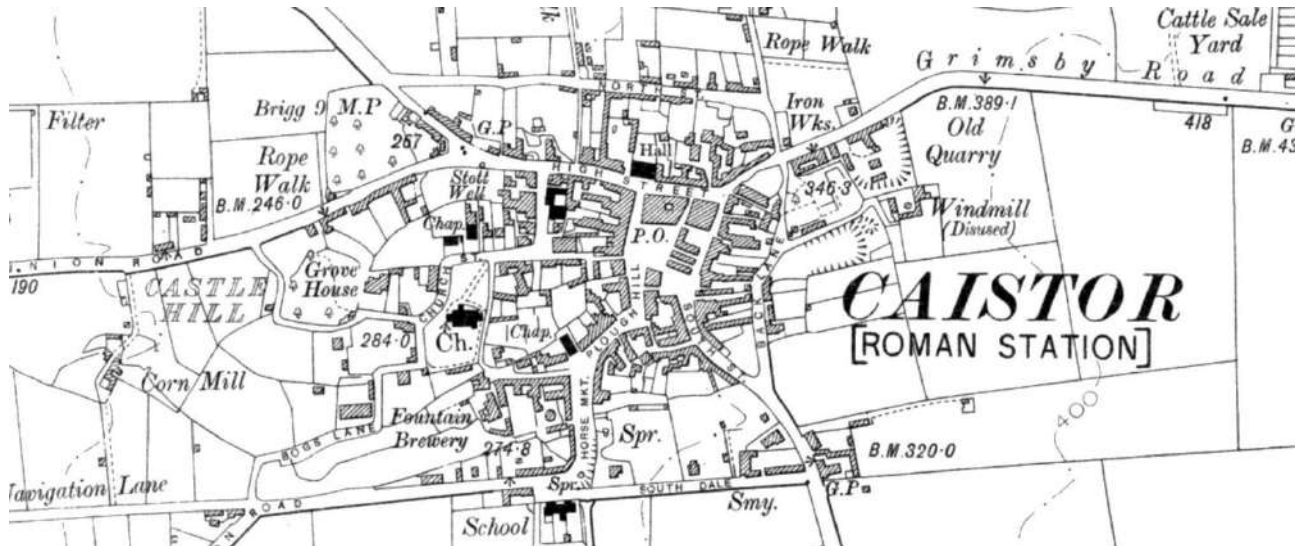


The Four Bands of Caistor

Gavin Holman, 30 March 2025

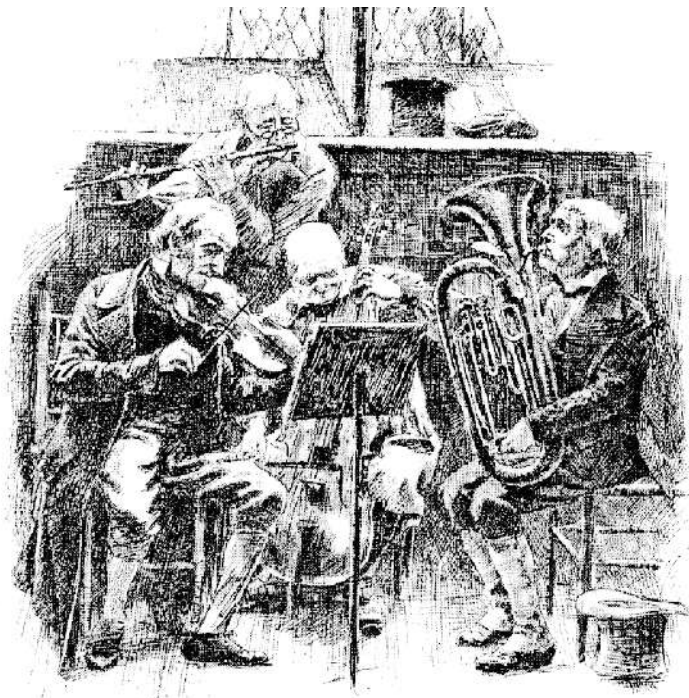
Caistor is a small market town in Lincolnshire, once the site of a Roman fortification – hence its name. From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century there were four bands providing music in and around the town.



