

Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band – a surprising success story

Kildwick Band doesn't rank highly in the pantheon of British brass bands. It would be surprising if you heard it mentioned in the same breath as say Black Dyke Mills, Foden's Works, Besses 'o th' Barn, or any of the great colliery bands of South Yorkshire. Even so, for a short time at the beginning of the 20th century, Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band could reasonably claim to be one of the best little bands in the country.

The story of the band is well worth re-telling, involving as it does: a village trombone-player who received a spontaneous ovation from a crowd of critics; a band who lost a major prize because they had to play in near-darkness; who were refused funding from their own committee but then received a large hand-out from a local benefactor; and how they used this money to travel to London, take on the best bands in the country, and win !

The early years (1860 – 1893)

Brass bands started to appear in the UK in the early 1800s, developing out of earlier village or church bands. They provided a source of local entertainment and were also designed as a means of directing the energies of local men away from activities less acceptable to polite society.

The Kildwick and District Brass Band, originally known as the Farnhill Brass Band, was formed in 1860¹⁸. It began with just 10 or 12 members and practiced in a house at the top of Starkey Lane that had previously been a school, but in 1867 they moved to rooms above a shop in Middletown.



Figure 1: A motley band. The earliest photograph of a brass band in Kildwick, although the date and location are not known.

Early evidence for the band comes from a gravestone in Kildwick Churchyard:



Figure 2: Gravestone of an early band member. Erected by members of the band.

The band clearly had sufficient funds to afford a gravestone for one of their members.

In 1870 the band elected Mr. Robert Sugden as bandmaster, and purchased their first uniforms.

However the first reference to the Kildwick band as a participant in a band contest is at the 1866 Keighley Agricultural Show. A report in the Bradford Observer shows that they came fourth and won a prize of £3 – equivalent to £250 at 2016 values, so not a bad achievement.

KEIGHLEY AGRICULTURAL SHOW.

September 1866

BAND CONTEST.

For the musical contest five brass bands entered. These were the Kildwick Band, the Bradford Model Band, the Spinkwell and Calder Band, the Spring Head Band, and Marriner's Juvenile Band. For these, in the first contest, there were four prizes for a piece of music of their own selection—the first prize being £10, the second £5, the third £3, and the fourth £2. In addition there was a second contest in "a piece at sight," the being £20. The judges in the contest were Mr. Hagan, of Lancaster; Mr. Fish, of Manchester; and Mr. Nicholson, of Leicester. They gave their award as follows:—1, Spinkwell and Calder Band, £20; 2, Spring-head Band, £10; 3, Bradford Model Band, £5; 4, Kildwick Band, £3; 5, Marriner's Juvenile Band, £2. The Spinkwell and Calder Band obtained the first prize in both contests, but according to rule it had to give way in the second prize to the band next.

Figure 3: A report from The Bradford Observer, September 6th 1866. Kildwick band come fourth and win a prize.

This appears to have set the pattern for the band's activities and aspirations up until the early years of the 20th century. They compete in various local contests, sometimes winning small prizes, other times failing to be placed at all.

They also play at other local events: dances, fetes, etc. and, most notably, at the opening of the new Bradford Town Hall in September 1873.

The AMALGAMATED ENGINEERS 'mustered very well, there being about 500 men in the procession. There was nothing needing a lengthened notice, as they all walked in their ordinary dress. Their banner which led the van was of blue silk with white fringe, which cost about £17. The inscription on the flag was "Amalgamated Society of Engineers." The Kildwick Brass Band came after this, and then followed a waggonette containing the superannuated members belonging to the society. The rest followed on foot.

Figure 4: A report from The Bradford Observer, September 10th 1873. Kildwick band form part of the procession for the opening of the Town Hall in Bradford.

1876 – The band build their own practice room

In 1876 the band came to an arrangement with the owner of the Farnhill estate, Sir George Lane Fox for the use of a site on which to create a new band room. The building, which was built by members of the band themselves, had a lintel inscribed “Prospect Assembly Room, erected by Members of Kildwick Band A.D. 1876”; stone for the building was provided by supporters of the band, obtained from a local quarry.

In April 1877 a bazaar was held in Kildwick School to help defray the cost of the building.

Craven Herald – 4th April 1877

On Monday a bazaar, for the sale of useful and fancy articles, was opened in the National School, Kildwick, by J.W. Ackroyd Esq. of Crosshills. The bazaar was in aid of the building fund of the Prospect Assembly Room, Farnhill, which has just been erected by the efforts of the Kildwick Brass Band, aided by their numerous and influential friends. The building is a plain but substantial erection, and is intended as a place of practice for the band, the want of such a place having been long felt. The estimated cost of the building is about £150, towards which sum upwards of £70 had been subscribed previous to the bazaar, and the object of the bazaar was to entirely remove the remaining debt.

Opening the event, Mr. Ackroyd said:

As they were aware, for some time past members of Kildwick Brass Band had been feeling the want of a more suitable room to practice in. The old room was very inadequate indeed, was sadly too small, badly ventilated, and objectionably near to the surrounding houses, so that the band was often looked upon as a great nuisance.

The event raised over £120; more than enough to pay the outstanding debt on the building, with money left over put towards the purchase of new uniforms and music.

The location of the band room, known familiarly as the Band ‘Ole, has recently been confirmed⁸. It was located at Arbour Top, and the site is now a private house. (Sadly the inscribed lintel has disappeared.)

1879 – Kildwick “Prize Band”

In June 1879 the band took part in a competition at Nelson, under the baton of Mr. R. Sugden. They came fourth and won a prize of £3 3s. A newspaper report gives the judge’s verdict on the band’s performance.

Craven Herald – 21st June 1879

Kildwick Brass Band – The following are the judge’s remarks with reference to the playing of the above band at the brass band contest at Nelson on Saturday last, reported in another column:

Tune 4, tone 4, time 4, ensemble 5, total 17. Opening firm and well together; cornet duet fairly performed; largo bases a little out of tune; a slight hitch in the harmonies in the 15th bar; largo allegro crescendo and accented places well minded, especially by bass instruments; andante euphonium fairly played; intonation a little imperfect; Redvine played too slow; allo furioso, first bar played much out of tune by cornets; rest of movement fairly played.

So, obviously some room for improvement.

Nevertheless, it seems that this fourth place enabled the band to refer to themselves as a “Prize Band”, and this epithet appears in many subsequent newspaper reports.

Note: Quite why the band couldn’t have called themselves a Prize Band after achieving a fourth place in the competition at the 1866 Keighley Agricultural Show is not clear. Later, when brass band contests became more organised, there would be clear rules about which competitions allowed the winners to designate themselves a Prize Band.

1893 – A reorganisation to increase participation

On 16th April 1893, members of band held their Annual General Meeting. This meeting, subsequently reported in the Craven Herald, looked to bring about a radical change in the way the band was organised and managed.

Craven Herald – 21st April 1893

Re-organisation of the Brass Band – The annual general meeting of the Kildwick Brass Band was held in the Prospect Assembly-rooms, the property of the band, on Monday evening.

... The business was ... to consider the best means for placing the band on a sound basis in order to encourage the members to take a more active interest in the welfare of the band, to consider the advisability of forming a new instrument fund, and to rescind the existing rules and regulations ...

It appears the printed rules had been formed about twenty years ago, and since then nothing had been done to re-arrange them in accordance with the general ideas of the present members. Several rules were considered too strict, hence it was found useless to attempt their enforcement without materially affecting the number of players.

