

## Don't mess with the band...

*Gavin Holman, 19 October 2025*

The Jubilee Fountain in East Grinstead was built in 1887, to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, with generous funding from Reverend C.W. Payne-Crawford, who also supported the Town Band. However, the fountain was vandalised on the morning of the Jubilee celebrations by members of the Band, who covered it in boiling tar. They were protesting against the Rev. Crawford, who had withdrawn their funding after the Band had taken part in an unauthorised public celebration of a verdict which had declared the former workhouse site in the town as parish property.

This site, now with houses on it, had originally been leased to the town in 1747 by Sir Thomas Webster, and used to build the workhouse on. The land was sold on in 1862 and the workhouse replaced by housing. A descendant of Sir Thomas laid claim to the land, but this was rejected in the courts, which became a cause for the local celebration. Presumably, the Rev. Crawford, who was one of the leading voices in the town, had some interest in the land or his acquaintance with the current Webster claimant, which may explain his objection to the court result and the subsequent public appreciation of the verdict.



*East Grinstead Town Band in the 1870s*