

Bands in the Mining Industry

[Worksop Miners Welfare Band]

No study of Brass Bands in the area could be complete without reference to the many colliery bands formed following the sinking of collieries in the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and South Yorkshire Coalfields.

Owing to the geographical location of Worksop within Nottinghamshire and the concentration of mines to the West of Bassetlaw, the distribution of Bands is inclined to follow that area.

It is either an accident of history, geology or the machinations of the former National Coal Board which places Worksop in the South Yorkshire Coalfield. This is not to say that there were no Town Bands and Village Bands elsewhere within Bassetlaw, though few if any achieved a high degree of success in competition. Nevertheless they provided that local community spirit and identity which served the residents of those areas in all the ways a Brass Band does.

No account of local bands would be complete without reference to the World Famous Creswell Colliery Band, who won the British Open Championship in 1947, under the baton of conductor Harold Moss. The band had been striving for this success since 1940 when they came second; third in 1943, and second in 1944. The band subsequently made a considerable number of radio broadcasts and recordings, and on one occasion playing for His Majesty King George VI.

A comparison drawn between the situation at the turn of the century and ninety years later shows a dramatic reduction in the number and distribution of Bands in the area, due in part to the decline of the mining industry. Most Colliery Bands were supported by the mine owners and later by the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) and the former National Coal Board. It is said that in the early years the mine owners bestowed patronage on their bandsmen in giving them comparatively light or surface duties. Others who did not wish to encourage a band did precisely the opposite!

Many Bands sustained themselves using instruments which were provided by CISWO, who could and do insist on their return if the Band severed their connection with a colliery or the mining industry. Instruments have always been expensive by comparison with the level of wages/salaries pertaining at any one time. The financial difficulties of the Worksop Band in the 1920's is evidence a local band trying to maintain independence.

Closed Collieries

1	Kilnhurst Colliery	1858-1986
2	Steetley Colliery	1873-1983
3	Firbeck Colliery	1925-1968
4	Orgreave Colliery	1851-1981
5	Shireoaks Colliery	1856-1990
6	Dinnington Colliery	1903 - 1991?
7	Treeton Colliery	1877-
8	Yorkshire Main Colliery	1910-1985
9	Brookhouse Colliery	1929-1985
10	Thorne Colliery	1912-1956 (re-sunk in 1979)
11	New Stubbin Colliery	1913 - 1978
12	Bullcroft Colliery	1908 - 1970
13	Manton Colliery	1888-1994

Other Bands in Worksop from 1856

The Worksop Journal reported that on Whit Monday 1856, when three Friendly Societies formed a procession, three Bands took part. After the procession to the Parish Church and Divine Service, they dined at various hostelries. The Old Abbey Club dined at the Corn Exchange where Mr Marshall of the Greyhound Inn catered for 240 persons. The Mosbro' Band attended and played appropriate airs after each toast. The Golden Ball Friendly Society dined in their large room... and the Sherwood Rangers Band contributed to the pleasure of the day. The Wheat Sheaf Club dined at the club room of the Wheat Sheaf Inn, and the Sutton Brass Band very much delighted the Society with their performances.

1871 was a busy year for the Band of the Worksop Rifle Volunteers. In the 20th May edition of the Worksop, Retford and Gainsborough Times, it was reported that the 2nd detachment of the 7th Hussars arrived in Worksop, en route from York to Aldershot. They arrived in Worksop on the Saturday and stayed until Sunday. At 10.00am they paraded in front of the Corn Exchange and marched off to the Abbey Church. The Band of the Worksop Rifle Volunteers kindly lent their services.

On June 3rd of the same year, the Whit Monday processions were headed by three Benefit Societies. The Golden Ball Club was headed by the Band of the Worksop Rifle Volunteers, and on reaching Wheat Sheaf, the Wheat Sheaf Club fell in and was headed by the Harthill Band. Subsequently both Clubs joined the Abbey Sick and Friendly Society, the whole forming an interesting procession, and were marched to the Abbey Church where a very appropriate service was preached by the Reverend E.Hawley.

In 1878 upwards of 100 men and horses of the 20th Hussars arrived in Worksop from Mansfield on their way to Leeds. As they marched into Worksop, the music of their excellent band heralded their arrival. They drew up in front of the Lion Hotel,

and the men were despatched to their various Billets. The officers stayed at the Lion Hotel, and in the evening a large group congregated outside the officers mess, expecting the band to provide some entertaining music, as was the usual custom. On this occasion they were disappointed. It was later understood that the officers had been entertained by a Worksop gentleman, and the services of the band was utilised to entertain the officers. At about 6.00am on Tuesday morning, the men mustered outside the Lion Hotel, and shortly afterwards started for Doncaster, the band playing them out of town.