The rules were, therefore, thoroughly dealt with and, without exception every alteration was unanimously approved.

The entrance fee for new members was reduced from 10s 6d to 2s 6d, and the meeting expressed a strong desire that this alteration should be considered by the youth of the district, a certain number of whom they expect applying for admission to the band ...

It was stated that the present instruments were in a bad state, and it was the band's intention, as soon as possible, to have a new set of instruments, the means of raising necessary funds receiving a good share of discussion. However, it was unanimously decided to form a new instrument fund on the motion of Mr. B. Hartley.

It was stated that there were 17 members at present, but a few past members had signified their intention to rejoin them. A rough estimate for a set of instruments was stated to be about £160 ... It is nearly twenty years since a public appeal was made in the district by the band, the last occasion being to raise funds to clear the then existing debt on the band room (erected in 1876) ...

This report is interesting as it shows that the band were keen to recruit new members: young men who might not be able to afford the 10s 6d membership fee (equivalent to approximately £50 at 2016 values).

The glory years (1903 – 1905)

In early 1899, the band played at a concert in Farnhill:

Craven Herald – 3rd February 1899

KILDWICK

Brass Band Concert – A tea was provided in the Primitive Methodist schoolroom on Saturday last under the auspices of the Kildwick Brass Band. In the evening a concert was given in the same place. The artistes were Miss Green, Soprano; Mr. B. B. Snowden, Tenor; Mr. C. Walker, Baritone; solo trombone, Mr. Jeffries; and solo violin, Mr. E. Metcalfe A.C.V.; also the Kildwick Brass Band. There was a fair attendance and a very enjoyable concert.

It seems likely that the solo trombonist was Charles Jeffrey, a member of the famous Black Dyke Mills band. He was subsequently appointed as the band's professional conductor.

This appointment resulted in a vast improvement in the quality of the band, and in their aspirations. So much so that, in 1903 and 1905, they took part in the Crystal Palace Contest.

1903 – Kildwick 3rd place

Although this was yet the official “national championship” that it would later become, the Crystal Palace Contest was a major event in the brass band world. The 1903 event was actually five contests, for various prizes: 1000-guinea Champion Trophy, 50-guinea Daily Telegraph Challenge Cup, 50-guinea Daily Express Challenge Shield, 50-guinea Graphic and Daily Graphic Challenge Cup, and 10-guinea Champion Journal Challenge Cup. At this time there were no rules about which competition a band could enter, they simply went in whichever contest they thought they would do well in. Typically, of course, the larger bands competed for the bigger prizes.

The Kildwick band were never going to be able to take on the big boys, and so entered the 50-guinea Graphic and Daily Graphic Challenge Cup contest. Even so, for a small village band to contemplate taking part in such an event must have been a big leap of faith. As the newspaper reports indicate, even local people were not expecting much of the band’s attempt: certainly not for them to do as well as they did.

The Keighley News provided an extensive report of the event, reproduced in full below, describing the band’s exploits in detail.

Keighley News – October 3rd 1903

KILDWICK PRIZE BAND AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE A NATIONAL HONOUR WON

Friday, September 25th, will mark an epoch in the history of Kildwick Band. On that date for the first time they dropped their parochial glamour and challenged fortune as contestants among the musical combinations of Great Britain for national honours. It was a bold venture for those village musicians to pitch themselves, as it were, into the vortex of melody at the Crystal Palace, and it may be confessed that one or two sound minded critics regarded the attempt as somewhat audacious. But, on the other hand, the great majority of the residents of the Kildwick district pinned their faith to the band, and the result is that the latter are now able to show that this confidence has not been misplaced. The final al fresco practice was held on Friday night last, after which Mr. Henry Robson, the worthy host of the Ship Hotel, entertained the band to supper, and sent them on their bold errand with the inner man replenished with all sorts of good things, for which he was heartily thanked in the name of the band by Mr. Walter Inskip.

Though the hour for entraining, 11.45, was long past the regular bed-time for the good residents of these parts, they forsook the drowsy goddess in order to march with the band to the station, and nothing could have exceeded the enthusiasm and hearty goodwill which characterised the send-off. St. Pancras was reached at 6.30 am and after breakfast another good hour’s practice was put in, so that the Kildwick lads could fill their lungs with London air.

The Crystal Palace was reached at eleven a.m., and here the Kildwickians met their first set-back. There were twenty-three competing bands, and in the ballot for places Kildwick had what we in the North country call "hard luck". They drew the fatal number 23, which meant that they would be the last occupiers of the band stand. This was particularly discouraging, because they could not leave the Palace grounds, the long wait was tiring, and calculated to damp the players' enthusiasm, and it might be that as the contest neared its conclusion the great body of spectators would disperse, and the players be deprived of that most estimable of all verdicts – public opinion. The competition began at twelve noon, and not until the hands of the clock pointed to 7.30 p.m. did the long-sought opportunity of Kildwick come. But the fact that the crowd of people increased rather than diminished as the Kildwick Band, with Mr. Charles Jeffrey as conductor, took their places on the stand, emphasised the belief that they regarded Kildwick as a sort of dark horse. Nor were they disappointed. The only spontaneous outburst of applause given during the competition was awarded to Mr. Harold Inskip at the conclusion of his trombone cadenza. It came from all over the place, and the general verdict was that this little village band possessed the finest trombone player in the Palace on Saturday last, and a similar tribute was generously conceded to the soloists. The test piece selected was "Gems of Welsh Melody," and the Kildwick lads rendered it in splendid tone.

They had, however, two formidable drawbacks. Being the last played band, they had to eliminate all the impressions formed in the mind of the judge (Mr. Walter Reynolds) regarding the performances of the other bands – and worst of all the lights were so high up and so dim that they cast nothing but blurred patches across the music rendering the latter practically useless. Some members had, in fact, to discard the score and trust entirely to memory, and it was just here that the cup slipped away from Kildwick. The general impression was that had Kildwick played in daylight and without the long tedious wait they would have been streets ahead of any other band in the competition. The final bars were played just before eight o'clock, and having deputed a representative to look after their interests, the members of the band left for London. The result was not made known until 10 p.m., when it was thrown upon the screen in the concert-hall, and a wire to London appraised the band that, despite all drawbacks, there were only two bands challenging for the Graphic Cup which were considered better than they. They had pulled off third prize in a great national contest, in which they had pitted against them the most experienced players in the kingdom. They were satisfied, and did not take umbrage at the Cockney urchins addressing them as "blokes". They were Crystal Palace prize-winners, and when they got into the train at St. Pancras at 11.45 on Saturday night they felt justifiably proud of the honour they were bringing back with them. Although they arrived as early as 6.30 a.m., on Sunday morning, their Kildwick friends were [there ?], and gave them a welcome that will be long remembered by the members of the band. During the week there have been congratulations all round, and as the discipline and esprit de corps among the members of the band are of the most satisfactory nature there is no reason, having regard to their past feats, why they shouldn't in time achieve even more notable successes.

Our other local newspaper, the Craven Herald, managed to miss reporting the event altogether in their 2nd October issue. When they did get around to it, on 9th October, the report was simply an edited-down version of that already published by the Keighley News.

Other newspapers took a different view of the importance of the event and it was even reported in New Zealand – although it is only fair to note that the bulk of the report in the Lyttleton Star² is about the 1000-guinea Championship Trophy, with just the results of the other contests listed.

