

Mansfield Open-Air Mission Band

Gavin Holman, 13 October 2025

The open-air missions were started by the Wesleyans in Mansfield in 1892, and were shortly joined by the Primitive Methodists and the Free Church in their meetings. J.W. Graham, a member of the local Wesleyan Methodist Church, organised a brass band in 1919, to accompany the open-air mission services. At first this was a boys' band of some 20 players, all of whom worked in the collieries. At a later date a few adults also joined the band to swell the numbers. In its early years it was conducted by Mr F. Eggleshall.

Mansfield had no shortage of bands during the period of the Open-Air Mission Band. The Mansfield Woodhouse, Mansfield Borough, Mansfield Colliery, Mansfield British Legion, Mansfield Salvation Army, and Mansfield Excelsior Bands were all contemporary with the Mission Band.

The Band supported the local Methodist churches and raised funds for various good works in the district, particularly support the childrens' and hospital funds.



Members of the Band (above) in 1923:

H. Kemp, J. Parker, A. Knight, S. Steele, F. Jelly, C. Clarke, L. Johnson, J. Tack, S. Ward, F. Kirkland, J. Roberts, E. Ward, F. Clibbery, C. Shaw, William Towers, A. Clibbery, L. Litchfield, H. Brocklehurst, M. Boocock, R. Jakeman, W. Stoke, P. Vardy, H. Eggleshaw, W. Bradley, G.E. Flint, S. Ross, F. Eggleshaw, J.W. Graham, F.N. Ellis, E. Pilgrim, V. Sutherland, E. Hobson, W. Towers, A. Lister, A. Hobson, and G. Ward

Arthur Henshaw was conductor of the Band in 1935.

The Band competed in the City of Leicester Brass Band Festival (4th Section) at the Lancaster Hall, on Saturday 7 March 1936, playing the test piece "Sunrise to Sunset". They were unplaced.

There is no mention of the Band after 1936, so it is assumed that it disbanded soon thereafter, and certainly did not survive WW2.