It was reported in the Worksop Guardian of May 8th 1896 that members of the 4th Nottingham Rifle Volunteers held their annual Volunteer Church Parade at the Priory Church. The Battalion Band comprising some 22 performers, under the direction of Bandmaster Belcher headed the procession. In the afternoon the band played a selection in the Marker Square.

Another band in Worksop was Steel and Garland Priory Foundry Band, whose conductor was Mr E.Russon. On November 18th 1910, the Worksop Old Soldiers Association held their Annual Church Parade, and the Priory Foundry Band took part in the procession, along with the Worksop Town Band and Shireoaks Band. In the evening a concert was given at the Gaiety Theatre. The Priory Foundry Band played selections. Brandman Craven of the Priory Foundry Band received first prize for the smartest Bandsman.

During the same period there was a Druids Church Parade at Worksop. The Smith Pride Lodge of the Sheffield Equalised Independent Druids whose headquarters were at the Market Hotel, held its annual demonstration on Sunday on a large scale. The members numbered 160, they gathered at the Hotel and, headed by the Handsworth Woodhouse Prize Band paraded the streets. They proceeded along Bridge Place, Eastgate, Priorswell Road, Potter Street to the United Free Methodist Church. After the church service the procession continued through Bridge Street, Westgate, Norfolk Street and Newcastle Avenue to the cricket ground, where the Handsworth Woodhouse Band gave a concert, which included such items as:

March - The Roman

Selection per Astra Fideles - Mayerbeer (with cornet solo)

Variations - played by Mr E.Trout

Selection "Comfort ye my people" – Handel

Selection "Kyrie & Gloria" unknown composer

It was mentioned that the band had taken part in four contests that year and had won 5 prizes.

Indeed, on the previous Saturday the Handsworth Band had won 2nd prize at Pleasley in the 'selection' and Mr E.Trout won a silver medal for the best cornet player in the test piece. Much of the success of the band was attributed to the conductor Mr J.W.Coupe. There was a further parade at 5.15pm which proceeded via Bridge Place, Potter Street on to the cricket ground, where the band gave another concert. The programme included the following items:

March - The Cornet
Selection - Warce - R.Smith
Selection - Lucretia Borgia - H.Round
Selection - Trill the Lark – Metcalf
Selection - Mozart - H.Round
March - George the Fire - R.Smith

In 1901 the Worksop Guardian reported on Friday June 7th that the 7th Yeomanry Band under bandmaster H.Holmes was out for the Sunday Church Parade. The men numbered 300 and were inspected by Lord Galway. On July 18th of the same year the Worksop Guardian reported that at Osberton Gardens Mr Paske and his Yeomanry Band provided a musical treat.

On 29th July 1910, the Regimental Band of the Yeomanry played in Worksop under Bandmaster T.W.Renshaw, together with the Battalion Band of the Territorials under Bandmaster Boddice.

Worksop Bands which no longer exist

The previous pages make reference to several Worksop and district Bands which no longer exist:

- The Band of the Worksop Rifle Volunteers
- The Steel and Garland Priory Foundry Band
- The Sherwood Rangers Band

Bands which have formed, disappeared and survived since 1831

Distribution of Bands within approx. 15 mile radius of Worksop.

* denotes the Band is in existence at the time of writing.

- Rawmarsh Band
- Rotherham Town Band
- *Whiston Brass Band
- *Maltby Colliery Band
- *Harworth Colliery Band - now Harworth RJB Band
- *Dinnington Colliery Band
- Firbeck Colliery Band
- * Killamarsh Band
- Harthill Band
- *Whitwell Colliery Band - now Whitwell Band
- Shireoaks Colliery Band
- *Worksop Salvation Army (Worksop Citadel Band)
- *Worksop Town Band - now Worksop Miners Welfare Band
- Band of the Worksop Rifle Volunteers
- Steel & Garland (Priory Foundry) Band
- Retford Town Band
- Clowne Band

- *Creswell Colliery Band - now Creswell Rexco Band
- *Welbeck Estates Band
- Bolsover Colliery Band
- *Pleasley Colliery Band
- *Shirebrook Colliery Band
- *Thoresby Colliery Band – now Thoresby (UK Coal) Band
- Tickhill Band
- Bawtry Band