

A trumpet prize for an unknown band in 1926

Gavin Holman, 15 February 2021

I was recently contacted by Ian Smith, whose late father-in-law had purchased a trumpet second-hand in the late 1940's. It is a Vincent Bach Mercury model, serial no: 487, and was presented as a prize to one of the bands in the Crystal Palace National Brass Band Contest in 1926. It is finished in a brushed silver-coloured metal with gold plating and elaborate engraving of flowers and leaves in gold plate, with wording "*Presented by Lewin Bros, 17 Moor St, LW1 To Prize Winner Brass Band Contest, Crystal Palace 1926.*" There is a small amount of damage on the bell and some spare parts in the case. The storage case has no 'Bach' markings, but has the importers trade plate affixed.



The trumpet was actually the prize awarded to the 5th placed band in the Junior Cup (B) contest at the National Championships in 1926. Unfortunately, we are only aware, at present, of the first three placings, so the identity of the band that won the trumpet is unknown.

The trumpet will have been awarded to the band, and the ultimate recipient may have been the conductor, the principal cornet player or someone else altogether (that would have been up to the band after the event). Being a trumpet (not a cornet) it is unlikely to have been used in the band proper, so it may well have found its way elsewhere.

It is interesting to look at the prizes for the contest overall. Certainly, the trophies, cash prizes, and kudos will have been worth the effort for those placed 1st to 3rd, but occasionally, those placed lower in the contest ended up with a prize 'worth' more – for example in the Grand Shield contest that year, the 3rd place winners received £15, and the 4th place a tenor horn worth 25 guineas (£26 5s.). A list of the prizes awarded that year is given below.





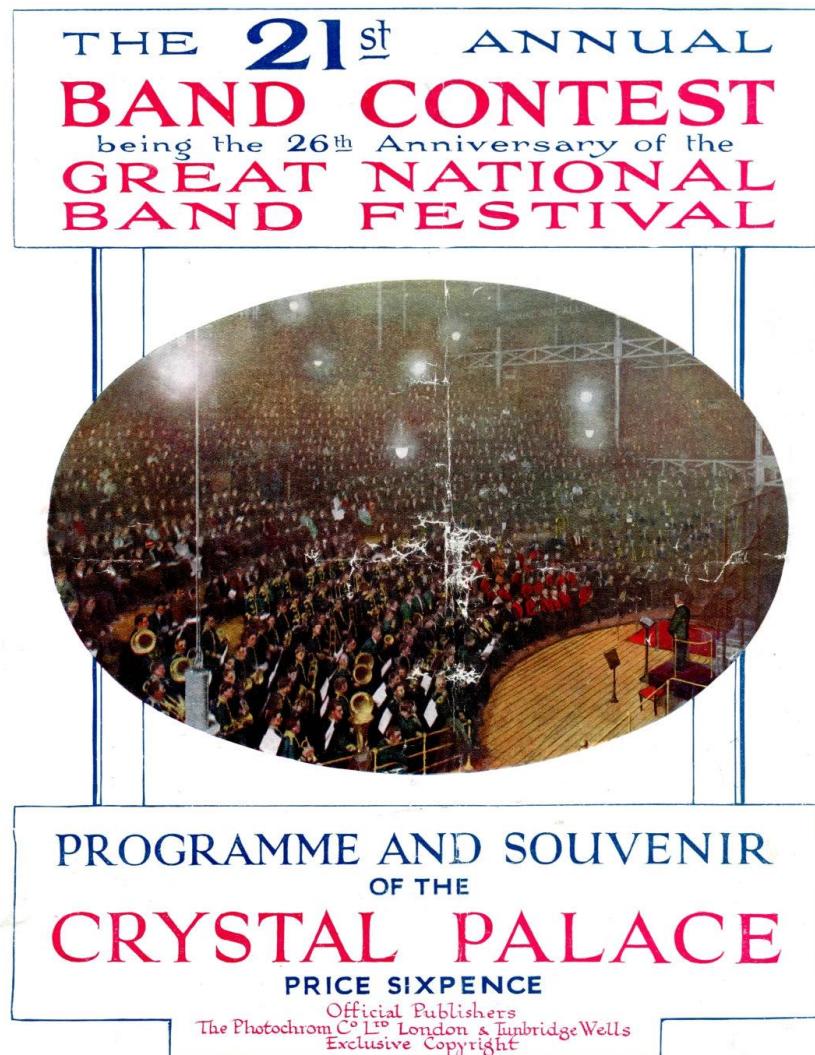
The Junior Cup (B) Contest in 1926 took place in the "New Dance Hall" at the Crystal Palace, with the test piece being a selection from *L'Arlesienne*, by Bizet, adjudicated by James Jennings and George H. Mercer. Birstall Old Band took 1st place, conducted by Joseph Crawford Dyson; Lambeth Borough Band, 2nd place, conducted by Tom Morgan; and Rushden Town Band, 3rd place, conducted by Albert Lawton. Lower placings are not known, but the recipient of the trumpet must have been one of the following:

