

# South Street Mission Brass Band

## Some scenes from fifty years of an evangelistic brass band

*Compiled by Gavin Holman, April 2019*

The South Street Mission was located in Macbeth Street, Hammersmith, Middlesex and was founded in 1901 by Sister Lizzie (d. 1949). The band was founded in May 1909, and was active through to the mid-1950s, competing in a few contests in its later years.



*South Street Mission Band – 8<sup>th</sup> April 1912*

**March 1910** - William Wells, the leader of the band, was bound over to be of good behaviour by the local magistrates at Mortlake, following a complaint against the band and his singing outside the premises of Florence Etcherley of Castlenau, Barnes.

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 1910** - Performed at the People's Hall, Boone Street, Lee, on, supporting the services there.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1911** – performed at the Coronation celebrations at the Hammersmith Workhouse, at 3.30pm, “marched up playing a lively air, attracting all the inmates to the lawn where the band formed in a circle, and for the next half-hour discoursed music which was much appreciated by all”

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July 1911** – conducted by Mr Reginald Tune, led a procession of the United West London Brotherhood Societies to a demonstration in Ravenscourt Park

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 1911** – performed selections at a Temperance Demonstration organised by the Good Shepherd Mission and United Kingdom Alliance at Ravenscourt Park

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 1912** – the band, conducted by Mr R. Tune, accompanied the members of the Mission on their excursion to South Harrow, led by the Superintendent of the Mission, Sister Lizzie

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 1912** – the band, conducted by Mr R. Tune, accompanied the Hammersmith “Women’s Own” on their excursion to Sunbury

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1912** – performed selections at a Temperance Demonstration organised by the Good Shepherd Mission and United Kingdom Alliance at Ravenscourt Park

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December 1913** – performed at the celebrations of the Mission’s Inauguration of Independence and Separation from West End Church



*Conductor Reginald Tune*

**May 1914** – the band attended the funeral of Brother Thomas Carter, U.B.L.U. The collection of 30 shillings which was raised, was given to Sister Lizzie who promptly returned it as a donation to the relief funds for the locked-out labourers

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 1914** – performed selections at a Temperance Demonstration organised by the Lawson Mission and United Kingdom Alliance at Ravenscourt Park

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August 1914** – the band, accompanied 170 children of the Mission Sunday School on their excursion to Eastcote via Ravenscourt Park

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August 1914** – the band and Sister Lizzie marched the principal streets of Brentford before holding a meeting at St Paul’s Road, Brentford, opposite Brentford Dock

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August 1914** – the band held a “helpful” meeting at Turnham Green

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 1914** – the band held “helpful” meetings at Ravenscourt Park in the afternoon, and The Grove in the evening. Every Sunday evening, on the return of the band to the Mission, a naval and military service was conducted by Sister Lizzie, those in uniform being especially invited.



*Open-air service at Ravenscourt Park, c. 1913*

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1914** – the band and Sister Lizzie held an open-air service at St Paul's Road, Brentford, opposite Brentford Dock

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 1914** – marched through the streets in the neighbourhood of West Kensington Park, drawing large crowds

**1914-1918** - After the outbreak of WW1 most of the band joined the forces to fight. Sadly four of them did not survive, but the others did return after the war ended. During the war, when the men were away fighting, Sister Lizzie recruited ladies to play in the band to keep the musical work going.

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 1914** – marched in “harvest attire” through King Street and other thoroughfares in the neighbourhood, halting at the residence of Miss Sayers in St Peter's Square, where the band played “*The Church's One Foundation*”

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 1914** – paraded the streets of the borough on behalf of the Askew Road Wesleyans, attracting large crowds with their playing of different national anthems and other stirring melodies

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 1914** – Sister Lizzie offered the services of the band to the War Office for recruiting purposes

**March 1915** – the band provided support to the mission at Newton Avenue Church over a period of three weeks, accompanying marches during their evangelistic mission

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 1915** – the band played at the musical festival which was held to celebrate the anniversary of the independence of the Mission, conductor Reginald Tune, bandmaster H. Tune. They opened the proceedings with the Belgian National Anthem (as the festival was in aid of the Belgian Relief Funds). Prior to the War the band numbered 46 players, but 10 had since joined the army

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 1915** – the band accompanied the West Hammersmith Volunteers to their Inspection at the Guards' Ground, in Hyde Park

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1915** – the band performed at Fulham Military Hospital

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916** – the band led the cortège at the funeral of Clifford Tune (aged 18), son of conductor Reginald Tune, who had only a few days before sought to join the 18<sup>th</sup> London Regiment.



