ARNOLD MYERS

Made in Manchester: Instruments of the Higham Firm

Joseph Higham, of all the provincial British firms of brass instrument makers, was the longest-lasting and the most productive and innovative, energetically competing with the major London makers – Distin & Co (later Boosey & Co, and Boosey & Hawkes) and F. Besson (later Besson Co). The firm was established in Manchester by Joseph Higham in 1842 and operated independently until 1923, and then as a subsidiary until 1939; the name was revived as a brand for some 20 years post-war. Joseph Higham and latterly J. Higham Ltd did the bulk of their business with the brass bands of Northern England, but also exported around the world. Their instruments were mostly mainstream models differing little from those of their London competitors or from French imports, but their production did include instruments with characteristic features and some of innovative design.

JOSEPH HIGHAM (1818–83)

In the early 1880s Higham gave an interview to (Manchester) City News which was reprinted in the firm's 1887–9 Price List and General Catalogue.[1] He claimed to have originated brass band contests at Belle Vue (Manchester) – what part he actually played in organising the first contests is, however, not known. Higham related that when volunteer militia regiments were raised in 1859[2] he first saw it as an opportunity to sell military band instruments, but was instead persuaded to enlist the existing band that he directed and furnished with instruments. Figure 1 shows the terms of the agreement. For the regiment to pay band members for duties within working hours and to supply uniforms was normal; for the instruments and music to be supplied by an instrument manufacturer was unusual. The band, whose members were employees of the Higham firm, operated successfully as the 1st Manchester Rifle Volunteers Band at least until 1881.[3]

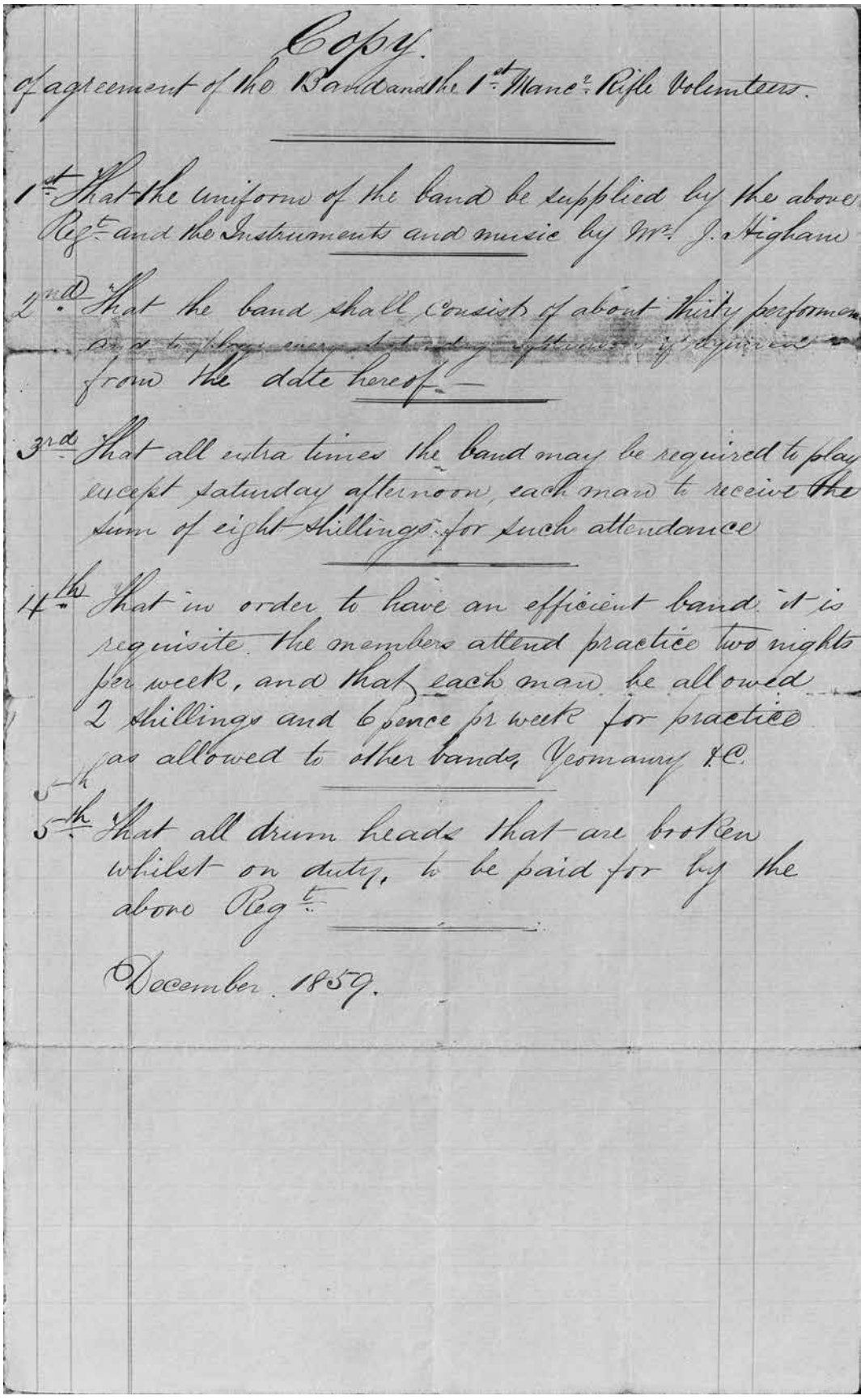
No instruments are known to survive from the earliest recorded addresses in Chapel Street, Salford (1842–1850). In the early years of the business, some instruments were imported and sold by Higham: at least one Besson Stölzel-valve cornet with a Higham stamp is recorded.[4] Joseph Higham claimed to have supplied instruments to the military from 1852, but of course would not have needed a big contract to claim to supply the armed forces.

