

Thomas Raistrick - Champion Boy Cornetist

Gavin Holman, 15 February 2022

Thomas Raistrick was born on 9 August 1892. In 1901 (according to the census) he lived with his father, Hartley Raistrick (36), mother, Mary (34), sister, Rhoda (13), and brother, Seth (11), at 7 Church Hill, Baildon. Hartley was a stockkeeper at a local worsted mill, and Mary worked there as a worsted weaver.

His first musical mention comes on 7 October 1905, when he performed several unaccompanied cornet solos at the annual supper of the Baildon Green United Cricket Club, held at the Cricketers' Arms, Baildon Green.¹

A 'smoking concert' was held at the Old House at Home, Otley Road, Shipley, in aid of the Shipley Brass Band, on 1 January 1906. The band, conducted by Marshall Roberts, played selections, and Thomas Raistrick, by then a member of the band, gave various cornet solos.²

The Shipley Band was the last of a series of four bands in the town (excluding that of the Canal Ironworks). It was originally founded as a Salvation Army band around 1888, but many of the members soon broke away to form the Shipley Christian Temperance Brass Band. However, it did not take long for the temperance aspects of the band to falter, and by 1893 it had dropped the teetotal requirements, becoming Shipley Brass Band. Its conductors included Sam Simpson in 1891, Marshall Roberts in 1902-1905, with John Paley playing a major role in instructing the band and acting as its professional conductor for contesting.



Shipley Brass Band, c. 1905 – Thomas is in the centre, behind the conductor, John Paley

The temperance rules of the Shipley Christian Temperance Brass Band were formally inaugurated in August 1889. It was also known as Shipley Gospel Mission Band. One

¹ Shipley Times and Express, 13 October 1905

² Shipley Times and Express, 5 January 1906

known member, Thomas Hill, played Bb Bass in the band until 1893. It bought the instruments and other property (including music) of the defunct Saltaire Brass Band in October 1896 for £20. Its greatest achievement was winning the Belle Vue July contest, in 1903, playing the test piece "Idomeneo". The band did not contest after WW1, but survived until 1936, when it disbanded.



Thomas Raistrick, c. 1907, in the uniform of the Shipley Brass Band

On Sunday 3 June 1906, the Shipley Brass Band, conducted by Marshall Roberts, gave a sacred concert in Saltaire Park in the afternoon and Crowgill Park in the evening, which included a cornet solo from Thomas Raistrick:

“The weather being all that could be desired, there was a good attendance. The programme submitted was as follows: march “*Collingwood*”, selection, “*Poliuto*” (Swift); recit. and chorus, “*Comfort Ye*” “*And the Glory*” (Handel); selection “*Casket of Gems*” (Round); hymn “*Stockbridge*” (Wadsworth). A sheet for contributions was placed at the gate, and the amount realised was £5. In the evening the band gave a concert in Crowgill Park, in the presence of a large number of people. The programme was as follows: march “*Washington Greys*” (Grafulle); selection “*Gems of the Opera*” (Rimmer); selection “*Satanella*” (Balfe); and hymn, “*St Catherine.*” Master T. Raistrick, of Baildon, gave a fine performance of the cornet solo, “*Star of Bethlehem.*” The collection in the sheets realised £3 19s., making a total for the day of £8 19s.”³

Thomas gave another solo at a similar concert on 21 August 1906:

“On Tuesday evening the Shipley Brass Band gave a concert in Crowghyll Park. There was a fairly good attendance. The programme was as follows: march “*Chevalier*” (Lewis); overture, “*Nonpareil*” (Round); selection “*Songs of Scotland*” (Round); valse “*Casino Tanze*” (Gung’l); selection “*Spring Chicken*” (Monckton); grand fantasia “*Great Britain*” (Round); cornet solo, “*Cornet King*” Master T. Raistrick. The band was under the leadership of Mr. Marshall Roberts. The amount taken in the collection sheets was £1 3s. 7½d.”⁴

On Saturday 3 November 1906, the Wesleyan Cricket Club held its annual tea and concert, in the Shipley Schoolroom. Among the various vocal and instrumental artists performing, was Thomas Raistrick, who gave a number of cornet solos.⁵

Mr G.C. Waud was a major patron of the Shipley Brass Band, indeed he had provided them with a new set of instruments and uniforms in the early 1900’s, and in 1906 had helped them clear off old liabilities with a donation of £50. The band gave a dinner in his honour, on Monday 26 November 1906, at the Old House in Home, on Otley Road. John Paley had recently resumed the conductorship of the band from Marshall Roberts, and he accepted £14 10s. in full settlement of the account due to him (£32) for his previous professional duties with the band. During the evening the band played various selections, John Paley provided some cornet solos, as did also Thomas Raistrick who:

“... played a cornet solo in a manner that secured for him quite an ovation. Mr Paley declared that the boy was a born cornet player, and he had no hesitation in prophesying for him a great future.”⁶

The Perfect Sunday Afternoon Society promoted a concert on Sunday 23 December 1906:

“The Shipley Brass Band were responsible for the P.S.A. Society’s concert on Sunday afternoon in the Crag Road Council school. Councillor Lupton Brooks presided. A capital programme was given. The duet “*Excelsior*” was capably played by Messrs. Lincoln and M. Roberts, and a cornet solo by Master T.