*Bandmaster H. Tune*



*South Street Mission Band – 1914*

**March 1917** – Charles Robinson was arrested and charged with stealing a cornet from the Mission Brass Band in January – he had asked to join the band and said he would come along the following Monday. When the band went out on the march, twenty minutes later Robinson called at the hall and said the bandmaster had sent

him to fetch a cornet, which was then given to him – he did not take it to the bandmaster.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September 1920** – the band joined forces with the Hanwell Salvation Army and their band at the harvest thanksgiving services at Brentford

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July 1922** – the band, conductor H. Tune, accompanied an excursion of old people from the Fulham and Kensington Workhouses to Ducane Road Hospital, Shepherd's Bush

**November 1926** – the band took part in the Armistice Day processions and services in the borough

**12<sup>th</sup> February 1928** – the band visited Wormwood Scrubs Prison for the afternoon service – music performed included Rimington, Dawn of Spring, Crimson Star, Sandringham, march Lodestar



*South Street Mission Hall*

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June** – the band travelled to Fleetwood, Lancashire to provide music for services at St Paul's Church. In addition to the five services, including one on the beach, the band visited Blackpool, then to a musical festival in Fleetwood on the Monday before returning to Euston

**September 1934** – the band performed at the Mission harvest festival, conductor R.H. Tune, music included the tone poem Maesgarmon, and Ida & Dot cornet polka (by bandsmen C. Mullis & C. Chisnall)

**Early 1951** - The band was reformed and was known as the South Street Mission Christian Silver Band.

**May 12 1952:** To enable the Gorse Hill Salvation Army, Swindon, to buy floor covering for the aisles and platform of their hall in Chapel Street, the South Street Mission Band from Hammersmith in London gave a concert in Trinity Methodist Church, Cricklade Road. They marched along Cricklade Road playing as they went, and causing a traffic jam of four buses, eight cars and a large number of cyclists.

**Other events** – the band had many engagements (reported, unreported, and alluded to) in Hammersmith and nearby boroughs over the years, all with the aims of spreading the gospel, raising funds to help the poor and destitute, and supporting the Mission and other similar causes in the neighbourhood. These took the form of regular services, processions and marches, together with some secular and popular concerts. The driving force behind all this was Sister Lizzie until her death in 1949, at which time the band apparently declined or folded, only to be re-organised in 1951.



*South Street Mission Band – 1914*



*Soup kitchen at the Mission Hall*

## CONTEST RESULTS

6th Oct 1951	Oxford Annual Contest (Section 3), playing " <i>The Call of Youth</i> ", conductor J. E. Garratt
3rd Nov 1951	Berkshire & Neighbouring Counties Band Festival Guild (Section 3), playing " <i>The Spirit of Youth</i> ", conductor J. E. Garratt
1st Mar 1952	Hammersmith Contest (Third Division), playing " <i>Wayside Scenes</i> ", conductor J. E. Garratt - 4th place
5th Apr 1952	London and Southern Counties (Third Section), playing " <i>Rufford Abbey</i> "
11th Oct 1952	London and Home Counties BBA Contest (Third Section), conductor J. E. Garratt - 2nd place
8th Nov 1952	Berkshire & Neighbouring Counties Band Festival Guild (Section 2), playing " <i>Three Songs without Words</i> ", conductor J. E. Garratt - 5th place
7th Mar 1953	London & Home Counties BBA Spring Contest (Third Section), playing " <i>A Holiday Suite</i> "
28th Mar 1953	London and Southern Counties (Fourth Section), playing " <i>Country Sketches</i> "
10th Oct 1953	London and Home Counties BBA Contest (Third Section), playing " <i>A Holiday Suite</i> ", conductor H. Gurney Doe - 3rd place
21st Nov 1953	Berkshire & Neighbouring Counties Band Festival Guild (Section 2), playing " <i>A Holiday Suite</i> ", conductor H. Gurney Doe - 2nd place
6th Mar 1954	Hammersmith Contest (Third Division), playing " <i>Glastonbury</i> ", conductor H. Gurney Doe

