

The town or borough of Mossley is situated 10½ miles from Manchester, and 2½ from Stalybridge, on the London and North Western Railway, and has a population of about 16,000, a great proportion of whom are engaged in the cotton manufacture.

The town occupies a very unique geographical position, being situated in the three counties of Yorkshire, Cheshire and Lancashire.

The love of music has always been a leading feature in the character of the inhabitants. The Vocal Society at the present day is one of the leading combinations of the North of England and the brass band may also be classed among the first half-dozen bands in the country.

The old band was formed about the year 1850, and obtained considerable notoriety in its day, taking the 1st prize in the first Belle Vue contest in 1853. In the second year they came off without a prize, and in the third year they took the 3rd at Belle Vue, and 1st at Congleton. The following members of the old band are still living, viz. :— Messrs. James Sykes, Robt. Schofield, W. Fielding, Wm. Taylor, Joseph Robinson, John Rhodes, and Julius Schofield.

At this time the band had Ab instruments, and as the principal contests were being conducted on Bb instruments, the cost of changing was too great, and this laid the foundation of the break-up of the old band. Many of the players found musical situations elsewhere, and one by one dwindled away, until there seemed no prospect of the continued existence of the band.

Then again the condition of labour at this time made it very inconvenient for members to attend practice. Most of the mills worked till 8 o'clock at night and until 4 on Saturday afternoon, and this gave little time for rehearsal.

The members had moreover to rely on their own resources—they had no subscriptions from outsiders, and whatever money was raised by engagements or by concerts was put to the funds. Various schemes were tried to keep up the finances, but whether from apathy or inability of the townspeople they were not supported generously enough to meet the demands and expenses of the band and in 1858 the instruments and all the available property of the band were sold to meet its liabilities.

A sketch of the band would be incomplete without special reference to Mr. James Sykes the Eb Bombardon player, and celebrated player on the bass violin. On the latter instrument he has made his name well-known throughout the kingdom, and has taken engagements for the season at Belle Vue, Blackpool Pier, New Brighton, Harrogate, Woodhall Spa, and the principal circuits on travel. Mr. J. Bestwick, now trombonist with Carl Rosa Opera Company, was one of his pupils, as well as Mr. G. Brooks, the celebrated horn player in the present Mossley Band.

After the break-up of the band another was formed at Roughtown, a part of Mossley. This was called the Druids Band, and in its day was successful in carrying off the first prize at Pomona. This band also succumbed, and soon after an attempt was made to re-establish the old band, which some of the Druids band joined, but it was not until May, 1893, that they resumed their contesting career, with Mr. G. Brooks as leader, and Mr. A. Owen as conductor. In June, 1893, it was decided to engage Mr. Edwin Swift as conductor, and in Sept., 1893, Mr. J. F. Carter was appointed leader. The band became very popular, and still more so when Mr. Angus Holden, the famous cornettist threw in his lot with the band, and his skilful and beautiful style was at once a great attraction to the adherents and supporters of the band.

The committee of management is composed of a number of gentlemen who are enthusiasts in the

cause of music and the best welfare of the band.

In August, 1894, they purchased Waterton House, a detached residence with 3 acres of ground and the Mossley Band Club has been established on the premises. The building is singularly well adapted for the purpose. There is a beautiful lawn in front for practice in fine weather, and the stabling and coach-house have been gutted, and make a very convenient band-room. A bowling green is in course of construction, and this, when finished will be a great attraction and cause a large influx of members, who already number over 400. It would be invidious to make any distinction among the band of active workers, but in all fairness and in acknowledgment of their valuable services the names of Mr. Sam Shaw Haigh, the President, and Mr. J. H. Buckley, the indefatigable Secretary, should not be passed over.

The following is a list of prizes won by the band during the past three years :—

1893.			
Name.	Prize.	£	s. d.
Warrington	2nd	8	0 0
Blackpool	6th	12	0 0
1894.			
North Ashlon	4th	8	0 0
Southport	divided 1st and 2nd	13	0 0
Knutsford	3rd	5	0 0
Belle Vue (July)	3rd	19	19 0
Eccles	1st	15	0 0
Crompton	1st	15	0 0
Belle Vue (Sep.)	6th	13	10 0
1895.			
Clough Hall.	3rd	15	0 0
(Beating Black Dike.)			
Prestwich	4th	3	0 0
Uppermill	1st Quickstep	4	2 0
Southport	1st and 2nd divided	13	0 0
Rawtenstall	3rd	8	0 0
Kingston	1st	15	3 0
(21 bands played.)			
Chadderton	2nd	12	0 0
Saddleworth	1st and 2nd divided	10	0 0
Saddleworth	Quickstep 1st	1	10 0
Knutsford	1st	15	0 0
Darwen	4th	2	10 0
Silverdale	2nd	16	0 0
Blackpool	6th	8	0 0
Belle Vue	6th	23	15 0
Saddleworth	1st in Selection and Quickstep	16	0 0
Sandbach	1st in Selection and 2nd in Quickstep	15	10 0

MR. J. F. CARTER,

**BANDMASTER AND SOLO EUPHONIUM,
MOSSLEY BAND.**

Mr. J. F. Carter was born at Greenfield in 1857, and began his musical career with the Royal George Band when he was 14 years of age. He afterwards played the solo baritone with the Boars-burst Band, and soon after changed this instrument for the euphonium, on which he became very proficient, and his services were secured by Messrs. o'-th'-Barn Band in 1883, with whom he remained until 1891, and assisted this band very materially by his splendid tone and execution to carry off the best prizes at the principal contests. He won a euphonium for the best solo at Derby, and a medal at Leeds for a similar performance.

He subsequently played with Radcliffe, and was then appointed leader of Mossley Band in Sept., 1893, and from this date the contesting career of the band may be said to begin, as he infused such a spirit of enthusiasm and courage in the members by his example and instruction that they applied themselves with vigour and determination to raise the status of the band and to revive the faded honour of their predecessors.