³ Shipley Times and Express, 8 June 1906

⁴ Shipley Times and Express, 24 August 1906

⁵ Shipley Times and Express, 9 November 1906

⁶ Shipley Times and Express, 30 November 1906

Raistrick was loudly applauded. Miss Hemingway gave a recitation. The band was under the leadership of Mr. M. Roberts. The collection amounted to £1 1s. 6½d.”⁷

By this time, Thomas was principal cornet of the Shipley Brass Band and, at last, in 1907, got his own uniform, as explained in this report of the New Year’s Day concert in Shipley:

“A pleasing little incident occurred on New Year's Day, when the Shipley Brass Band, who have had a rare friend in Mr. G.C. Waud, were playing at that gentleman's residence, Ferniehurst, Baildon. The youngest member of the band is Master Tom Raistrick, aged 13, son of Mr. Hartley Raistrick, of Baildon Green. Although only just entering on his teens he is the band's solo cornet, and for his age he has without doubt a marvelous command of the instrument. He was not connected with the band when Mr. Waud provided the new instruments and uniforms, etc., with the result that notwithstanding the fact that the lad is the comet soloist, he has up to now had to appear minus regimentals. On New Year's Day, Mr. Waud requested that young Raistrick should play a solo in one of the drawing-rooms at Ferniehurst. The invitation was, of course, promptly responded to and, with Mr. John Paley as his accompanist, Raistrick played a solo in a manner which evidently took by surprise the hospitable host and hostess and guests. Congratulations were showered upon him by all present. Mr. Waud called the lad up to him and asked why he was not wearing uniform. No sooner had Raistrick replied that he had not got one than Mr. Waud said, “Then you shall have your regimentals from me as a Christmas box”. Before leaving Ferniehurst Mr. Paley was asked to lose no time in seeing that this promise was carried into effect.”⁸

Thomas is next reported performing with the Baildon Brass Band, on Sunday 14 June 1907, which also mentions his arrangement of “*Deep Harmony*”.

“In accordance with their usual custom at "Feast" time, the Baildon Brass Band gave sacred concerts on the Moor on Sunday afternoon and evening. A large number of people were present at each performance, especially in the evening, when the moor presented quite an animated appearance. In the afternoon the programme was as follows: march "*Rebel*" (Jubb); fantasia "*Sandringham*" (W. Round); selection, "*Memories of Wallace*" (Wallace): cornet solo "*I dreamed a dream*" (Edith Cooke) - Master T. Raistrick; selection "*Musical Bouquet*" (H. Round); selection "*Don Alfonso*" (Donizetti); and hymn, "*Deep Harmony*." At the evening performance the following items were rendered: march "*The Crack Corps*" (Geo. Southwell); overture "*Silver Cross*" (J.A. Greenwood); selection "*Rhineland*" (H. Round); cornet solo "*Star of Bethlehem*" (S. Adams) – Master T. Raistrick; selection "*La Vestale*" (Spontini); chorus "*The Heavens are Telling*" (Haydn); selection "*Musical Bouquet*" (H. Round); and hymn "*Deep Harmony*". The latter item is a piece by Mr. Handel Parker, of Shipley, and arranged for brass bands by Master T. Raistrick of Baildon. The band was under the conductorship of Mr. S. Simpson of Saltaire. At each concert the band played remarkably well. The amount taken in sheets was: afternoon £5 8s. 4d., evening £9 10s., total £14 18s. 4d.”⁹

⁷ Shipley Times and Express, 28 December 1906

⁸ Shipley Times and Express, 4 January 1907

⁹ Shipley Times and Express, 19 July 1907

Thomas' next known solo appearance was at a benefit concert at the Shipley Pavilion, on Thursday 10 October 1907, which consisted of various solo instrumental and vocal acts.¹⁰ This was followed by a similar concert at the Shipley Trades Hall, Briggate, on Tuesday 18 February 1908, in aid of a member of the Painters' Society who could not work for several months due to illness.¹¹

This was Thomas' last known appearance as a 'boy cornetist'.

In the 1911 census, Thomas was still living with his parents, at 11 East Squire Lane, Bradford, but his siblings were elsewhere. Thomas' occupation was listed as a 'plush weaver'. His father, Hartley, had become blind in 1907, and he was listed as being a 'door mat maker' at the Institute for the Blind.

Thomas married his wife, Ada Cockburn (b. 1893), on 24 December 1914, at Baildon Church, and they set up home at 4 Greenside, Baildon. He joined the army later in 1915, and was attached to the 13th (Reserve) Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment, with whom he served during the war. His son, Hartley Melvin Raistrick, was born on 23 March 1916.

During the post-armistice activities in Germany, in July 1919, there was a Victory Sports celebration held by the 1/6th Battalion the Prince of Wales Own (West Yorkshire Regiment) at Blucher Park, Cologne. The Regimental Band was conducted by Sergeant Tom Raistrick as part of the activities.

Thomas was demobilised on 19 October 1919, and rejoined his family, having achieved the rank of Band Sergeant with the Regimental Band.

He played the "Last Post" at the memorial service, on 2 November 1919, in Baildon at the Parish Church for those Baildon men who fell in the war.



Shipley Prize Band, c. 1920. Thomas Raistrick 2nd from left on back row

¹⁰ Bradford Daily Telegraph, 11 October 1907

¹¹ Shipley Times and Express, 21 February 1908

In 1933, Thomas Raistrick was conducting the Keighley Borough Silver Band in their concerts at Northcliff Woods, on 14 May 1933, where the programme included works of Verdi, Weber, Ketelby, Sullivan and others in the afternoon; and in the evening: "*Tancredi*", "*Sons of the Brave*", "*Cavalcade*", "*Maid of the Mountains*", and "*Lilac Time*". They also played "*Deep Harmony*" and "*Abide With Me*" – perhaps the former was Tom Raistrick's own arrangement?

In 1939, Thomas, Ada and Hartley lived at 3 Ivy Street South, Keighley.

Thomas Raistrick died in October 1977, in Keighley.