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Notes on the founding of the band in 1909 from:

Sister Lizzie – "*Road Making for the King - Story of South Street Mission, Hammersmith*" - Morgan & Scott Ltd, London, 1914

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### ***A Joyful Noise***

The ever-increasing circle of those who are coming into personal contact with Jesus creates an imperative necessity for opening up additional avenues of service for them. Invariably the first emotion of their new life is an ardent desire to serve, in some definite way, the One who has changed the whole course of their career; and to bring others to know Him also. To train and develop the qualities necessary for effective service, and to find scope for their exercise, has ever been our ambition.

It was this desire that led to the formation of the Band. We believe that all music, vocal and instrumental, is one of God's most exquisite and delicate gifts to man, and one of the greatest means for enlarging the soul and bringing light into the hidden chambers of the life. In it there is demonstrated the underlying fact of human kinship; for, whether amongst the cultured classes or the denizens of the drab and dreary districts, it is a

universal speech, possessing always the power to awaken the deeper chords of the being, to educate and refine the mind. For, as Ruskin reminds us, "Music, when healthy, is a teacher of perfect order".



*Sister Lizzie*

Four years ago we saw the possibility of a "road-making" ministry in this direction, but there appeared many difficulties in the way. Yet, after much prayerful consideration, the mountains and hills were considerably lowered, the valleys became lifted, and the path was made clear and plain for the launching of the scheme. First came the careful framing of the rules that were to govern the Band. It will suffice to mention the first three-fold one. Every bandsman must be a Christian, a total abstainer, and a non-smoker.

Not only have we experienced no difficulty in getting bandsmen on these terms, but we have always had more applicants anxious to join than we can find instruments for. From the outset, we were desirous that men should count it a great privilege to serve in this way. Also, that they should be willing to surrender everything that would act as an impediment in the work of making good roads to the hearts and consciences of the people, along which the King could come unhindered. Therefore a high standard was set, and each man encouraged to attain to it. Unquestionably there is, in the human soul, an answer to the call for any work which has in it a

predominant element of sacrifice, and on this principle the Band was formed.

The value of a possession is always regulated according to what it has cost to obtain. Thus we realised that the men would, to a great extent, estimate the worth of their commission as bandsmen, in the light of the price to be paid for it, and the heights of sacrifice to be climbed.

With very few exceptions the men had no knowledge whatever of music, but they gave themselves to prayer, and real hard work, with the result that, in five months from the time they received their instruments, they were able to take part in the outdoor meetings.

In no small measure has the phenomenal success of the band been due to the unremitting toil of the conductor, the worthy son of our bandmaster. His unwearied patience with the men, his personal consecration and devotion to the highest interests of the work, together with his exceptional gifts, give us cause for thanksgiving "on every remembrance of him."

We cannot but rejoice when we remember many who, in the first instance, were drawn to the services by the strains of music, and have since found that peace which comes from a knowledge of sins forgiven, and a life brought into harmony with the purpose of God. Many of our bandsmen are miracles of redeeming and transforming grace. They have emerged from the dark abyss of sin, and, having come into contact with the source of purity, to-day the current of their lives flows as a "river of water, clear as crystal", irrigating the surrounding desert. They never cease to speak with wonder of the "truths concerning the cleansing". Space forbids that we should recount their stories here, but they can at any time be heard from the lips of the men themselves ! By way of illustration, we give a few details regarding some of them.

Amid the greatest poverty, with an entire absence of training or discipline of any kind, the early days of one man were spent, and in his youth he began to exhibit all kinds of vices. He gained his "living" as a costermonger - a mode of life rife with every temptation. Not being able to read or write, he had very little interest in life save the public-house and its particular adjuncts. His wife was invited to our women's meeting, and for some time attended regularly. There awoke in her heart a desire for the rest and joy of which she heard. But with this came the haunting fear that the invitation given by Jesus to the "weary and heavy laden" was not intended for her. She repeatedly declared that she was "too bad".

