

## ALLOA INSTRUMENTAL BAND.

The Alloa Instrumental Band was formed as a Town Band in 1875, under the able conductorship of Mr. John McBeath. Nothing of note took place during these years—from 1875 to 1881, when band contests were started in Scotland, the first and only one taking place at Wemyss Castle, Fife, during that year (1881). Alloa Band competed thereat and was successful in getting first prize. During the years 1881 to 1885 the band attended five contests at Wemyss and secured four first prizes and one 2nd prize, a very creditable record indeed.

In 1882 a contest was held at Coatbridge, and there success also awaited them, being awarded the first prize, also a cornet and silver cup. In 1884 a contest took place at Alloa, where they secured 2nd prize for selection and 4th prize for quickstep; and in 1886, at a contest in Edinburgh 4th prize was obtained; and a year later they took 3rd prize at Galashiels.

In 1888 they attended seven contests, viz., Edinburgh, Waverley Market, Kirkcaldy, two at Stirling, Armadale, Dunfermline, and Glasgow Exhibition, securing three 1sts, three 2nds, and one 4th. Of the foregoing prizes 12 must be credited to Mr. John McBeath, as conductor, viz.: six 1sts, four 2nds, one 3rd, one 4th, including a cup and cornet. Great praise is due to Mr. McBeath in bringing forward this band as an Amateur Contesting Band, with such remarkable success. Two prizes, viz., one 2nd and one 4th are to the credit of Mr. Jas. Jenkins, and 3 prizes, viz., two 1sts and one 4th, to the credit of Mr. J. Irvine.

In 1889 the Band secured the services of Mr. Richard Marsden, of Manchester, and during the year 1889-90-91 the band was very successful under his conductorship, having secured in all 14 prizes, viz., eleven 1sts, one 2nd, one 3rd, and one 6th, including 2 cornets and 2 medals.

Having dispensed with Mr. Marsden, the band in 1892 engaged Mr. J. E. Robinson, of Oldham, as conductor. During the contesting seasons '92-'93-'94 the band has been most successful, their list of winnings being ten 1sts, two 2nds, four 3rds, two 4ths and one 6th prize, including one medal.

In 1892 Messrs. Silvani and Smith issued a Championship Gold Medal, open to Scotland, to be awarded to the band having most points during that season and, as showing that the Alloa Instrumental Band were still maintaining their pre-eminent position, they were, after due deliberation, awarded the Gold Medal. This success was primarily due to the efficient conductorship of Mr. J. E. Robinson.

From 1881 to '94 the band has secured in all 29 1sts, 13 2nds, 6 3rds, 5 4ths and 2 6ths. Of recent years the band has had numerous private engagements, the grand total amounting to upwards of £3,000.

The band is equipped with a beautiful set of plated instruments made by Besson and Co., London. The instruments were exhibited at Chicago Exhibition, and were played upon by the members of Gilmore's Band at the adjudication of the Brass Band Instruments.

The trustees of the band have just issued their balance-sheet, which shows the funds of the band to be in a most flourishing condition, there being a balance in hand, after meeting all liabilities, of £124/16/-. Thus the band is in a splendid financial position, and we doubt whether there is a single band in the Kingdom that can produce such a favourable balance sheet. It speaks well for the excellent management of the band. At the same time

the band is, in a musical sense, one of the finest, if not *the* finest, in the country.

We append a list of the band members:—

Soprano and Bandmaster—	Solo Baritone, R. Dawson.
Wm. Borthwick.	2nd " W. Patterson.
Soprano, Wm. Henderson.	Solo Euphonium,
Solo Cornet, J. Mackinson.	H. Hutchinson.
" " Alex. Fyfe.	2nd Euphonium,
2nd Cornet and Secy., Wm. McLeod.	D. Mackenzie.
3rd Cornet, Wm. McBeath.	Solo Trombone, D. Carr.
1st Flugel, Alex. Allen.	2nd " W. Sinclair.
2nd " (vacant)	Bass " P. Binnie.
3rd " J. Lawson.	Eb Bass, J. Harrower.
Solo Horn, John Fyfe.	" " R. Davis.
2nd " Wm. Baxter.	Bb. " J. McLaren.
3rd " Alex. Patterson	BBb " R. Hunter.
	Bass Drum, J. Stobie.

### MR. J. E. ROBINSON,

CONDUCTOR, ALLOA INSTRUMENTAL BAND.

Mr. J. E. Robinson was born at Mossley in Dec. 1845, and was reared in the midst of Brass Band playing, his father being solo cornet player in Mossley band, of which our subject became a member when about twelve years of age. He commenced his contesting career at the two great contests at Crystal Palace in 1860-61. Some time after this, his family having removed to Oldham he became connected with the Oldham Church Schools Band (afterwards Oldham Rifles), commencing with first baritone, afterwards first horn and then solo cornet, under such teachers as Mr. J. Brophy (of "3 D. G's" fame), Mr. J. Sidney Jones and Mr. Edwin Swift. Later on the services of Mr. A. Owen were secured and Mr. Robinson filled the post of sub-conductor under that gentleman for twelve years. We might just say that Mr. R's first appearance at Belle Vue was in 1868, playing solo horn for Meltham Mills, the band gaining 4th prize.

In the season of 1890 Mr. Robinson began teaching some of the junior bands for contesting, and was very successful, giving the Conway Brass Bands, North Wales, a week's training, and winning four first prizes with them. He also had the Shaw and Chadderton Brass Bands, taking prizes with both, including 2nds at Southport, Droylsden, and Bolton.

In March, 1892 he was engaged by the Alloa Band as conductor, and during the first year won the gold medal presented by Messrs. Silvani and Smith for the Championship of Scotland. During 1893 he was appointed conductor of Lassodie Band, with whom he has won many prizes. In addition, he has been appointed to train the Cambusbarron and Bonnybridge Bands, as well as the Alloa Orchestral Society.

Mr. Robinson's testimonials include 2 gold medals and a gold albert from Oldham Rifles, a group of portraits from the Shaw Band, Silvani Gold Medal, value 10 guineas, and a silver-mounted ivory baton and purse of gold from Alloa Band.

He has also fulfilled numerous engagements as an adjudicator, and has had to refuse several repeat engagements since going over the Border. Mr. Robinson has proved himself a most successful teacher and any band in want of a thoroughly good, practical tutor, will find in him the very man they need.

We might just mention, in conclusion, that Mr. Robinson's name is on the list for the Queen's Decoration to Volunteers for long service, he having served 20 years and 8 months in the Oldham Corps.