[1] Joseph Higham, *Price List and General Catalogue*, printed date 1887, amended by hand to 1889. Kindly made available to the author by Howard Higham Robinson, great-grandson of Joseph Higham and grandson of Peter Robinson.

[2] Trevor Herbert, 'Nineteenth-Century Bands: Making a Movement', in Trevor Herbert ed., *The British Brass Band: a Musical and Social History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.36–43.

[3] A photograph of the 32-strong military band in 1881 is reproduced in a booklet, *Peeps into the Famous Higham Band Instrument Factory ...*, (Manchester: J. Higham Ltd., [1905]).

[4] Phillips auction catalogue, London sale 17 May 1998, lot 25.



Copy.

of agreement of the Band and the 1st Manc.r Rifle Volunteers.

1st That the uniform of the band be supplied by the above Reg.t and the Instruments and music by Mr. J. Higham

2nd That the band shall consist of about thirty performers and to play every Saturday afternoon if required from the date hereof.

3rd That all extra times the band may be required to play except Saturday afternoon, each man to receive the sum of eight shillings for such attendance

4th That in order to have an efficient band it is requisite the members attend practice two nights per week, and that each man be allowed 2 shillings and 6 pence pr week for practice as allowed to other bands, Yeomanry &c.

5th That all drum heads that are broken whilst on duty, to be paid for by the above Reg.t

December 1859.

Figure 1. *Copy of the agreement between the 1st Manchester Rifle Volunteers Band and its band, directed by Joseph Higham, 1859. Courtesy of Howard Higham Robinson. Photograph: Antonia Reeve.*

Figure 2. *Bugle with 4 keys and 1 valve, c1856. Inscribed on shield-shaped brass plaque on copper bell 'Joseph Higham / Maker / Victoria Bridge / MANCHESTER / Registd,, July 7th,, 1852 / No 43'. Ex- Wilhelm Bernoulli collection; Historisches Museum, Basel 1980.2795. Photograph: Bruno Kampmann.*

The earliest extant instruments (from the Victoria Bridge address, 1850–63) were typical instruments of the period. There are examples of ophicleides in York Castle Museum (DA671), the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (279) and Bradford Art Galleries and Museums; slide trumpets at the University of Edinburgh (3215) and one formerly belonging to Frank Tomes; french horns with two valves and crooks in the Keighley Museum (9529) and Bradford Art Galleries and Museums (H.226/76.1).

British Registered Design BT45/17/3321 of 7 July 1852 is for a keyed bugle with only four keys; instead of the usual fifth and sixth keys (furthest from the bell end) there is a whole-tone rotary valve (see Figure 2). This adds two semitones to the lower end of the range and was claimed to improve intonation.

Figure 4. *Cornet in B♭, the rotary valves operated via push-rods. Joseph Higham, Manchester, c1864, serial number 5656. Ex- Frank Tomes collection; St Cecilia's Hall Concert Room and Music Museum, University of Edinburgh (6058). Photograph: Antonia Reeve.*

Although by 1852 the keyed bugle was rapidly being replaced by cornopeans and cornets, it seems to have met with some success as several examples survive in collections.

