

The Oakworth Brass Band Contests – 26th June 1880

Gavin Holman, 13 January 2025

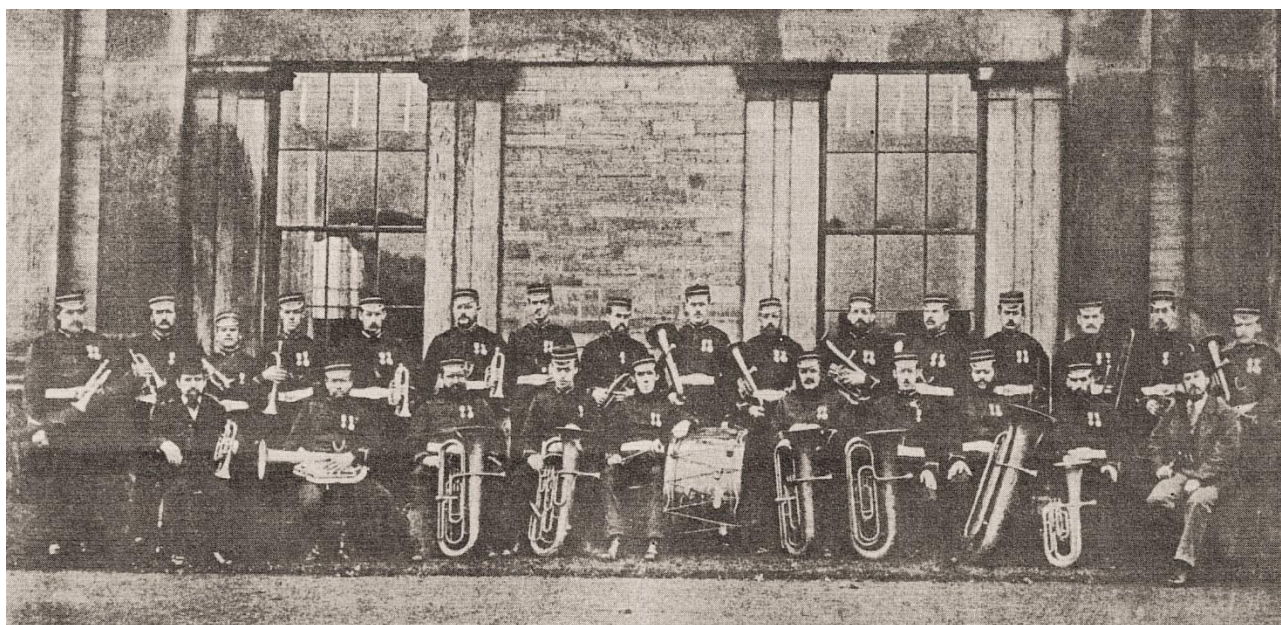
Details of the brass band contests of the past are usually only found in the occasional newspaper report or a surviving programme from the event itself, The judges' remarks are less often reported or available and are rarely seen.

The contest, held on 26th June 1880 at Oakworth, near Keighley, was organised by the Oakworth Brass Band. Sadly, little is known about this particular band, other than one of its players was William Turner, who made a significant name for himself as a soloist with firstly the Oakworth Band, then later the Haworth, Keighly Marriner's, Harden Mills, Saltaire and Leeds Railway Foundry bands.

An notebook (see below), belonging to one of the contest organisers, gives fascinating information about the finances for the contest, with details of the entry fees, tickets and expenses. A total of £31 4s 4d was made, with expenditure of £25 3s 2d. A nice profit (for the day) of £6 1s 2d.

The tickets for admission were 1s 6d. each, with various individuals being given a book of 12 to sell, income from tickets was £20 17s 8d.

The bands competing were: Black Dyke Mills, Dewsbury Old, Leeds Model, and Meltham Mills. Nelson and Trawden bands had also entered but failed to turn up. As well as the own-choice test piece contest, there was a glee competition and individual instrument contests – for cornet, trombone and euphonium.



Meltham Mills Band, 1878

The adjudicators were Thomas Tallis Trimnell, from Chesterfield, and J. Sugden – a local man from Keighley.