After a time, however, the light dawned, and to her came the glad knowledge that this Saviour could cancel a lifetime of moral guilt. Her chains fell off, her soul was free, she rose, went forth - and has ever since followed her Lord with a devotion worthy of emulation. She endured much persecution from her husband in those early days, but she sought in every way to win him for Christ. We joined her in persistent prayer on his behalf, whilst some of those who in the past had been his companions in sin determined now to lay siege to him and bring him to the Saviour. They kept

up the campaign, constantly waylaying him, and inviting him to the services. They repeated to him the story of their own deliverance from the power of sin, in language that he could understand.

This went on for some time, until one Sabbath evening - after he had spent the day more or less in drinking—he was seen by one of his friends, who, running after him, begged him to come to the meeting. He yielded and came. When he had left home that evening, his wife had besought God that someone might meet him and constrain him to go to the service; and, whilst praying thus, she had the deep inner consciousness that it would be even as she desired. The man sat beside an old companion who had already met with Jesus, and in consequence was utterly changed. He became deeply impressed by the preacher's message, and determined to surrender his poor sin-stained life to Him "who is able to save to the uttermost". And in that hour all the craving for drink was annihilated by the tremendous spiritual resources that came to him by faith in Christ, and he continues unto this day a "living epistle" of "the riches of His grace".

Another man frequently tells the pathetic story of his life ere Jesus met with him. As far back as he can remember, he was usually hungry. Through the crowded streets, this poor, ragged boy hunted day by day for his food. Famished and wretched, he would creep barefooted close up to shop doors, and would dive in and out of costermongers barrows, in search of something to satisfy the gnawing pangs of hunger. A crust of dirty bread, some refuse from the fruit stalls - in fact, anything he could find, constituted his daily fare, with an occasional meal from a baked potato cart, or fried fish shop, when a halfpenny could be obtained.

It was the old story of parental neglect, due to the fact that the precarious income of the family found its way into the coffers of the publican. The children early shared the penalty of their parents' wrong-doing. Instead of the care and protection that should have been their heritage, they were subjected to ill-usage from them. They would rush away, taking refuge in any available hiding-place, in order to escape the angry words and blows.

The years passed away, and the boy grew up, ignorant and degraded, with no knowledge of God or religion, until one Sabbath evening he saw a company of people gathered at what proved to be an open-air service. Someone on the outskirts of the crowd offered him a card, on which was printed a short prayer. "No!" he replied, "this ain't for me, I wasn't fetched up to it." The friend went on to tell him of Jesus, and the possibility of a life of victory over the forces of sin. Then, having obtained a promise that the man would kneel and say the prayer when he reached home, the friend left him. He grasped the card tightly, and proceeded on his way, saying, "Yes! I will! I'll have a cut at this". On reaching the place where he lived, he immediately set to work to spell out the words on the card. No less than six times did he kneel and try to say it over correctly, fearful each moment that the man who shared the room would come in and find him on his knees.



*“As he was, and as he is”*

It was a strange beginning to a new life, but in this dim groping there was the movement of the soul towards the light. From that day he gradually emerged into a life of spiritual power. “Old things have passed away, and all things have become new.” Since then his position in life has greatly improved. As frequently happens with those who are reclaimed, he has removed into a better neighbourhood. Yet occasionally, with his wife and children, he pays a visit to us.

But what a change from the old days! How difficult would it be to recognise in the "silk-hatted", well-dressed man, now a member of an influential church and the possessor of a comfortable and happy home, the once degraded slave of sin!

Yet another illustration of wonderful emancipation is found in our "drummer".

We were privileged in having in our fellowship his brother, a man characterised by a passionate devotion to his Lord, and mighty in prayer. Again and again he urged us to join him in supplication that this brother might be saved. From earliest youth his brother had spent his days in profligacy and sin. Now he was the victim of drink, and the consequent recklessness caused him to sink lower, until he was serving a sentence in

gaol. A tall, well-built, powerful man, we have heard him tell that it has required seven policemen to arrest and take him to the station. He was a terror to his family and the neighbourhood. In the whole realm of his life and thought neither God nor religion had any place. Yet "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

A certain Sabbath evening found this man sitting in the meeting. He was greatly impressed, and when the writer spoke to him, he was trembling as though with ague, and exclaimed: "It is all true! quite true! but I never saw it before! What can I do?" The address had been from Deut. iv. 29. As the story was recounted of the loss of inheritance, and sorrow that would inevitably follow wandering from God; and of the gracious promise that, even when men had arrived at the uttermost reaches of misery and defeat, if they would seek God, He would be found by them; this man, who, from bitter experience, knew the meaning of slavery and loss of all, saw a picture of himself. Yearnings for a better life were awakened.



