he was never great as a player, his whole study and ambition being for conducting.

In 1890 he was appointed bandmaster at Thackley, which position he held until the band amalgamated, in 1893, with the Idle Brass Band, thus forming the present Idle and Thackley Brass Band. He was at once appointed bandmaster to that band, which he held until he went to the famous Wyke Band as 2nd euphonium player.

At the beginning of 1898 he was offered and accepted the very important position of bandmaster to the Wyke Band for 1898. it was a great undertaking, seeing that the Band Committee had passed a resolution that the band should be "the best brass band in the world" during 1898. However, the band confirmed the resolution. by really being the champions for that year, the band's record being 8 firsts and 4 seconds at 12 contests, winning in cash and specials £343, winning first at Belle Vue, Kirkcaldy, Dumfries, Frosterley, etc. After the great victory at Belle Vue the committee organised a great tea and concert, at which Mr. Swift (the band's professional conductor) and Mr. Wade received handsome presents, in recognition of the band's great success. Mr. Wade's present was a very handsome ebony and gold mounted baton, in case, and is one of his most treasured possessions.

1898 was the very best year the Wyke Band ever had, the total income from contests and concerts being over £1,000. Mr. Wade was again bandmaster during 1899, and conducted the band at West Stanley contest, winning 1st prize (£40); also at Dundee contest, and again won the 1st (£40). Mr. Wade has a great name as a scorer of selections; perhaps, for his age, he has scored more than any other teacher. He has scored every selection of Wright and Round's for the last ten years, making as high as 12 scores of some of them. He also scored while at Wyke, Mr. Swift's great works, "Bayreuth," "Faust," and "El Etoile du Nord" (so as to thoroughly understand them), all of which he presented to Mr. Swift when he left Wyke. "His scoring is like copperplate" - so one patron wrote. He has testimonials from the very highest adjudicators to the remotest village bandmaster. He has sent band scores all over the British Isles. Mr. Wade scores everything that he conducts, and fills in the text, he having a splendid library of operas, oratorios, and other music."

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Albert Wade died on 27 September 1938, in Ipswich, Queensland