1904 – Kildwick did not compete

For reasons that may have had something to do with the internal dispute that would come to the fore in 1905, the band did not participate in the 1904 Crystal Palace competition. However they weren't idle and appear to have taken steps to increase the quality of their playing, as well as poaching players from other bands. They even made the news when not taking part in a competition:

Craven Herald – January 22nd 1904

KILDWICK AND DISTRICT PRIZE BRASS BAND – An interesting quartette contest was promoted by this band and held in the Friendly Societies' Hall, Crosshills, on Saturday, when there was a good attendance. The entries consisted of the following bands: Linthwaite, Colne Old, Bradford Postmen, Hebden Bridge, Cowling Temperance and Bradford City. Mr. Charles Jeffrey (late of Black Dyke Prize Band) discharged the duties of adjudicator...

The intervals were filled in by Kildwick band which, under the conductorship of Mr. Walter Inskip (owing to Mr. Jeffrey being adjudicator), gave a splendid rendition of those popular selections "Gems of Scotch Melody" and the one which brought Kildwick fame and honour at the Crystal Palace Contest, "Gems of Welsh Melody".

It was felt that the Kildwick bandsmen have spent no idle hours during the winter, and since they have secured Mr. Richard Inskip, solo cornet (late of Mossley), as a permanent addition, the progress they have made is marked, and they will have to be counted within the forthcoming season's contests ...

But they weren't sweeping all before them:

Craven Herald – July 15th 1904

BAND SUCCESS – The Kildwick Prize Brass Band were successful in winning the second prize at the competition at Bingley on Saturday. They were bracketed equal with Bradford City for first place, and both bands had to replay the test piece, "Gems of Scotch Melody". The judge (Mr. Jackson) then awarded the first prize to Bradford City. The Kildwick Band was conducted by Mr. Jeffrey (formerly of the Black Dike Band).

1904 saw the first appearance of the band in the Craven Household Almanac, an annual digest of local groups and societies in and around Skipton. The entry reads:

Brass Band – Practices held in the Prospect Assembly room, Farnhill (the property of the band). President and treasurer T. O. Aked; secretary J. J. Nelson. Committee consists of 17 members. The actual membership of the band numbers 140, from which 28 playing members are selected. Bandmaster W. Inskip; conductor (prof.) C. Jeffrey.

This indicates a remarkable change since 1893. The band now has 140 members, compared to the 17 just eleven years previously. The number is quite remarkable considering the size of the Farnhill / Kildwick catchment area and suggests that the recruitment drive, promised by the rule changes of 1893, must have been successful.

1905 – Kildwick winners

The build-up to the 1905 Crystal Palace contest wasn't exactly plain sailing. The band were having difficulty raising funds:

Craven Herald – 22nd September 1905

KILDWICK

Promenade Dance – The Kildwick Prize Band's effort in promulgating a public dance in the Society's Hall on Saturday last was not so well patronized. Two more open-air practices were given at Farnhill and Junction on Sunday afternoon and evening to augment the Crystal Palace Contest Fund.

But they did have some well-off friends in high places.

Keighley News – 23rd September 1905 [text not totally legible]

KILDWICK

The Brass Band and Mr. Brigg, M. P. – [In a special ?] meeting of the Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band the bandmaster (Mr. Walter Inskip) was instructed to supplement the secretary's acknowledgement of Mr. Brigg's handsome donation to the band's instrument fund by conveying to him the following resolution: - "We, the members of the Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band, having heard of the generous donation of £15 made to the instrument fund of the band by John Brigg, Esq., M.P., [... text illegible ...] to convey directly to the hon. Member for the Keighley Division the sincere and hearty [thanks ?] of the band for this practical manifestation of his [abiding ?] interest in the affairs of the band past and present, and to assure the hon. Member of the [deep felt ?] desire of every member to make the band in every way worthy of the confidence and patronage so generously bestowed.

John Brigg was the tenant of Kildwick Hall, the MP for Keighley, and by no means short of a bob or two. Nevertheless, £15 in 1905 represents over £1200 at 2016 prices. A considerable donation.

The contest itself was again reported extravagantly by the Keighley News. This time the column was written by "A Bandsman" who explains not only how the band came to achieve their victory but also takes the opportunity to stick two fingers up at the members of the band's own committee who appear to have been rather less than supportive of the players' efforts.

Keighley News – 7th October 1905

KILDWICK BAND'S SUCCESS

FIRST PLACE IN THE CRYSTAL PALACE CONTEST

HOW KILDWICK WON THE SHIELD

[SPECIALLY WRITTEN BY A BANDSMAN.]

It takes faith to move mountains, but faith can move them. Two years ago Kildwick Band secured third prize at the Crystal Palace contest. Then it had battered instruments which have since found their way to the melting pot. A year ago the new instrument fund began, but the outside committee of the band vetoed any attempt to participate in the great national tussle at Crystal Palace. They did the same thing this year. Every obstacle that could be put in the way of the band going to London was thrown across the path by the outside committee. The Band itself, however, had faith – faith in its ability, faith in its belief of success – and today they stand justified. But thanks are due to the good residents of Kildwick and district, without whose practical and timely aid the splendid result achieved on Saturday could never have been consummated. When the outside committee of the band tied up their purse-strings and refused a penny of financial assistance, then the band appealed to the public, and the wherewithal flowed in handsomely.

TRAINING FOR THE CONTEST

The financial difficulties in connection with the contest having been disposed of, the musical efficiency inseparable from success was diligently and devotedly pursued. Day and night, “al fresco” and under cover, the band pursued its practices, each one of which brought the band nearer to the possession of the shield they now hold. Mr. Charles Jeffrey (the professional conductor of the band), who won such distinction with the famous Black Dike Band, has deservedly trod the path of progress and fame with the fortunes of the Kildwick Band. In 1903 he conducted Kildwick when it was placed third at the Palace contest; in 1904 he took Bramley to the second place; and now he leads Kildwick into the flowery paths of first prize winners. A word also is due here to the persistency, assiduity and indomitable faith of the bandmaster, Mr. Walter Inskip. Upon him has largely fallen the brunt of the battle regarding ways and means, and to his inspiration in the darkest moments is due the happy result we now chronicle. On Friday night last the band mustered in good time and good form for the final home rehearsals. There was a glint in the eye of each player – one of those flashes of determination which explains the secret of the Yorkshireman’s success in all walks of life. The innate confidence burning within the breast of each member of the band spread to the people and the good folk of Kildwick turned out to wish god-speed and success to “our band”. “Our Band !” The expression itself was an inspiration. Much was expected, and all that was expected was done. Prior to leaving the band was entertained to a sumptuous repast, provided gratuitously and splendidly served by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Mitchell at the Ship Hotel, Farnhill.

At the station the band played a choice selection to the great crowd assembled, and amid the hopeful cheers and "Gud luck owd lads", the train moved off. "How shall we come back whoam if we dunno' win after all this to do", croaked the only pessimist in the party. A hearty roar of laughter was the answer. "If we dunno' win we wain't come whoam, an I'm fayther of five bairns", responded one of the many optimists. At Keighley the first stop was made, where we boarded the special Pullman saloon which the railway company thoughtfully provided – and charged for !