British Patent 123 of 15 January 1857 is for an arrangement of rotary valves in a staggered disposition with push-rod actuation. The bends in the windway through the valves are gentle, though not (as claimed in the patent) the same whether or not a valve is operated. The earliest surviving instrument with valves made to this design is shown in Figure 3 (colour section). The cornet with three valves (see Figure 4) was made over a period of some six years and is represented by several extant examples. This idea was used later by Fiske in the U.S., also by Schuster and by Schediwy in Germany where these valves were termed '*Kreuzventilen*'.

From 1871 Higham inscribed some of his instruments 'CLEAR BORE' or 'PATENT CLEAR BORE', but by this time he was not regularly using rotary valves, and the Périnet valves of these instruments did not differ significantly from those of other makers. This inscription was used on Class A instruments, continuing after the sale of the business in 1923.

Perhaps continuing the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British predilection for copper, Higham produced band instruments in copper until 1887 or later (see Figures 3 and 5, colour section). These handsome instruments stand out from instruments by other makers, at the time normally supplied only in plain brass or silver-plate.

The corpus of Higham instruments in collections includes a number of five-valve euphoniums such as that shown in Figure 6. They share with five-valve instruments by Besson what could be seen as a standard British 5-valve tuning arrangement whereby the 4th valve lowers by 5 semitones, the 5th valve by 1 semitone. Before the widespread adoption of compensating or double-principle four-valve euphoniums and basses, five valves gave a degree of flexibility in fingering which could assist good intonation. It is quite possible that Higham was the first in Britain to produce this model: the earliest extant examples date from *c*1872 and *c*1873.

Around this time Higham established a large factory at 127 Great Ducie Street, Strangeways, Manchester (a site currently facing H.M. Prison). In instrument inscriptions the address is given simply as '127, Strangeways'. All of his work addresses

Figure 6. *Euphonium in B♭ in copper, 5 valves, Joseph Higham, Manchester, probably c1887, serial number 38128. In addition to the main inscription is an owner's mark, 'W.C.S. EUPHONIUM NO 1'. Probably c1887. Author's collection; St Cecilia's Hall Concert Room and Music Museum, University of Edinburgh (2771). Photograph: Antonia Reeve.*

(including 2 Victoria Street, 1863–79, and 131 Great Ducie Street, 1867–79) and domestic addresses lie within quite a small area, along the Manchester-Salford boundary, more or less marked by the River Irwell.

From the serial numbers (see Appendix) the annual production of brass instruments can be seen to have been highest in the period 1875 to 1890. The figures can be compared with those of Boosey & Co in London.[5] In 1871–2 Higham was producing around 750 while Boosey's were producing some 1600 brass instruments; in 1876–8 Higham was producing around 1800 while Boosey's were still producing some 1600; but by 1897 the Higham firm was producing only around 900 while Boosey's were producing some 2000. Higham production reduced

[5] Arnold Myers, 'Brasswind Innovation and Output of Boosey & Co in the Blaikley Era', *Historic Brass Society Journal* 14 (2002), pp.391–423.

even further to the low hundreds in the 1920s and 1930s.

The firm employed a workforce of over 70 *c*1880.[6] Several Higham employees went on to make their mark elsewhere, including William Hillyard (from 1852), and Alexandre Le Forestier who had been apprenticed to Besson in Paris, worked for Antoine Courtios, then for Higham 1871–82, subsequently for Pepper in Philadelphia.[7] Instrument maker John York (1859–1910) served his apprenticeship from age 14 with Joseph Higham, and subsequently established his own brasswind making business in Sydney, Australia.[8] The 1887–9 *Price List and General Catalogue* advertises a range of woodwind, mostly imported from Buffet, Paris. They were thus able to equip military bands, although only brasswind and drums were made in the Higham factory.[9]

1883–1896: PETER ROBINSON

After the death of Joseph Higham, the direction of the firm was taken over by Peter Robinson (16 September 1835–17 May 1901) who had married Joseph Higham's eldest daughter, Louisa on 2 April 1860. See Figure 7 for an individual photograph, Figures 8 and 9 for group photos in front of the shop façade. Robinson's family background was in a successful grocery business, he travelled to the United States, and it is not known how involved he became with the instrument-making trade: he almost certainly relied on a competent works manager. Peter's son, Albert Higham Robinson (1865–1938), was also involved in the business according to the latter's son.[10]

The Higham firm was moderately active in presenting itself at major exhibitions. That prize medals 1862 were won at the London International Exhibition of 1862 and at the 1865 Dublin International Exhibition of Arts and Manufacturing was put to use in advertising and inscribed on nearly all subsequently made instruments. The Higham firm exhibited just one instrument in the Royal Military Exhibition, London, 1890[11]: a euphonium on the 'full double' principle (i.e., in B♭+F as in the modern french horn) addressing the intonation problems of basic four-valve brass instruments when valves are used in combination.[12] Boosey & Co. were producing their successful compensating valves, a different solution to the problem. There is no evidence that Higham ever put this model into production, which may have been because Besson & Co took out a patent in the same year[13] although Besson did not employ it until the mid-1890s with

Figure 7. *Peter Robinson, proprietor of the Joseph Higham firm from 1883. Courtesy of Howard Higham Robinson.*

[6] Joseph Higham, *Price List and General Catalogue*, 1889.

