

GOAT SANDWICHES TO START A BAND.

Queer Romance of Music in a Village Near Huddersfield.

From our Reporter.

HUDDERSFIELD, Thursday.

MORE than 30 years ago, a plain-spoken, good-natured farmer called together village folk near here to decide whether they should form a band.

"We must have a band of our own," said he—"and what's more, gentlemen, I'll give a goat to start the band fund."

The offer was accepted; a band was founded in the little village which has given its name to one of the best-known bands in the Holme Valley. It is the Hade Edge Prize Band originally known as the Billygoats Band.

The present dignified title is perhaps more in keeping with the band's accomplishments. They have won prizes at many large contests.

The founder of this band with a quaint history now lives at Holmfirth, two miles from the village of Hade Edge. He is Mr. Jonathan Hirst, a shopkeeper at Upper Bridge, who is proud of having founded the Billygoats Band. Jonathan is getting old, and he is crippled with rheumatism, but he keeps cheerful.

"I can certainly claim the honour of having founded the Billygoats Band but only the oldest folk in these parts can remember how we raised the money," Jonathan told me, at his little shop to-day.

"I was born at Hade Edge, and was for many years a farmer and stonemason there. The band was formed this way. Folk in the village had been grumbling because we were having to pay £3 a year to a band from another village whenever we had a Sunday school treat, or any other festivity, so I called a village meeting and suggested a band of our own. The young men in the village were very keen on the idea. Everybody took an interest in the band. There were many quarry workers at Hade Edge in those days.

"I had a young billygoat on my farm. We killed it and cooked it; and we cut it up and sold small portions at so much a plate. It was very tasty, too. The people ate goat sandwiches, and the proceeds went towards starting the band.

"The sale of the billygoat was so profitable that later we roasted three more goats. They were cut up and made into sandwiches. I should not mind dining off a piece of one of those goats tonight," said Jonathan, chuckling at the memory of the sandwiches.

It was inevitable after the goats had been sacrificed for the sake of the band, that people could not forget the fact. Whether the early bandsmen at Hade Edge were somewhat dismayed when the band became known as the Billygoats Band, Mr. Hirst did not recall. But he said that occasionally vulgar people made goat-like noises when the bandsmen passed, and there was much good-natured chaff.

"I am glad to say that the band flourished

from the start," said Mr. Hirst, continuing the story. "They have won a great many prizes since those days. The money we got from the sale of the billygoats went towards buying uniforms and instruments, if I remember rightly.

"Now Hade Edge Band have a bandroom of their own in a two-acre field. They have progressed better than ever I expected."

Mr. Hirst recalls that on their early outings the band used to travel by wagonette. There was much more interest in brass bands in those days, and people would walk miles to hear a good one.

At Hade Edge there was a much earlier band in existence than the Billygoats Band, and this earlier band had a very vulgar but highly expressive nickname "Belly Band," because, after drawing fees, the bandsmen had a reputation for settling down in the nearest public-house.

Mr. Hirst, by the way, claims it was he who suggested the idea of founding the cattle market at Holmfirth.