A PRELIMINARY TRIAL

The next stop was Leicester, and St. Pancras was reached at 6.10 a.m. London was fast asleep. The morning air was fresh and frosty and crisp. The atmosphere was magnetic; so much so that one of the members lit his cigarette with it. A smart tramp, and well-served breakfast in the aristocratic rendezvous of Regent Street and the removal of all the stains of nocturnal travel made every member fit for the task imposed upon him. The final hour's rehearsal was performed in a yard behind Regent Street, and here the first prizes were won in an amusing fashion. As the rehearsal proceeded windows were opened and somehow or other the impression got abroad that "blokes plying below b'long'd the Blue 'Ungarian Band", as one of the Cockney admirers put it. Then began a regular shower of coins of the realm, which proved to be the harbingers of the success to come. At 11.15 a.m. we arrived at the Crystal Palace, learned that our band stand was situated in that portion known as the Maze, and our representative who had been deputed to draw for place having informed us that we were placed ninth on the list, we whiled away the time silently, hopefully, yet confidently, until 3.15 p.m., when our hopes, and boasts, and skill were to be tried in the fierce fire of test.

In our section nineteen bands drawn from England and Wales were entered, we had heard eight play before we got on the stand, and ten bands were to follow. Somehow the impression had possessed the musical world at the Palace that a great performance was expected of Kildwick Band. Conductors and great professional players flocked round to hear us, and never did men play with greater zest, care, or precision. It would be brutal almost to differentiate between the players where everyone did his best; and although the judge's remarks are not yet out one dares to prophesy that for harmony and skill there was no band of any class that excelled the boys from Kildwick in their performance of the test piece. Congratulations followed hearty applause, and it was clear that nothing but a miracle could rob us of the fruits of victory.

THE RETURN HOME

Let it be said here in fairness to our other competitors that Kildwick Band had no cheap thing on hand. The bands from Sheffield and Doncaster were among those whose performances were of a really high order of merit, and it was nothing but the superior merit due to careful organisation, persistent practice, and the most skilled tuition which put Kildwick at the head of all other competing bands. The judge's decision was received for a moment in silence; the tension on the minds of the members of our band stopped speech. But a moment more and a good sound-ringing Yorkshire cheer went up – one of those cheers which startle the Cockney with his fog and smoke and grime infected lungs – and a moment later even our opponents in the contest who hailed from the county of broad acres joined in our jubilation, and were proud of "Good Old Yorkshire".

At 11.45 p.m. on Saturday night we entrained for home. We had gone away in fear and hope; we returned blessed by the goddesses of success and joy, and those, apparently, were on no friendly terms with the kindly Morpheus, who stood waiting to be called but was not. We arrived at Kildwick at 7.15 on Sunday morning, and were surprised by the crowds who greeted our arrival. Before leaving the Palace we inspected the very beautiful shield of which we were the winners. It has not come our way yet. The usual routine is for the manager and director of the contest, Mr. Henry Isles, to present the shield to the winning band at a public function organised in the locality represented by the band. Already the manager of a Leeds theatre has offered to put his place at the disposal of the band for the presentation of the shield, but this offer has been declined, as it is felt by the band that as the good people of Kildwick and district have helped them so loyally and generously in the past, now, in the moment of victory, the patrons of the band shall share its honours. For this purpose a public function, the definite character of which has not been fixed upon, will be organised shortly, and full particulars will be given in the advertising column of the "Keighley News".

Note: The, at first sight, rather remarkable suggestion that the Kildwick band were the "Blue 'Ungarians" perhaps needs a little explanation. The Blue Hungarians were a famous brass band of the late 18 and early 1900s¹⁵. Their performance at the Glasgow International Festival in 1888 was captured on canvas by the painter Sir John Lavery¹⁶ and is also mentioned in the recent novel "Gillespie and I" by Jane Harris¹⁷.

It's not clear when, or even if, the public presentation of the award took place, but the History Group archive has two photographs of the 1905 winning band with the shield.



Figure 5a: The 1905 prize-winning band, with the shield. Date unknown, but possibly 26th May 1906 (see Figure 9)



Figure 5b: Another photograph of the 1905 prize-winning band, with the shield. Date unknown.

Here is a photograph of the shield.

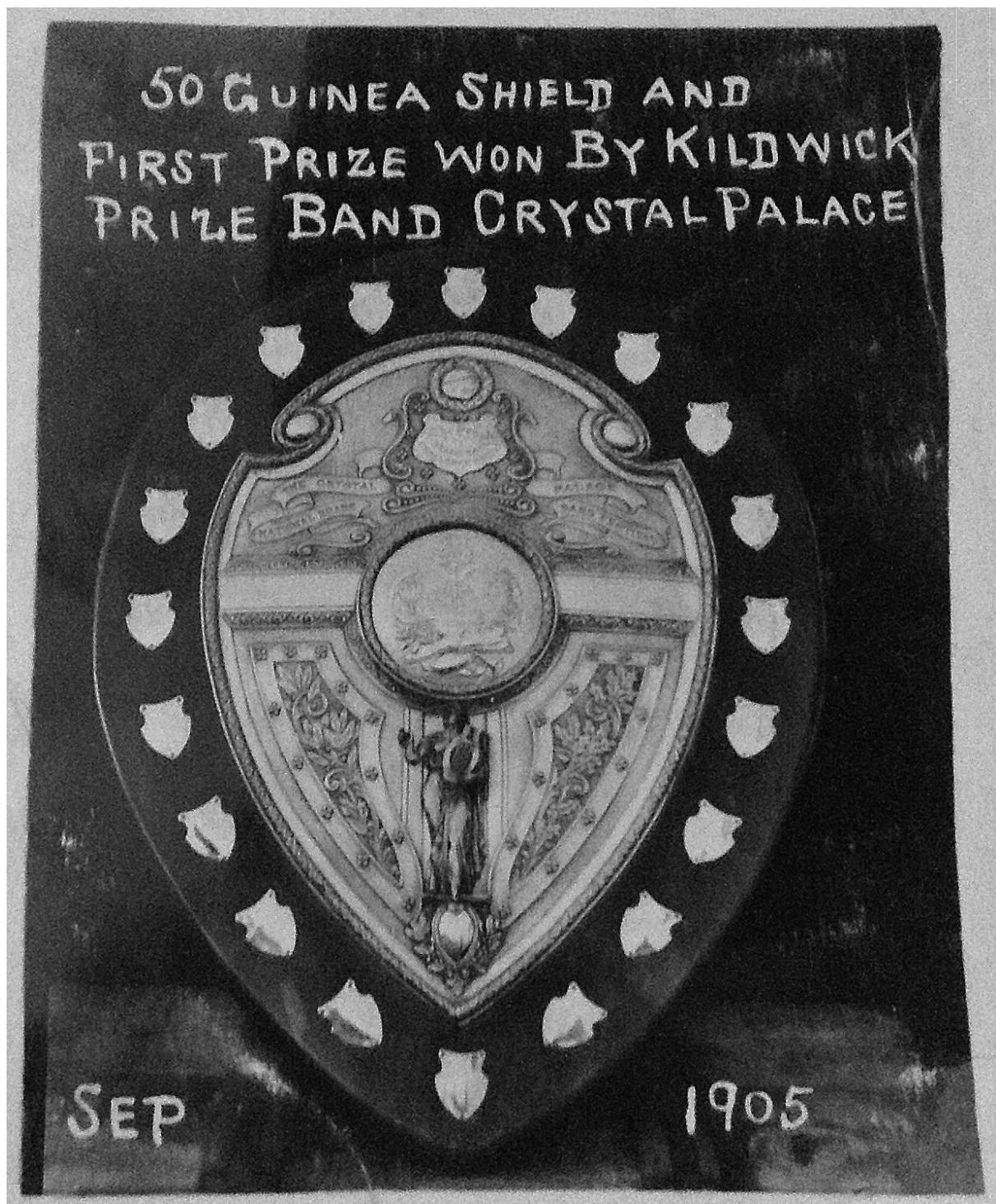


Figure 6: The 1905 winner's shield

Despite the absence of a public event, the band's success was well received locally.