[7] William R. Waterhouse, *The New Langwill Index: A Dictionary of Musical Wind-Instrument Makers and Inventors* (London: Tony Bingham, 1993), pp.176, 230.

[8] Andrew Evans, 'Playing on: John York and the Sydney Brass Musical Instrument Factory', *Sydney Journal* 4 No.1 (2013), pp.66–85.

[9] Some of the firm's prices are listed, along with those of other makers, in Arnold Myers, 'Instruments and Instrumentation of British Brass Bands,' in Herbert (2000), pp.309–310.

[10] Letters from Howard Higham Robinson to the author, 18 February 1990 and 17 March 1990.

[11] C.R. Day, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Musical Instruments recently exhibited at the Royal Military Exhibition, London, 1890* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1891) No. 417, p. 213.

[12] Arnold Myers, 'Design, Technology and Manufacture since 1800', in Trevor Herbert and John Wallace (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1997), pp.115–130.

[13] Adolphe Fontaine-Besson, *New and Improved Valved Musical Instruments*., G.B. Patent 6649, filed 30 April 1890.

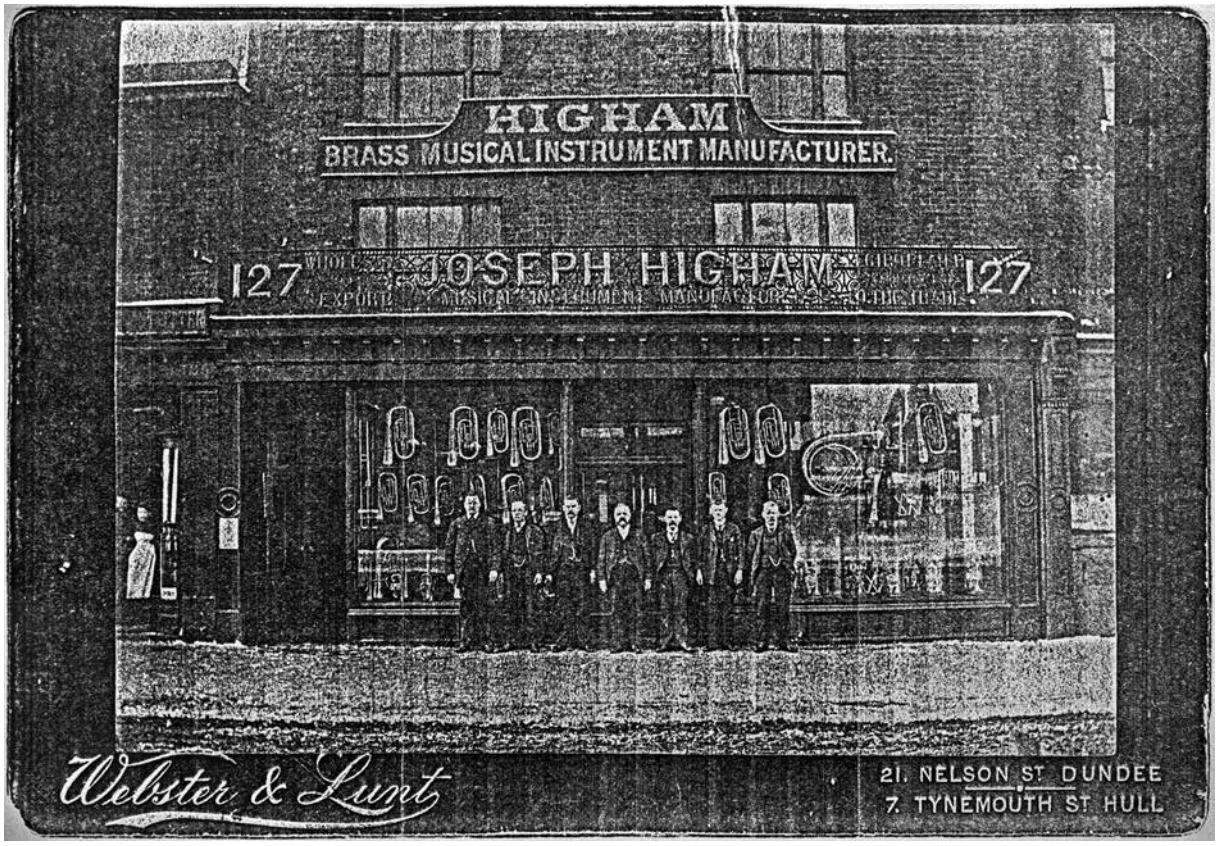


Figure 8. *The Higham shop front in Strangeways with the firm's management, photographed in 1892 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Higham business. Peter Robinson stands in the centre, with his son Albert Higham Robinson on his right. Courtesy of Howard Higham Robinson, son of Albert Higham Robinson.*