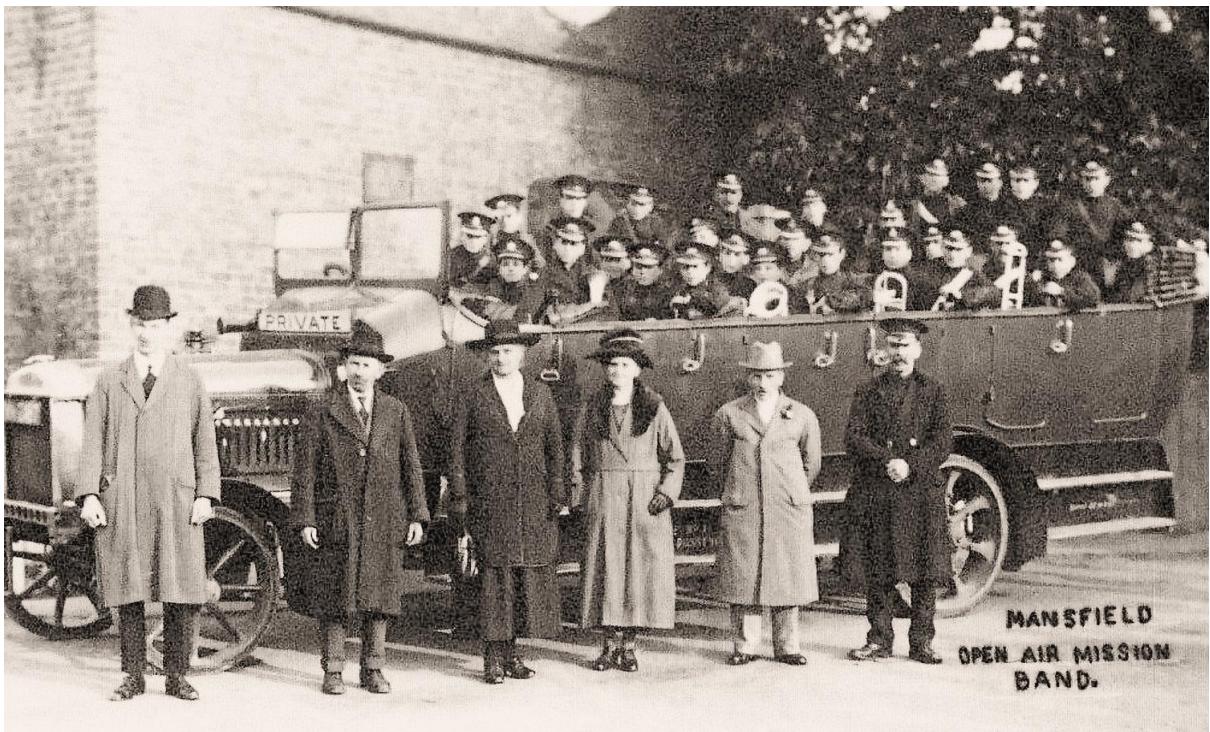


The Band playing at an open-air demonstration, c.1922

List of the Mansfield Open-Air Mission Band's known engagements:

- Saturday 11 September 1920 – played in Spalding market place
- Saturday 27 August 1921 – played at Holbeach, marching and on the bridge, collecting £4 5s for the Mission.
- Tuesday 22 November 1921 – organised and took part in the music festival in Mansfield YMCA Hall, raising funds for band uniforms.
- Tuesday 29 November 1921 - music festival in Mansfield YMCA Hall.
- Tuesday 24 January 1922 - music festival in Mansfield YMCA Hall, raising funds for Mansfield Hospital.
- Saturday 24 June 1922 – led the local Sunday Schools demonstration procession.
- Saturday 2 September 1922 – drove by char-a-banc to Spalding, playing in Hall Place, then to Holbeach, playing in the market.
- Sunday 3 September 1922 – gave a concert in Moulton village and then visited Whaplode, before returning to Spalding, playing themselves into the town.
- Sunday 12 November 1922 – performed at the Mansfield Mayoral Service.
- Wednesday 22 November 1922 – gave a concert in the YMCA Hall.
- Wednesday 14 February 1923 - music festival in Mansfield YMCA Hall.
- Tuesday 22 May 1923 – took part in the Non-conformist churches' demonstration at Sutton-in-Ashfield, together with the B Winning, Kirkby Old Silver, Mansfield British Legion, Stanton Hill, Pleasley, Kirkby Salvation Army and Sutton Temperance Bands.

- Saturday 1 September 1923 – made their 4th annual visit to Spalding, also visiting Whaplode and Skegness the following day, raising £15 in Whaplode.



The Band on one of its trips to Spalding & Whaplode

- Saturday 15 September 1923 – visited Debdale Hall.
- Saturday 19 July 1924 – performed in Spalding over two days.
- Saturday 30 August 1924 – visited Whaplode and Holbeach and performed over the weekend.
- Monday 1 June 1925 – led the procession of the Non-conformist Sunday Schools.
- Sunday 9 May 1926 – gave various concerts over the weekend to provide “soothing strains” in support of local strikers in the General Strike.
- Sunday 23 May 1926 – further concert following Sunday School demonstrations in the town.
- October 1926 - the band made its usual visit to Whaplode.
- Sunday 5 December 1926 – the first of a regular winter Sunday ‘popular service’ at the Victoria Hall, Mansfield – known as “Happy Sunday Evenings”.
- Sunday 4 September 1927 – annual visit to Whaplode, collecting £13 10s.
- Monday 5 September 1927 - visit to Skegness.
- Wednesday 23 November 1927 - music festival in Mansfield YMCA Hall.
- Saturday 23 June 1928 – played at the Oxton Wesley Church fete and sports.
- Saturday 1 September 1928 – visit to Spalding, playing in the Sheep Market.
- Sunday 2 September 1928 - visit to Whaplode.
- Sunday 19 July 1931 – the band’s 11th annual visit to Whaplode.

Some of the other contemporary Mansfield bands:



Mansfield Colliery Brass Band



Mansfield Excelsior Silver Prize Band



Mansfield Military Band, 1913



MANSFIELD SALVATION ARMY BAND.