Craven Herald – 13th October 1905

KILDWICK

The Band – In honour of the recent success obtained at Crystal Palace, the band paraded the neighbourhood on Saturday. Considerable interest was displayed by the public en route. As a mark of esteem and appreciation a subscription list has been opened for Mr. C. Jeffrey, under whose tuition the band has attained their achievement.

A couple of weeks after the contest, the band received details of the judge's comments. The performance hadn't been perfect, but the band had been clear and worthy winners.

Keighley News – 14th October 1905

KILDWICK

KILDWICK BAND'S CRYSTAL PALACE PERFORMANCE: JUDGE'S REMARKS

The remarks of the judge at the Crystal Palace Band Contest, in reference to the Kildwick band's performance, were as follows: - "Irish Melodies" – Opening move, best opening yet by trombone, and good to end. "Eileen Alannah", nice start with everything going well and fair time, baritone very good indeed, also horn. Brass band has good tone and soprano a feature. Vivace well done by all; "Asthore" solo cornet, soprano and solo horn, all excellent and band backing them up. Andante – good playing, better than anything previous so far. Allegro Marcia – Well in tune and good playing, cornet cadenza excellent.

"Alannah" – euphonium putting some soul into it, and accompaniments well done; everything capital, and quite enjoyed this; moderato well played; trombone cadenza capitally done considering the class of bands. "Green Isle of Erin" – trombone phrasing beautifully and agitato not overdone. L. baritone and euphonium enter really, and accompaniment rises and falls with melody, not a neat entry by any means to the jig; after, good to finish; as an all-round performance it pleases me the best so far – 1st prize.

Also, now that the band's dispute with its committee was out in the open, something had to be done to resolve the matter and it seems as if Farnhill Parish Council decided to get involved.

Keighley and Bingley Chronicle – 13th October 1905

FARNHILL

... The clerk [of Farnhill Parish Council] was also invited to write Mr. Binns-Hartley, suggesting a joint meeting of the Council and the committee of the Kildwick Prize Brass Band at an early date, the meeting to be held in the Band Room.

The outcome of this meeting is not known and is sadly irrelevant as, although they weren't to know it, the 1905 Crystal Palace victory was the high-water mark for the band.

Whether individual members of the band received a prize or medal is not known, although the band itself received a Prize Winner's Certificate.



Figure 7: The beautiful 1905 prize-winner's certificate. The original, now in the possession of Kildwick and Farnhill Institute, measures 30x35 cm (approx) and is housed in a solid oak and brass frame.

Charles Jeffrey, the conductor, received a number of prizes including a personal certificate, a silver tea and coffee set on a tray, a monogrammed brief-case, and a silver and ivory baton.

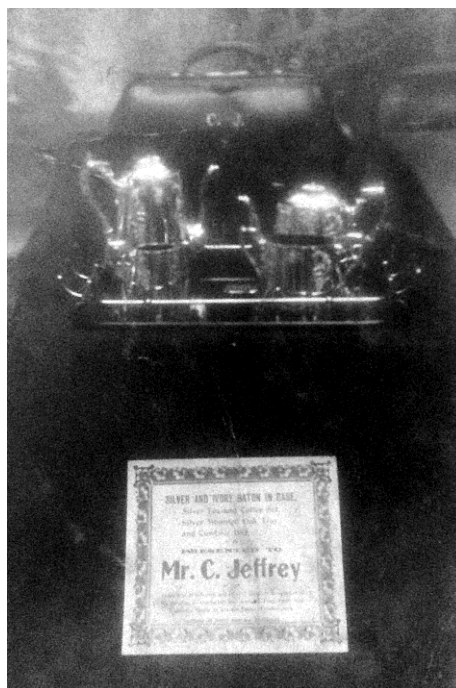


Figure 8: Photograph of the winner's prizes awarded to Charles Jeffrey, conductor of the Kildwick band.

The decline (1906 – 1914)

Early in 1906 the band took delivery of new uniforms, that quite impressed the reporter from the Craven Herald.

Craven Herald – 1st June 1906

KILDWICK

The Band – On Saturday afternoon the Kildwick and District Prize Band paraded through the streets of Kildwick and Farnhill for the purpose of showing their new uniform and collecting money to help the band to pay for the same. The band looked very smart, and the makers of the uniform are to be complimented on their workmanship and style. The band had their photos taken on the lawn of Kildwick Hall, and the collection realised over £3.

Remarkably, the photograph survives.



Figure 9: The band at Kildwick Hall, May 26th 1906. This photograph is included in the book “South Craven in Old Picture Postcards” by Peter Whitaker and Alec Wood. Their caption to this says that George Whiteoak, who took the photograph (GW) was a member of the band. It is possible that the photograph shown in Figure 5 was also taken at this event – the band personnel and uniforms appear to be the same.

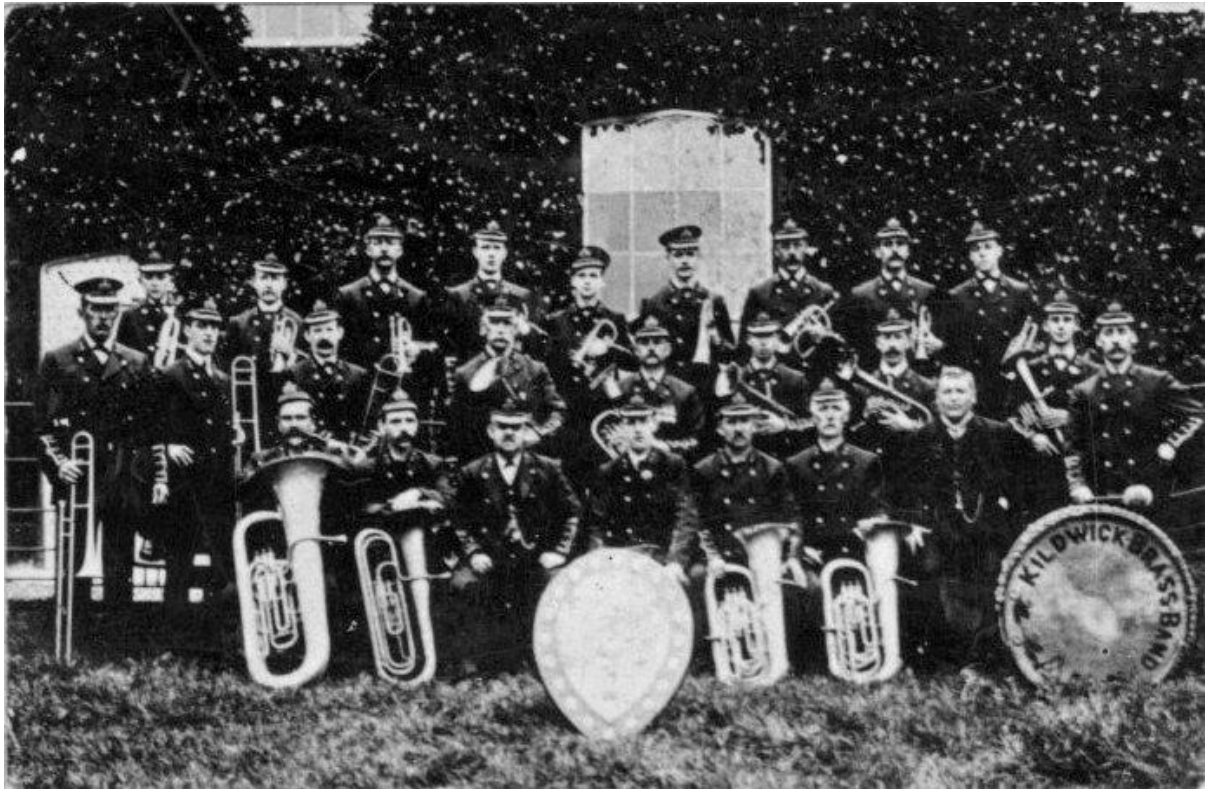


Figure 10: Another photograph of the prize-winning band at Kildwick Hall. Do they remind anyone else of a famous fictional band of the 1960s ? “They’ve been going in-and-out of style, but they’re guaranteed to raise a smile”.