The three conductors involved in the contest were John Gladney for Meltham, Alexander Owen, the newly appointed professional conductor of Black Dyke, and J. Sidney Jones, who was the conductor of Leeds Model and professional conductor for Dewsbury Old – he would later go on to conduct Leeds Rifles Band and the Harrogate Subscription Band.



John Gladney



Alexander Owen



J. Sydney Jones

In addition to the notebook, there are two fairly detailed reports on the contest in the contemporary local newspapers.

A brass band contest and glee and solo contest was held at Oakworth near Keighley, on Saturday last. The following bands entered: Leeds Model, conductor Mr. J.S. Jones, selection from Weber's operas; Trawden, conductor Mr. Owen, selection, "Robert le Diable;" Black Dyke, conductor Mr. Owen, selection from "St. Paul;" Dewsbury Old Band, conductor Mr. J.S. Jones, selection from Meyerbeer's operas; Nelson, conductor Mr. Gladney, fantasia from Weber's operas; Meltham Mills, conductor Mr. Gladney, fantasia from Weber's operas. Only four bands put in an appearance, and played in the following order: Black Dyke, Leeds Model, Meltham Mills, and Dewsbury Old.

After each band had played once each, a glee contest for brass instruments took place, when the following competed: Black Dyke, No. 1 party; Leeds Model, and Black Dyke, No. 2 party.

A trombone solo came next, when five competed as follows William Taylor, Staleybridge Old Band; Mr. J. Eyecott, Leeds Model; Mr. Seth Coldwell, Meltham Mills; Mr. Edwin Stead, Black Dyke; and Mr. G. Firth, Black Dyke.

At the conclusion of the trombone contest one for cornets and sopranos took place, in which the following took part: Mr. A. Owen, Staleybridge; Mr. O. Swift, Leeds Model; Mr. S. Hoyle, (soprano), Black Dyke; and Mr. G. F. Birkinshaw, Meltham Mills.

Next came a contest for euphoniums, when the competitors were as under: Mr. W. Haley, Leeds Model; Mr. Thom Taylor, Staleybridge Old Band; Mr. R. Stead, Meltham Mills; Mr. P. Bower, Black Dyke; Mr. J. Naylor (tenor horn), Black Dyke; and Mr. William Hartley, Trawden.

The judges T.T. Trimmell, Esq., Mus. Bac., Oxon, and J. Sugden, Esq., Keighley, awarded the prizes to the successful competitors. Band contest: 1st prize, £18, Meltham Mills; 2nd £10, Black Dyke; 3rd, £6, Leeds Model; 4th, £3, Dewsbury Old Band. Glee contest: 1st prize, £4, Black Dyke No. 2; 2nd, £2, Black Dyke No. 1; 3rd, £1, Leeds Model. Trombone contest: Prize, a Besson slide trombone won by Edwin Stead, Black Dyke. Cornet contest: Prize, a beautiful electroplated and engraved cornet, from Besson's, value £12 12s., won, by G.F. Birkinshaw, Meltham Mills. Euphonium contest: Prize, one of Besson's 4-valve euphoniums, won P. Bower, Black Dyke. The contest was a decided success, and was numerously attended.¹

¹ Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 1 July 1880



Black Dyke Mills Band, 1893

The following week some of the adjudication remarks for the contest were published:

