

WESTWOOD PRIZE BAND.

The above band belongs to the small colliery village of Westwood, which is situated about 11 miles west of Newcastle, and 3 miles east of Shotley Bridge and Consett. It was organised about the year 1892, and is entirely composed of local miners. They commenced their career under a well-known local musician named John Dawson, and did very well under his able tuition. Shortly afterwards they secured the services of an old army veteran named William Wilson and made great progress under him, but unfortunately he was seized with a severe illness from which he never recovered. He was conveyed home from the Newcastle Infirmary where he died and was buried with every honour by his fellow musicians.

The Band now began to think of contesting and looking round their choice fell upon Mr. Luke Harkey, the gifted Sopranoist of Tanfield Lea Band, which was then in its prime. After a few months' drill they competed at Marley Hill Contest and were unsuccessful. In 1895 they tried their luck at Walbottle contest and secured 2nd prize for March. Mr. Harker persuaded them to try a professional and the services of Mr. W. Holdsworth, of Wyke, were requisitioned.

The Band attended 5 contests in 1896 and secured 6 1sts and 1 2nd. In 1897 their record was 6 1sts, 6 2nds, and 1 3rd, out of 8 Contests. In September, 1897, after many tempting offers, Mr. Harker went to Muirkirk Band in Ayrshire, Scotland, for 12 months. The Band was in rather low water in 1898 and only competed in 3 Contests, winning a 1st and a 4th.

Mr. Harker returned to his old love in September, 1898, and in 1899 the Westwood men had another very brilliant season, securing six 1sts, six 2nds, one 3rd, and two 5ths.

The soloists, who are all natives of Westwood, have also distinguished themselves individually in the contest-field. At Tow Law Contest in 1896 Mr. Stephenson won the medal for Solo Horn and Mr. Beckwith won the Solo Cornet Medal at the same place, 11 bands competing. In 1897 Mr. Jos. Allison won the medal for the best Euphonium at Hexham, 9 bands competing, while in 1899

at Shildon contest their Solo Trombonist, Mr. R. Henry, succeeded in bringing off the medal for the best Trombone, out of 16 competitors.

The record of the Band for the four years is as follows :—

1896.

Contest.	Selection.	March.
Mickley	—	1st
Haydon Bridge	1st	1st
Ryton	—	2nd
Tow Law	1st	1st
N'wc'stle-on-Tyne	1st	—

1897.

Haltwhistle ..	2nd	1st
Stanley	2nd	—
Hebburn	1st	2nd
Warkworth ..	3rd	—
Penshaw	1st	2nd
Haydon Bridge	2nd	2nd
Hexham	1st	—
Murton	—	1st

1898.

Carlisle	4th	—
Waterhouses ..	—	1st
Penshaw	—	—

1899.

Mickley	1st	1st
Stanley	2nd	—
Haltwhistle ..	2nd	1st
Waterhouses ..	1st	2nd
Shotley Bridge	3rd	1st
Bishop Auckland	2nd	—
Victoria Garsfield	2nd	2nd
Sunderland ..	5th	—
Shildon	1st	—
Hexham	5th	—
Tynemouth ..	—	—

The Band have to thank the public in and about their own village for their liberal support and kindly interest, to which not a little of the success attained is attributable. The band are full of determination to go ahead, and mean if possible to eclipse all their previous achievements in the coming season.