In August, the band played at the Haworth Gala; an event over-shadowed by a tragic event that occurred a couple of days later.⁹

... On Saturday 9 June 1906, music was provided by the Haworth and Kildwick Brass Bands, plus the Keighley Wiffum Waffum Wuffum and Haworth Bingem Bangem Comic Bands. Highlight was to be the balloon ascent and parachute descent by Miss Lily Cove. This spectacle was postponed for two days because of unsuitable weather. But disaster struck. When Miss Cove jumped from the balloon, she somehow became detached from her parachute. She plummeted to the ground near Ponden Reservoir.

At the end of September, the Keighley News reported the band’s preparations for their defence of the shield. These appeared to follow what, by now, had become the usual pattern: a final outdoor practice, this time at Crosshills, was followed by a meal at the Ship Inn before the band caught the late train to London.¹⁰

But this time it was all to no avail. In the following issue, the paper provides a full report of the contest and a full list of all the prize-winners in all the categories. The Kildwick band is not mentioned.¹¹ Their national successes were at an end, and this seems to have been the last time they took part in a major contest of any description.

Subsequent reports of the band’s activities quickly become sparse.

There is, however, one more photograph of them; taken on what looks to have been a very wet Keighley Gala Day, in June 1907.



Figure 11: The Kildwick band taking part in the Keighley Gala Day parade, 1907.

On September 21st 1907 the band played a concert of sacred music in Ilkley. The collection, a total of £8, was divided between the band and the Ilkley Coronation Cottage Hospital.¹² After that the band seem to have largely restricted themselves to local events: giving concerts in the band room, and leading processions for the church and the Oddfellows.¹³

The last mention of Charles Jeffrey as conductor of the band appears on October 12th 1907, when he attended the funeral of a retired band member at Kildwick Church.¹⁴

On February 26th 1910 the band celebrated its 50th anniversary with a celebratory evening at its favourite watering-hole, the Ship Inn. The subsequent newspaper report lists their prizes since the Crystal Palace victory as:

- 1906 – 1st and 2nd at Sheffield
- 1907 – 2nd at Whitby
- 1908 – 3rd at Clayton and Marske-by-the- Sea
- 1909 – 3rd at Skipton

It also reported that Mr. Richard Inskip was the current conductor. The loss of Charles Jeffrey sometime between October 1907 and February 1910 can only have hastened the band's demise.

When the band performed at the opening of the new Conservative Club building on Kildwick bridge, their conductor is Mr. R. Sugden, who was probably the son of their very first conductor in 1867.

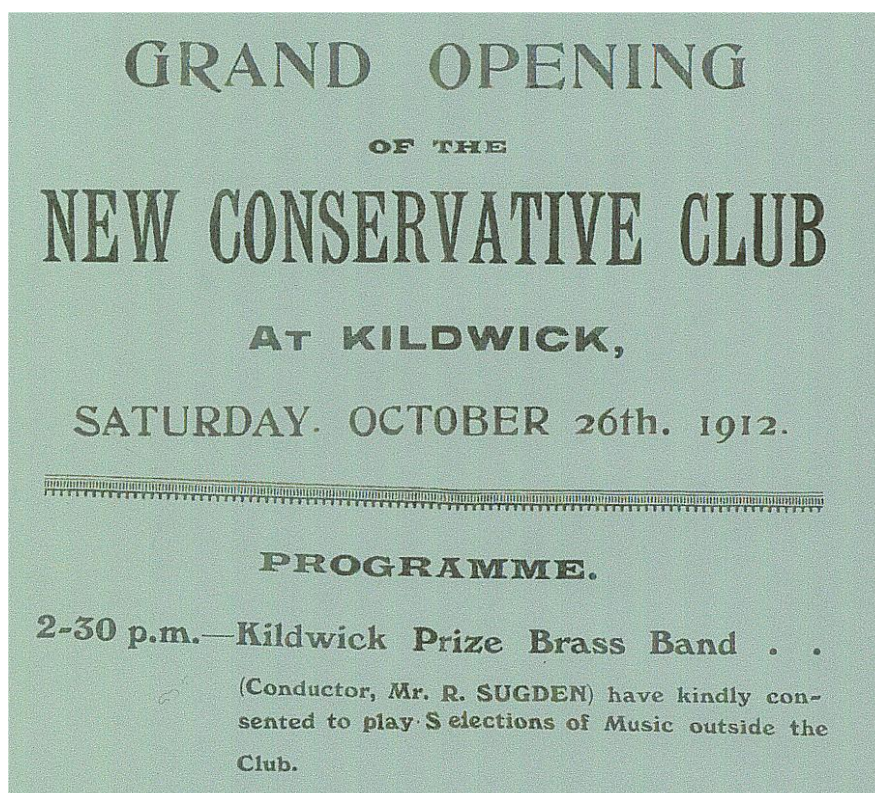


Figure 12: Programme for the opening of the Conservative Club, October 1912. Mr. Sugden was a committee member and although a fine musician, not a professional conductor. (Provided by Keighley and District Digital Archive)

The band began to shrink in size. Between 1910 and 1916, their entry in the Craven Household Almanac says the band has just 20 playing members, down from 28 in 1904, and probably too small an ensemble to participate in any major competitions. However in June 1914, just before the outbreak of WWI, they did play for WA Brigg's mayoral garden-party at Kildwick Hall – with yet another conductor.

Keighley News – 20th June 1914

KILDWICK HALL GARDEN PARTY

... Tea was served in a marquee in the garden, and selections of music were played at intervals by the Kildwick and District Prize Band, conducted by Mr. Joseph Hopkinson.

The band during WWI (1914 – 1918)

When war was declared, the young men of Farnhill and Kildwick heeded their country's call.

West Yorkshire Pioneer – 24th December 1915

KILDWICK BAND'S DEPLETED MEMBERSHIP

During the war the membership of the Kildwick and District Prize Band has suffered very much in number and now, under Lord Derby's scheme, another batch has been attested, and will be called up in their class. Despite the fact that the membership of the band has been reduced, the committee has decided to continue the custom of playing during Christmas and the New Year. The members who have joined the Colours are:- Messrs. J. Smith (killed), G. Inskip, C. Lee, J. Wellock, J. Tatcham, H. Riddiough, F. Drive (discharged), Harry Pollard and W. Ward. Attested: Messrs. W. Hopkinson, H. Walmsley, H. Barker, M. Dawson, R. Knight. Rejected: Messrs. J.W. Hartley, H. Heaton, S. Lister.

Three members of the band were killed.