- **Abercynon Colliery Workmen's Band** (conductor J. Donlan) – founded in the 1890s, had paid off the instruments by 1899 - conductor William Way. In 1900 the band collected £4 as a donation to the war reservists' fund. The principal cornet player in 1926 was Alf Price. The band was still active in the 1930's.
- **Camberwell Borough Band** (H. Carl Taylor) - active in the 1920's through to the 1940's.
- **Clifton Colliery Band** (Albert Wharmby) - active around 1900 and through to the 1930's.
- **Coventry Silver Band** (J. Matthews) - active in the 1900's through to the 1950's.
- **Dartford Town Band** (G. Ware) - active in the 1900's through to the late 1920's.
- **Dickenson's Silver Band** (Willie Greenwood) - formed in 1888 as Dickinson Brass Band, consisting of employees of the paper makers John Dickinson and Co. of Apsley. Also known as Apsley Mills Silver Prize Band. One of the predecessors of the current Hemel Hempstead Band.
- **Grays Temperance Band** (W. G. Watts) - founded in 1889. Still active today, as Grays Town Band.

- **Horsham Borough Band** (W. A. Smith) - founded in 1912 by the merger of Horsham Recreation Silver Band and Horsham Town Band. Still active today.
- **John Thompson Works Band** (George Henry Wilson) - active in the 1920's through into the 1960's. Also known as the Band of the 6th Battalion South Staffs Regiment.
- **Kibworth Silver Band** (Simeon Iliffe) - founded in 1905. Still active today as Kibworth Band.
- **Morris Motors Band** (T. Beresford) - formed in 1924 from employees of Morris Motors, it became a leading band under the guidance of Harry Mortimer. After several name changes, the band folded in the late 1990's.
- **Royston Silver Band** (Fred Dimmock) - founded in 1865. Still active today as Royston Town Band.
- **Swindon Great Western Railway Band** (C. Baker) - founded in 1912. Still active today as Swindon Pegasus Brass.
- **Yiewsley and West Drayton Band** (A. W. Allen) - founded in 1890. Still active today.

For details of this contest, and the others that day, see:

<https://brassbandresults.co.uk/contests/crystal-palace-junior-cup-b/1926-09-25/>



Prizes awarded in all the 1926 National Championship contests

Championship contest [won by St Hilda Colliery Band]

1st – The Crystal Palace National Challenge Trophy (1000 guinea trophy), and cash prize of £100. Each winning band member, the bandmaster, and secretary, receiving the Crystal Palace Championship Bronze Medal. [If the band won for the second time, the medals would be in solid silver, and if for a third time, in solid gold].