*"Our drummer – as he was, and as he is"*

Next day he told the men who worked beside him on the road where he had spent his Sabbath evening. As might be expected, they jeered and taunted, but throughout the week he refrained from frequenting his old haunts, and the next Sabbath evening found him again within the Mission Hall. Once more he carefully followed every word of the service, and, in the after-meeting, kneeling by the platform, cried out, "God be merciful to me". We explained to him the way of life. In the twinkling of an eye, the joy of pardon flooded his soul, and the cleansing tides of grace transformed him into a

new man in Christ. Across the horizon of his darkened life came the glimmer of the dawn, which is steadily growing brighter every day.

Here is another evidence that the preaching of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" awakens men, and draws them into close and personal communion with Himself. It is not enough to proclaim the Lord as a great ethical teacher, for the ethics cannot give energy to the paralysed will. Neither can the proclamation of Him as a reformer lift men out of the prison-house of their sins, any more than the Ten Commandments, displayed upon the walls of a church, will empower those who read absolutely to obey them. The reformer may gain men's applause, but it is the sacrificial Saviour alone who brings them out of the depths of guilt, the tyranny of sin, and the bitterness of death.

To return to the launching of the Band. We began with a great commissioning meeting; when to each man was handed his instrument, with suitable words of exhortation, a copy of the regulations which were to govern the Band, and an illuminated card containing the following inscription:

#### BAND COVENANT CARD

*"In solemn and serious purpose, believing myself to be a child of God, and called to His Service, I accept this appointment from Him, and promise by His help to conform to the regulations laid down, and understood by me".*

Here followed the name, address, and date. This card was publicly signed and the man welcomed into the ranks. Until to-day this is our method of commissioning the men, and in the homes of the Bandsmen these cards are to be found, suitably framed, adorning the wall, a perpetual reminder of what is, to them, a very real call to active service for their King. Despite many who have removed from the neighbourhood, or from any other cause have been compelled to resign, we have now forty-three men pledged to this service. It is impossible adequately to describe their splendid devotion. In season and out of season they are to be found at their post. After toiling laboriously day by day for their daily bread, they will take their stand at some busy street corner on Saturday nights, and by soul-stirring music, and testimony, seek to win some of the careless, indifferent crowd to the same royal friendship that has revolutionised their lives.

Throughout the year, each Sabbath afternoon finds them pursuing the same quest in the Park. The overcrowded condition of the Mission Hall renders it impossible for them to be present at the service on Sabbath evenings, so for two hours, even in the most inclement weather, they are to be found in one of the most frequented thoroughfares, by song, speech, and music preaching the Gospel to a congregation of four or five hundred persons, and reaping rich "fruit unto life eternal". Not infrequently are they requisitioned for a "midnight march". They parade the streets and seek by the music to attract the drunkards, at the hour when the public-houses are discharging their motley crowd; whilst they are also much in demand by churches of all

denominations embarking upon any special evangelistic campaign. This yeoman service is done voluntarily for the Master.

In addition, their presence at the ordinary meetings for prayer and worship is a source of inspiration to the whole Mission. It is a never-to-be-forgotten sight to see them upon their knees at the close of the Band Practice, when, for the last half-hour, they seek Divine power and courage to live worthily of their "high calling". What is the secret of such enthusiasm? Having been "forgiven much", they "love much", and thus are proving some of the wealth of their promised inheritance contained in the words we have chosen as the motto of the band: "There hath no man left aught for My sake and the Gospel's, but shall receive a hundredfold more in this present life".

The echo of this heartening word creates a holy and hallowing purpose, and energises us for the crusade in "rolling away the stone", and making ready the way of the Lord; whilst through all there is the determination to show forth His praise, who through centuries has been the illumination and lever of Society, "this same Jesus", who has lifted them to a higher level, for this world and the next, giving them now an infallible recipe for happiness, and the certainty that one day they will join the grand orchestra in the Homeland, to "go no more out".