Joseph Smith – killed in action, 19th September 1914

West Yorkshire Pioneer – 16th October 1914

KILDWICK - KILLED IN ACTION

The official intimation, received on Tuesday last by Mrs. Joseph Smith, stating that her husband, Private Joseph Smith, of the 2nd Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, had been killed in action in the Battle of the Marne, has been received with deep regret throughout the whole district. Along with other Reservists from the district, the deceased was called to join his regiment and proceeded to Dublin. Several post cards have been received, simply stating that he was all right and in France. During his seven years' service in the Army, Private Smith spent four years in India, and was a member of the band connected with his regiment. Since his return home as Reservist, he had been a member of the Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band. The deceased leaves a widow and one child.



PRIVATE J. SMITH, Duke of Well's Regt.,
formerly of Farnhill, killed in action 19th
September, 1915.

Figure 13: Joseph Green. This photograph from the "Craven's Part in the Great War" project

<http://version3.cpgw.org.uk/cpgwBook.cfm?pgID=107&slD=107-04>

Harry Walmsley – died of wounds, 14th December 1916

Craven Herald – 22nd December 1916

FARNHILL SOLDIER DIES IN HOSPITAL

We regret to report the death of Pte. Harry Walmsley, oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Seth Walmsley, of Hanover Street, Farnhill ...

The bearers of the coffin, which was draped with the Union Jack, were members of the Kildwick Prize Brass Band, of which Pte. Walmsley was also a member

In addition to the family, representatives were sent from the Farnhill and Kildwick Institute, Volunteers, Kildwick Prize Brass Band, Conservative Club, and Junction Mills (who also sent wreaths, of which there were a great many). Crowds of people came from all the surrounding villages, the church being packed to overflowing ...

West Yorkshire Pioneer – 22nd December 1916

FARNHILL - THE LATE PTE. HENRY WALMSLEY

The funeral of the late Private Henry Walmsley, of the 1st 5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment, took place on Sunday afternoon last at the Kildwick Church burial ground, amid many signs of deep sympathy and respect...

... The deceased was very highly respected in the village of his birth. He was a very promising member of the Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band...

... The bearers were Messrs. J. Hopkinson, J.W. Hartley, B. Whitaker, H. Wilcock, H. Heaton. A. Ogden, E. Gibson, and J. Whitaker, all fellow members of the band, in uniform...



PRIVATE HARRY WALMSLEY, Duke of Well.'s Regt., son of Mr. & Mrs. Seth Walmsley, Hanover Street, Farnhill, died of wounds 13th December, 1916. Aged 23 years.

Figure 14: Harry Walmsley. This photograph from the "Craven's Part in the Great War" project <http://version3.cpgw.org.uk/cpgwBook.cfm?pgID=198&SID=198-02>

George Inskip – killed in action, 27th November 1917

West Yorkshire Pioneer – 21st December 1917

FARNHILL - SOLDIER KILLED

Mr. Richard Inskip, of Hanover Street, Farnhill, received the sad news on Wednesday that his eldest son, Pte. George Inskip (Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment) had been killed in action. ... Mr. Inskip's second son, Richard, was in the same battalion as his brother, and is now in hospital at Reading suffering from wounds in his left hand. A third son, Louis, has been rejected from military service. Pte. George Inskip was formerly a member of Kildwick Brass Band, playing the cornet.



PRIVATE GEORGE INSKIP, Duke of Well.'s Regt., son of Mr. R. Inskip, Farnhill, killed in action 27th November, 1917.

Figure 15: George Inskip. This photograph from the “Craven’s Part in the Great War” project <http://version3.cpgw.org.uk/cpgwBook.cfm?pgID=316&slID=316-02>

Coda (1919 – 1936)

In June 1919 the Craven Herald reported the post-war return of the band to the village¹⁹.

The Band Funds.—The Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band promenaded the village on Saturday afternoon playing suitable music. There was a collection to help the funds. The music was delightful after the four years, when, owing to the war, there was not sufficient men to keep the band going.

Figure 16: The band bring music back to the village

The following month the band, under Richard Inskip, played in the procession that formed part of the Peace Celebrations in Crosshills; and, in the evening, provided music for dancing²⁰.

However, the loss of key men and the dislocation of society during and after the war made it difficult for the band to continue in any meaningful way. Its days were numbered.

An anonymous letter sent to the Craven Herald early in January 1924 alludes to problems that the band were having²⁷:

Dear Sir – I should be pleased if you would allow me a little space in which to express, on behalf of local music lovers, some appreciation of the worthy efforts of the Kildwick and District Prize Brass Band during Christmas week.

For some time past the Kildwick Brass Band has been under a cloud, and I believe there has been some danger of extinction. A revival, however, appears to have taken place, and the tasteful playing of hymns and selections in the Kildwick and Crosshills districts has been a very pleasant feature of the Christmas holidays.

Is it too much to hope that this revival may be maintained. The Kildwick Band have worthy traditions, and have gained distinctions in many parts of the country during the past years, and their continued and prosperous existence will gratify not only those attached to brass instrumentalism but lovers of music in general. Renewed activity will doubtless receive generous public support, and the best wishes of a large section of the local public are extended to the Kildwick Band for the New Year. It is to be hoped that 1924 will witness a return of enthusiasm on the part of the members and supporters, and that the New Year will bring full prosperity to the Kildwick Band.

*Your etc.,
MUSICIAN*

Sadly, “Musician’s” hopes were not to be fulfilled. In 1926 the band’s committee attempted to raise funds for the band, and stimulate local interest, by staging a “Slow Melody Contest” for brass instrumentalists from other bands²⁸; but the Kildwick band continued a slow, terminal decline.

Issues of the Craven Household Almanac for the years 1917 to 1927 have been lost, but from 1928 onwards there is no entry for the band, suggesting that it had decreased to such an extent that it was no longer worth even advertising its existence.

When the end finally came, it was quick and decisive. At a committee meeting in April 1936 the decision was made to wind-up what, by then, was known simply as Kildwick Parish Band, with the sale of the band room.

COPY

Kildwick & Farnhill Institute,
KILDWICK.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF MEMBERS of the Kildwick
Parish Brass Band held at the above Institute
on the 6th day of April 1936.

PRESENT :- Messrs. Jones Whiteoak, George Bottomley
Nelson Baxter, James Brown, Seth Holmes, John Baxter, James
Kitson, Percy Kitson, Fred Sugden, Seth Walmsley and James
Atkinson. (inter alia)

RESOLVED on the motion of Mr. Fred Sugden seconded by
Mr. Nelson Baxter

THAT the Band be wound up and that Mr. Kitson
and Mr. Seth Holmes be authorised to hand the proceeds of
sale of the Building formerly used as a Bandroom (after
payment of expenses) to the Trustees of the Kildwick
and Farnhill Institute and that the Receipt of the
Treasurer of the Trustees of the Institute be a good and
sufficient discharge for the handing over of such monies.

SETH HOLMES.

Chairman.

Figure 17: The resolution to wind-up the band's affairs

The building was sold to a Mr. Thomas Stirk for just £40 and, less than three months later, it was all over.