2nd – The Daily Telegraph Challenge Cup and £50

3rd – £30

4th – £20

5th – £10

Grand Shield contest [won by Birmingham Metropolitan Works Band]

1st – The Daily Express Challenge Shield and £30

2nd – The People Challenge Shield and £20

3rd – £15

4th – Messrs. Hawkes & Son will present one Eb Tenor Horn, New Contesting Model, "Excelsior Sonorous" Class "A" triply-plated and engraved with handsome gold wreath and gold-plated bell, presentation finish, complete in moulded pattern solid leather case, valued at 25 guineas

5th – Messrs. Besson & Co. will present one of their "Prototype" instruments to the value of £20

6th – Messrs. Boosey & Co. will present one First-Class Contesting N.V.A. Model Cornet, triply silver-plated and engrave with gilded wreath and inside bell, in new model attaché style case, valued at 18 guineas

7th – Messrs. Joseph Higham will present one Bb Cornet "Paragon" Class "A" Model No. 1 in brass, valued at 12 guineas, or other instrument of the same value.



Junior Cup (A) contest [won by Cambridge Railway Band]

- 1st – The Daily Graphic Challenge Cup and £20
2nd – The Champion Journal Challenge Cup and £15
3rd – £10

4th – Messrs. Chas. E. Foote will present one “Star” Model Cornet, triply silver-plated, with hand-engraved wreath on bell, gold-plated inside and outside bell, and gold-plated points, complete in special Bandmaster’s best leather case, valued at 19 guineas.
5th – Messrs. Lawrence Wright will present a Silver-plated Cornet, in case, suitably engraved, valued at 15 guineas.
6th – Messrs. J.R. Lafleur & Son will present one “Alliance” Class “A” British-made Cornet in Bb with rapid change to “A”, silver-plated and in leather case, valued at 14 guineas.
7th – Messrs. Mold & Co. will present one Silver-plated Cornet, valued at 12 guineas.

Junior Cup (B) contest [won by Birstall Old Band]

- 1st – The Daily Mirror Challenge Cup and £20
2nd – The Pearson’s Weekly Challenge Shield and £15
3rd – £10
4th – The Uniform Clothing and Equipment Co. will present a set of Music Stands and a set of Band Books of a total value of 17 guineas.
5th – Messrs. Lewin Brothers will present one Bb Trumpet, by Vincent Bach, with a quick change to A natural, complete with high and low pitch slides. The instrument silver-plated with inside of bell gold-plated. The exterior of bell engraved. Complete in velvet-lined fitted case, valued at 15 guineas.
6th – Messrs. B. Feldman & Co. will present a Boosey Triply Silver-plated and Engraved Bb “Perfecta” Contesting Model Trombone, with gilded engraving and bell, valued at £13.
7th – Mr. A.M. Philpot will execute repairs or plating to band instruments, or will present a rebuilt instrument to the value of £7 10s.

Junior Shield (A) contest [won by Stenalees Silver Band]

- 1st – The Cassell’s Saturday Journal Challenge Shield and £20
2nd – £15
3rd – £10
4th – Messrs. Keith Prowse & Co. will present any Band Instrument selected from their catalogue to the value of 20 guineas.
5th – Messrs. Beever’s will present one Bandmaster’s Frockcoat Suite and Cap, equivalent to the value of 12 guineas, or a set of Band Caps instead of the above.
6th – Messrs. Paxman Bros. will present One Pair of Turkish Cymbals, valued at £5.

Junior Shield (B) contest [won by South Notts Silver Band]

- 1st – The Iles Challenge Shield and £20
2nd – £15
3rd – £10
4th – Mr F. Tomkins will present a Class “A” Star Model Cornet valued at 7 guineas.
5th – Mr J.P. Hull will present one Cornet, valued at 5 guineas.
6th – Mr H. Lawback will present one Bb Cornet, Courtois Model, short action, strongly stayed, nickel-silver valves, single water key, A and Bb shanks and lyre, and the famous double-cup cornet mouthpiece, in black wood polished case.