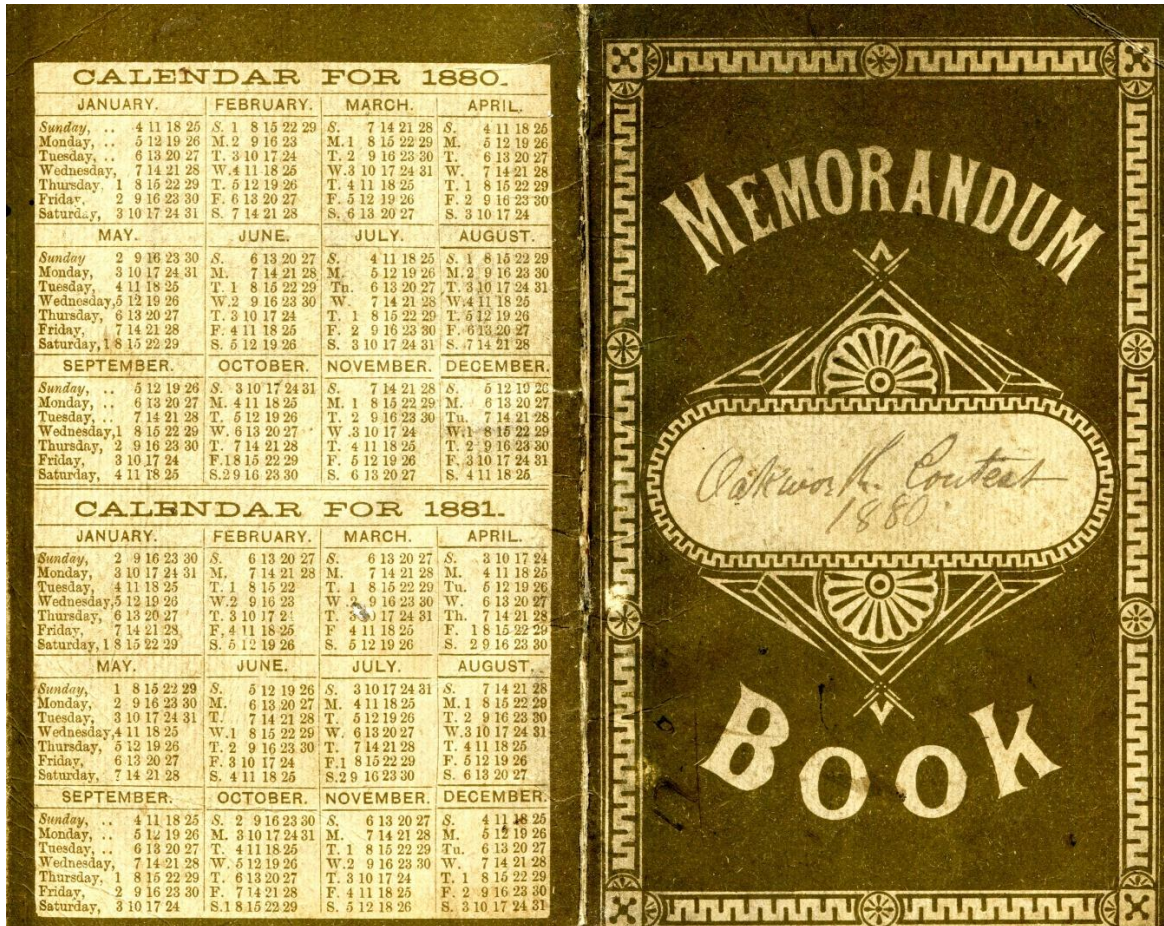
The following are the judge's remarks on the performance of the Meltham Mills and Black Dyke Bands, winners of the first and second prizes at the Oakworth contest on Saturday, June 26th: The opening movement was careful and cautious almost to a fault. The basses opened well, and, after a few bars, the band showed itself to be well balanced, and capable of work of a high order. The cornet played very effectively and the cadenza was capitally performed. Crescendos were exceedingly well managed, and chords were well sustained. The "Mermaid's" song was most beautifully accompanied, and was artistic in style. The cornet player and the flat soprano player were especially successful. The accompaniments of the band were exquisite, evenly balanced, and in excellent tune. It is seldom that each finished playing is heard as that which was given by the Meltham Mills Band, 1st prize.

Black Dyke Band, which secured 2nd prize. The opening was fine and well sustained, the deep tones of the bombardons coming out like the tones of a grand old cathedral organ. The chords were very crisp, and time was well kept. Bombardons kept well down in the song "O God have mercy," and the accompaniments were carefully played. The passage "Arise, shine" was taken a trifle too fast. The cornet was somewhat forced in the passage, snatching at the notes and playing stiffly and too precise. "Be thou faithful" was well rendered. The accompaniments were nicely handled, and it was decidedly the most effective part of the selection. The finale "O great is the depth" and the following fugue were well carried through, and showed much careful study. One great fault was that the selection was too long, the players having more than enough to do to maintain good tone throughout. ²

After the success of this contest a second one was arranged for the following year, taking place on 30 July 1881. This contest was in aid of the Keighley Cottage Hospital and attracted four competing bands.

² Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner, 10 July 1880

The Note Book



Symphonium
W. Haley (Leeds Model)
C. Jeffrey Saltburn Band
G. Cook Nelson
Tom Taylor Staley Bridge
R. Stead Meltham
J. C. Thom (Schedew)
P. Bower (Blk Like)
Joe Weylor
Wm. Haskley Trawden

John Pickles
Pickles Building
Hope & Anchor
Swing Boats Keighly

Selections
Leeds Model
Widdesham Cold Band
Black Like Mill
Meltham Mills
Trawden & Kildwick
Nelson

Leeds
Blk Like No 172
Leeds Model
Trawden
Nelson

Solo Comet
C. Swift (Leeds Model)
G. & Birbourns hard Meltham Mill
Owen & Hoyle (Blk Like)
J. B. Bestwell Nelson

Slide Trawden
Tom Taylor Staley Bridge
J. Weylor (Leeds Model)
Ed. Caldwell Meltham
Jonathan Presto Nelson
R. Stead Blk Like
G. Torka Blk Like

Selection Contents
Pleas Model N^o 24 " 10 "
Leaper W^m Jaeger. Cond. J. S. Jones Esq.
Selection Reminiscences of Operas
Landon N^o 24. Con. M^r Owen.
Robt. la Diabla. 10

Blk. White. 24. Con. Owen.
St Paul. (Mend.)

Jewsbury. Old. Paul.
N^o 24. Con. Sidney Jones. 10
Sel. from Myrthers Opera.

Nelson.
N^o 24. Con. J. Gladney.
Weber.
Mettham Mills 10
N^o 24. Con. J. Gladney.
Fantasia from Webers Operas.

Tickets Pack. 12 each 18
 + H. B. Andrews one Pack 18
 + John Whitaker one Pack 18
 + James Stell one Pack 18
 + James Jackson one Pack 18
 + John Holmes one Pack 18
 + Wm Smith one Pack 18
 + Lincoln Simpson 17
 + Benjamin Bishop 17
 + Joseph Cayce 17
 + Wm Lutz Pack 18
 + James Heat one Pack 18
 + Charles Walton one Pack 18
 + Wm Pyram one Pack 18
 + John Slater one Pack 18
 + Jonathan Shackleton 17
 + David Barwin one Pack 18
 + James Braeewell one Pack 18
 + Wm Pyram 2nd lot one Pack 18
 + James Tillotson one Pack 18
 + John Devore one Pack 18
 + Will Kinson Green one Pack 18
 + Amos Williale one Pack 18
 + Peter Las Highworth one Pack 18

Tickets sold by J. Mayley
 17 + 18. 10

+ John Green one Pack 18
 + Jonathan Stetiff one Pack 18
 + Wm Abston one Pack 18
 + David Smith one Pack 18
 + Abel Binn one Pack 18
 + James Preston one Pack 18
 + H. B. Andrews one Pack 18
 + Phineas Simpson 12th Paid 24
 + James Preston 2nd lot 18
 + Robt Wright 1/2 Pack 9
 + James Braeewell 2nd lot Blue 12
 + John Slater 2nd lot 18
 + John Bullerfill one Pack 18
 + James Simpson 12th Blue 12
 + John Clark Sen. one Pack 18
 + Fred. Wren 2nd lot 24
 + J. Highworth 1st lot Blue 6
 + Wm Pyram 2 Packs 36
 + John Slater 3rd lot 2nd lot Blue 24
 + John Slater 4th lot 12 Blue 6
 + Wm Pyram 2nd lot Blue 12
 + James Green 12 Blue 6
 + John Slater 5th lot 6 White 6
 + John Slater 6th lot 6 White 6

J. A. Weighley 20 + 40
 + Ralph Holdens 20 + 40
 + Wm Attham 20 + 40
 + Tom Barwick 20 + 40
 + Wm Krimmer King Arms 20 + 40
 + James Holdsworth Commercial 20 + 40
 + Wm Gannt Royal 20 + 40
 + Wm Krimmer 20 + 40
 + Herald Office 20 + 40
 + James Ormer 20 + 40
 + R. L. Moore 20 + 40
 + J. K. Moore 20 + 40
 + James Anderson 20 + 40