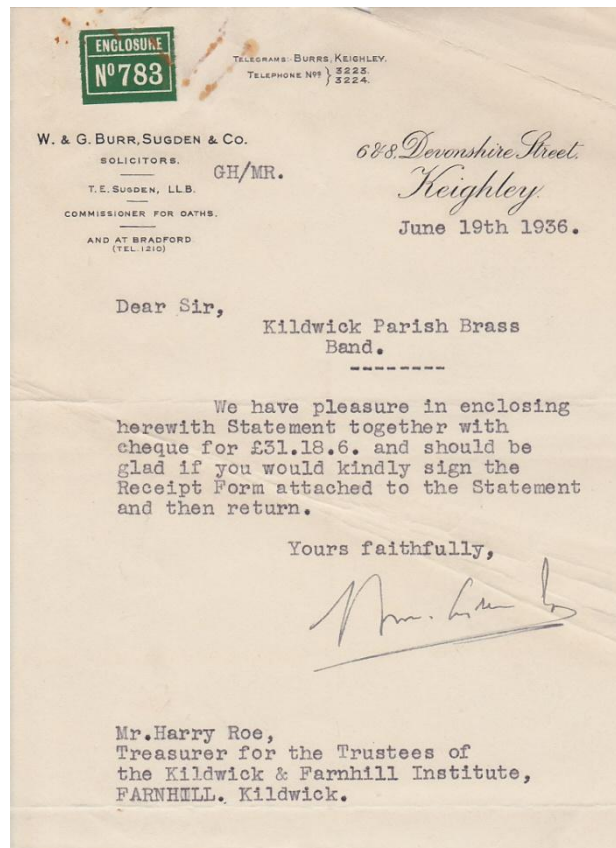


Figure 18: The band's final note

The rest is silence.

Appendix A – Early newspaper reports

The following table provides a summary of newspaper reports that reference Kildwick Band in the period 1866 – 1888.

Date	Event	Notes
1 st September 1866	Keighley Agricultural Show – Brass Band Contest	Kildwick Band, 4 th place (see Figure 3). ¹
24 th August 1867	Wakefield Agricultural Show	“ ... and, to crown the whole, a brass band contest, for which there were 14 bands entered ... [list includes Kildwick Band] ... At the close of the contest the fourteen competing bands united and played the National Anthem in excellent style, on the Grand Stand. An encore was asked for and given, after which the judges gave their decision ...” ² [Kildwick not placed.]
30 th August 1867	Craven Agricultural Society	“A brass band contest was a source of never-failing interest.” ² [Kildwick, 5 th place.]
September 1873	Opening of the new Bradford Town Hall	“The Amalgamated Engineers mustered very well ... about 500 men in the procession ... The Kildwick Brass Band came after this ...” ³ (see Figure 4)
July 1874	Opening of the Friendly Society’s Hall, Crosshills	“On Saturday afternoon a procession of the members was formed ... as well as the neighbouring villages of Sutton, Glusburn and Eastburn ... the procession being led by Kildwick Brass Band.” ⁴
17 th August 1878	Kildwick Parish Feast	“The Kildwick Brass Band was in attendance and played selections at intervals ...” ²¹
21 st June 1879	Competition at Nelson	“Judges remarks – Tune 4, tone 4, time 4, ensemble 5. Total, 17” ²²
16 th August 1879	Kildwick Parish Feast	“The Kildwick Prize Band was in attendance, and played selections of dance music.” ²³
23 rd August 1879	Kildwick – Athletic Sports and Galas	“The celebrated Kildwick Band was in attendance throughout the day.” ²⁴
1 st June 1881	Sutton National School	“Holiday – in honour of the marriage of Miss Ellen Bairstow ... generous friend of the scholars ... The Kildwick Prize Brass Band played several pieces of music in the playground” ⁵
13 th August 1881	Kildwick Annual Athletic Sports	“The Kildwick celebrated Prize Band contributed the musical part of the programme ...” ²⁵
August 1888	Kildwick Flower Show	“ ... in the evening a grand gala was held, the Kildwick band playing for dancing.” ⁶

Appendix B – A recollection of the Prize-winning band in London

In April 1939, Seth and Ida Walmsley celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary in Farnhill. The event was reported in the local newspapers. The reports note that Seth was a prize-winning horticulturalist and also that he had been a member of the Kildwick band when they won the Crystal Palace contest in 1905.

They included the following anecdote²⁶:

He was also a member of Kildwick Brass Band for a number of years, and is proud of the fact that he was a member of the band when they won the challenge shield at the Crystal Palace contest. He relates a very humorous anecdote in connection with this success. Wishing to obtain a pole on which to fasten the winning flag he went to a shop in the Metropolis and asked for a “brush steyl”. He was promptly told that they did not stock such an article, and had to take the shop assistant and show him one before the latter realised it was a brush handle that he wanted.

Seth Walmsley is the only name (apart from conductor Charles Jeffrey) that we can confidently say was a member of the 1905 band.

Appendix C – Miscellaneous photographs of the band

In March 2017 members of the History Group were invited to talk with Mrs Freda Topham, the great-niece of Richard Inskip – sometime conductor of Kildwick Band. She loaned us the following photographs.



Figure 19: Richard Inskip, the band's conductor



Figure 20: Brass Band Manchester Challenge cup - Annual September Brass Band Contest. The rear of this photograph says "Kildwick trophy"; we don't know when Kildwick won this competition.



Figure 21: A photograph of Kildwick Band, of unknown date. Probably including Richard Inskip; possibly in the centre with his youngest son, Louis, to our left.

References

- 1 Bradford Observer, September 6th 1866 – see <http://www.ibew.org.uk/misc4286.htm>
- 2 <http://www.ibew.org.uk/misc4286.htm>
- 3 Bradford Observer, September 10th 1873
- 4 Bradford Observer, July 13th 1874
- 5 <http://www.sutton-in-craven.org.uk/h1874CESlogbook.asp>
- 6 Leeds Mercury, August 13th 1888
- 7 <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=TS19031121.2.79.4>
- 8 Personal communications from Keith Bunnett, former resident of Farnhill; and John Lofthouse, the recent owner of the property
- 9 http://www.postcardcollecting.co.uk/ppm_online/ppm_10_aug.pdf
- 10 Keighley News, September 28th 1906
- 11 Keighley News, October 5th 1906
- 12 Keighley News, September 21st, 1907

- 13 Handwritten note in the possession of the Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group (source unknown)
- 14 Keighley News, October 12th, 1907
- 15 <http://newspapers.nl.sg/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb18950515.2.22.aspx> This is just one of a number of references to the band in this period.
- 16 <http://www.artyfart.net/lavery-The-Blue-Hungarians.html>
- 17 Gillespie and I, publ. Faber and Faber, 2011 (page 49)
- 18 Craven Herald, March 4th, 1910
- 19 Craven Herald, June 22nd, 1919
- 20 Keighley News, July 26th, 1919
- 21 Craven Herald, August 17th, 1878
- 22 Craven Herald, June 20th, 1879
- 23 Craven Herald, August 16th, 1879
- 24 Craven Herald, August 23rd, 1879
- 25 Craven Herald, August 13th, 1881
- 26 From an undated newspaper article, probably the Craven Herald, provided by Mrs. Jill Ideson – Seth Walmsley’s grand-daughter.
- 27 Craven Herald, January 4th, 1924
- 28 Craven Herald, March 12th, 1926

Acknowledgements

The Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group would like to thank Gavin Holman of The Internet Bandsman’s Enquire Within (www.ibew.co.uk) who kindly provided the newspaper cuttings and other material relating to the band’s early activities. and information on the organisation of the Crystal Palace competition in the early years of the 20th century.

The location of the band room was identified by Mr. Keith Bunnnett, former resident of Farnhill; and also by John Lofthouse, a previous owner of the property.

Special thanks are due to Alison Denison, the great grand-daughter of Charles Jeffrey, who kindly supplied the photographs used as Figures 6 and 8; and also to Mrs. Freda Topham, great-niece of Richard Inskip, who provided the photographs shown in Appendix C.