

Butcher's Juvenile Band

Gavin Holman, 7 October 2025

Walter Charles Butcher (known as Charles) was born in Whitstable, Kent, in November 1870. His father was a dredger working around Whitstable and the Isle of Sheppey. In 1891 he was a railway porter, working in the north-west, and spent some time in the Liverpool Royal Infirmary. His first wife was Mary Wallace Dunwoodie, they married in Liverpool in 1893. A daughter, Florence Gertrude, was born later in 1893. Mary died in 1898.

He later married Hannah Maria Arnell (of Wetherby) on 3 Dec 1902 at Thorner. They lived in Garstang, Seaforth, and Consett over the following years, before returning to Whitstable in 1910, finally moving to Seasalter in 1921. Together they had six children: Walter Alexander (1905), Robert Mozart (1906), Joyce (1906), Donald Mendelssohn (1909), Leonard Arnell (1911), James W. (1912) and Mary V. (1915).

Charles, himself, came from a large family – he had five sisters and four brothers in Whitstable.



Aside from his early career as a railway porter, Charles also was reported having the following occupations at various times: North Western Railway clerk, insurance agent, musician, laundry proprietor, lecturer, boat builder, sign writer, carriage joiner, and cornet musician.

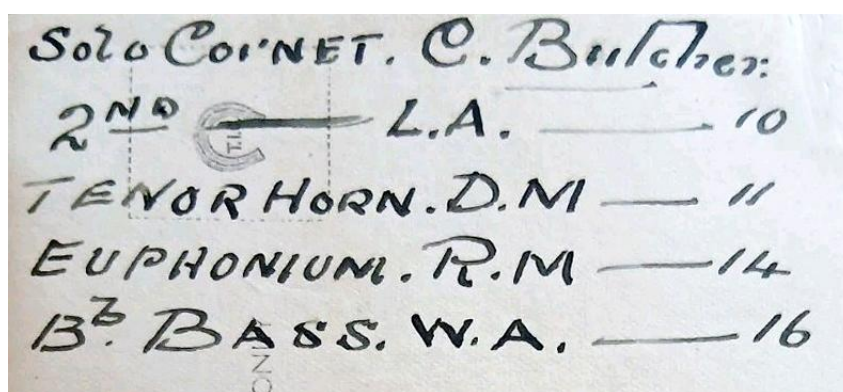
During his later years in Whitstable, from 1913 onwards, Charles became involved in the musical life of the town, he was a member of the local Wesleyan church and also the Sons of Temperance (East Grinstead Division) and performed cornet duets with A. Humphrey at an open night on Tuesday 28 November 1911 – performing “*Addio Speranza*” and “*selection from Martha*”. He gave cornet solos at a concert of the Whitstable String Band in the Congregational Hall on Wednesday 13 December 1911.

A concert on behalf of the International Order of Good Templars (Hope of Whitstable Lodge 1897) was given on Wednesday 27 March 1912 at the Primitive Methodist Schoolroom by the Whitstable String Band. Charles Butcher played the “*Carnival of Venice*” variations and also gave the whistling solo “*Alice where art thou?*”.

Charles also conducted the Wesley Military Band in April 1912, raising funds for the Titanic Relief Fund. The band went on to give concerts during the summer of 1912. It is not known what happened to it after that. There was another military band, formed after WW1 in Whitstable, conducted by Mr Frampton, and I assume that Charles was a member.

Another musical group in the town was the band of the 1st Whitstable Scout group. We don't know what role Charles Butcher had with this band, but I suspect at least his boys were members. See some photographs of this band, below.

In 1921 Charles' four older sons were performing with him as “Butcher's Juvenile Band”. Charles played solo cornet, Leonard 2nd cornet, Donald tenor horn, Robert euphonium, and Walter Bb bass. [note – this description, from the back of the photograph, does not quite align with the instruments and personnel shown.]



A handwritten list on a piece of paper, likely a photograph's back, detailing the instruments and personnel of the Butcher's Juvenile Band. The text is written in cursive and includes a small drawing of a cornet. The list is as follows:

Solo Cornet. C. Butcher:	
2 ND	L.A. — 10
TENOR HORN.	D.M. — 11
EUPHONIUM.	R.M. — 14
B ^B . BASS.	W.A. — 16

In April 1921 the band were advertised in the Whitstable Times as being available for “cornet solos, duets, trios, quartettes, and services given for any charities.” The family were living in Shellville, Seasalter, Whitstable.

BUTCHER'S JUVENILE INSTRUMENTALISTS.

**Cornet Solos, Duets, Trios, Quartettes
Services given for any Charities.**

Apply :—

**Shellville,
Seasalter,
Whitstable.**

Nothing more is known about the family's musical life, and Charles died on 30 January 1928, in Whitstable.



1st Whitstable Scout Group Band



1st Whitstable Scout Group Band, 1923



1st Whitstable Scout Group Band, 1924