Caistor in 1907

Caistor Band of Music

This first band was active in 1830 through to 1839, and was probably a small, mixed instrumentation ensemble. It performed for church services and processions. Their leader was J.T. Chant in 1839. At some point thereafter it disbanded or determined to become a 'full' brass band.



A typical small church band/ensemble in Victorian times

Caistor Amateur Brass Band

This first brass band was founded in November 1841, with teacher Mr Martin of Hull and leader J.T. Chant. The few records we have show that it led processions on civic and sacred events. The band's conductor was John Parish in 1852. It is assumed that it disbanded not long after that time.

Caistor Drum and Fife Band

This was active in 1863, helping the residents of Searby to celebrate the Royal Wedding of Prince Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and Princess Alexandra of Denmark.



A typical Victorian drum and fife band – Ballinacree, 1870s

Caistor Brass Band (also later known as Caistor Town Band)

This was formed in November 1875 as Caistor Brass Band, with 12 players, teacher J.C. Acey of Hull. They gave their first public concert on Wednesday 7 June 1876. They performed regularly in the town and nearby locations, leading processions, entertaining visitors to agricultural and horticultural shows, and giving concerts.

By 1878 some £120 had been spent on instruments and musical tuition, and the band was debating how to spend £28 in hand – some wanted a large marquee within which to hold concerts, others wanted new uniforms – in the end it was agreed to use £8 for uniforms, which were bought and displayed at the Dixon Memorial School anniversary celebrations at Pelham Pillar in August 1878. The band's conductor from 1878 to 1885 was Charles Ainger. George Walker was a member of the band up to 1889 when he emigrated. William Atkinson was the band's conductor from 1886 to 1908, when he emigrated to South Africa.

At a sacred concert in Kelsey South, on Sunday 11 July 1897, the band played "O, Paradise", "Sabbath Garland", "Crown of Honour", "Sweet Bye-and-Bye", "Cross and Crown", "Welcome Day of Rest", "Forest Hill", "Gabriel", "The Jolly Band", and "I am Praying for You".

In December 1898 a subscription was started to raise funds for several much-needed new instruments for the band. This was successful and the band, now numbering 21 players, made good use of the new instruments in Caistor market-place in June 1899.

The band continued to meet and perform through WW1, despite depleted numbers.

After the end of the Great War, in the 1920s, the band also known as Caistor Town Band.



Caistor Town Band, 1920

New uniforms were bought by the band in early 1921 and worn for the first time at the band's performance on Whit Monday 1921.

The band's conductor in 1923 was George Walker, and Mr Lamming in 1928.



Caistor Market Place

Charles Wright was a member of the band for 50 years, playing the euphonium, from its formation to 1925.

There is no record of the band competing in any brass band contests, but some of the band members travelled to Manchester in September 1923 to listen to the bands taking part in the British Open contest at Belle Vue. Other members repeated this trip in 1930.

The band was still active in 1943, but it disbanded around 1945. A minute in the band's records from 1931 stipulated that the band's instruments would be held by the Town Council until the band was reformed. This never happened, and in 1974, Mr Burnett delivered the instruments to the Council, which he had been holding on to for the previous 30 years, this was in addition to a sum of £29 which had been deposited when the band disbanded.



Caistor Town Band, 1921 in their new uniforms – back row: Norman Dixon, J. Lamming, W. Wright, E.H. Hinch, G.T. Tuplin; centre row: E. Mairs, E. Dixon, R. Grant, H. Ashley, A. Wright, ??; front row: A. Chapman, W. Mason, C. Dixon, E. Lamming, Rev. Tyack, and W. Lamming.