Money in hand.		Money Paid	
For Entry Fee	4 14 4	Change for office (Subs)	0 ..
In Stalls &c	1 1 6	M ^r John Sugden	10 ..
Tickets Money Received	20 17 8	Wine Refreshment Pans etc	3 8
From J. B. Huggins	.. 5 4	To James Stell	3 4
.. P. Redmond	.. 5 ..	To Police crew (Reput)	9 ..
	27 3 2	Thomas Sugden Road Repairing	3 6
Per James Senior	.. 15 4	Peppin	1 6
H. B. Andrews Tent	3 0 0	W ^m Smith (Ticket Coll)	3 6
Jonathan Sate-type	.. 1 ..	Wales & Brand	.. 3 1/2
P. Bridgesworth 3	Boy for Meeting Band at Key	.. 6
Joseph Drayley Tickets	.. 4 ..	Rec ^d from (D. Pickett) (Coco) etc	1 ..
W ^m Smith & John Green 7	Fort Stamps	2 6
	31 4 4	Judge. Trimmell	4 4
		Herald office note	6 11
		Paid James Jeffrey. Contry	.. 2 6
		Posting Skp &c (Cats.)	.. 4 3
		Paul to Captn Hudson	.. 2 ..
		Receipt Stamp	.. 6
		Howorth Brunstank	1 10 ..
		Jonathan Sate-type	.. 2 ..
		Joseph Drayley Posting &c	.. 1 8
		Posting Colms &c	.. 2 6
		2 P. to O. for Judge & Colm Rating	1 ..
		Stamps &c	5 .. 4
		To James Green	.. 1 4
		B. Tatham	4 4
			47 4 8

Brought over	17 6 5 1/2
To W ^m Smith	17 7 3 1/2
	.. 5 ..
Police	17 11 3 1/2
To Thomas Sugden	13 ..
P. Silvenwood	18 4 5 1/2
W ^m Wright	.. 7 10 1/2
John Green	.. 1 ..
Sam Simpson	4 0 0
Programming	2 5 ..
B. Tatham	.. 2 ..
	1 10
	1 ..
	25 3 2

Money Received for tickets sold.
 Since Simpson 12th 4

John Holmes ✓	0
Do. Diop ✓	0
Simon Simpson ✓	0
for Waterhouse ✓	0
James Heaton ✓	3
John Green ✓	1
Wm. Walton ✓	1
P. Wigglesworth ✓	1
J. Whitaker ✓	1
H. Lyle ✓	1
H. Smith ✓	1
James Jackson ✓	1
J. Byrsewell ✓	1
J. Stile ✓	1
J. Slater ✓	1
Heaton Snyden ✓	1
John Green ✓	1
Jonathan Buckelton ✓	1
Rich Hall ✓	1
R. Herbert ✓	1
Jonathan Sutcliffe ✓	1
James Green ✓	1
J. Dutton ✓	1
Byron ✓	1

Mr. Butterfield returned 12 White
 Paid R. Bell 4

John Holmes Paid 10
 Heaton Snyden 5

Sir The Committee of the
 Bazaar the 13. 13. Contest
 to be held here on Saturday
 June 26th Inst. are open to
 receive tenders for the supply
 of refreshments on the field
 (Spice + nut stalls + confection).
 The parties to find their
 own martjakes and a tent
 for the judge free of cost.
 The lowest or any tender
 not necessarily accepted.
 Applications will be received
 up to 8 o'clock on Saturday
 night next.

Apply to
 J. W. Mozley
 Pres B.B.C.C.

St. 6. Glac. 5. Court 5.
 Sept. 9. Loan. 6.

Mr. Paken

I heard you intended
 entering on Contest of June 26
 If the statement is true will
 you kindly let me know before
 Friday we shall order the Bells
 Printing on Friday without fail
 and cannot take Bands in
 after that date
 We shall have a judge (John Cross)
 one who understands Brass
 Band music and we think
 will give entire satisfaction
 to all. We have a fair entry of
 food Bands hoping to hear
 from you for return post

25 10
 1 5
 1 12
 2 17