their 'Victory' model euphoniums.[14]

British Patent 13630 granted to Peter Robinson (trading as J. Higham) on 13 August 1891 was for an echo slide trombone. The lack of surviving examples suggests that this was not a commercial success. It is, however, interesting that the trombone was at this time sufficiently important as a solo instrument to justify patenting an echo device (exactly comparable to that of an echo cornet). For the World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893), the 'Jumbo' helicon, a contrabass tuba with a 554mm bell, was made to catch the eye (the common helicon of the time had a 350mm bell). In 1892 Robert Cubitt was appointed to manage a London branch[15] and for several years around this date inscriptions on extant instruments indicate that Lyon & Healy of Chicago were Higham's agents in the U.S. Clearly a major effort was made to promote the firm's products. A Higham advert in 1905[16] refers to a medal won at the St Louis exposition of that year.

1896–1923: THE LIMITED COMPANY

In 1896 the Higham firm became a limited company. The Memorandum of Association of Joseph Higham Ltd dated 3 November 1896[17] records that the company was established to 'acquire and take over as a going concern, and to carry on and develop the undertakings and businesses carried on … by the late Joseph Higham, and subsequently by Peter Robinson, and more recently by the trustees of William Brown … who died on the 24th of April, 1894 …'. Several members of the Brown family became shareholders; Richard Brown, Thomas Brown and James William Brown served as directors. No connection between the Robinson and the Brown families has come to light; the Brown shareholders included at least

[14] Arnold Myers and Niles Eldredge, 'The Brasswind Production of Madame Besson's London Factory', *The Galpin Society Journal* LIX (2006), pp.43–76.

[15] Waterhouse (1993), p.77.

[16] Higham advert in the *British Bandsman* for 22 July 1905.

[17] The National Archives BT 31/15688/49982.

Figure 9. *The Higham shop front in Strangeways with the firm's staff, photographed in 1892 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Higham business. Peter Robinson stands in the centre, with his son Albert Higham Robinson on his left. Courtesy of Howard Higham Robinson.*

two cattle salesmen. The Manager and Company Secretary was initially Alfred Gray (who gave his occupation as 'Professor of Music'), and from 1901 the Manager and Company Secretary was Thomas Cadman Camden (who initially gave his occupation as 'printer'). Thomas Camden, father of the eminent bassoonist Archie Camden,[18] appears to have been the managing director up to the end of the company.

Unfortunately, no stock books or production records from the Higham firm survive. The only documentation from the firm which has been preserved is a sheaf of papers which appear to have come from two separate notebooks, not in the same hand. The first appears to date from the 1890s, the second from the 1910s.[19] The notes include 'recipes' for some of the less usual instruments made by Higham and special orders, such as the 'Jumbo helicon' made at the end of 1892, and for new models. The information appears to have been memoranda for the instrument maker rather than engineering technical drawings. There are pasted cuttings from product catalogues, sketches and measurements, not generally amounting to a complete specification for instruments. The 'recipes' frequently mention the use of parts for standard instruments being incorporated in special orders. Some other rare models described in the earlier papers are the F slide trumpet, E♭ alto slide and F alto valve trombones, A♭ bass valve trombone, C natural euphonion, french horn F & E♭ bell up 2 valves, right-handed french horn orchestral A-natural, and Handel trumpet in D natural. Some rare models described in the later papers are: a bass trumpet in B♭ with A rotary attachment made for and tuned by gentleman from Hallé (i.e., the Hallé Orchestra, 1910); a 'Synchrotonic' valve trombone (1915); an E♭ bass attachment for a G slide trombone

[18] Waterhouse (1993).

[19] In 1970, the author was able to examine these old Higham factory notes on the premises of the instrument repair firm, Thomas Reynolds Senr. of Salford, who had acquired them. After this firm folded, the notes were rescued by former employee Tom Allen, subsequently of 'The Music Shop', Urmston, who kindly allowed the author further study of the papers in 1990 and 2016.

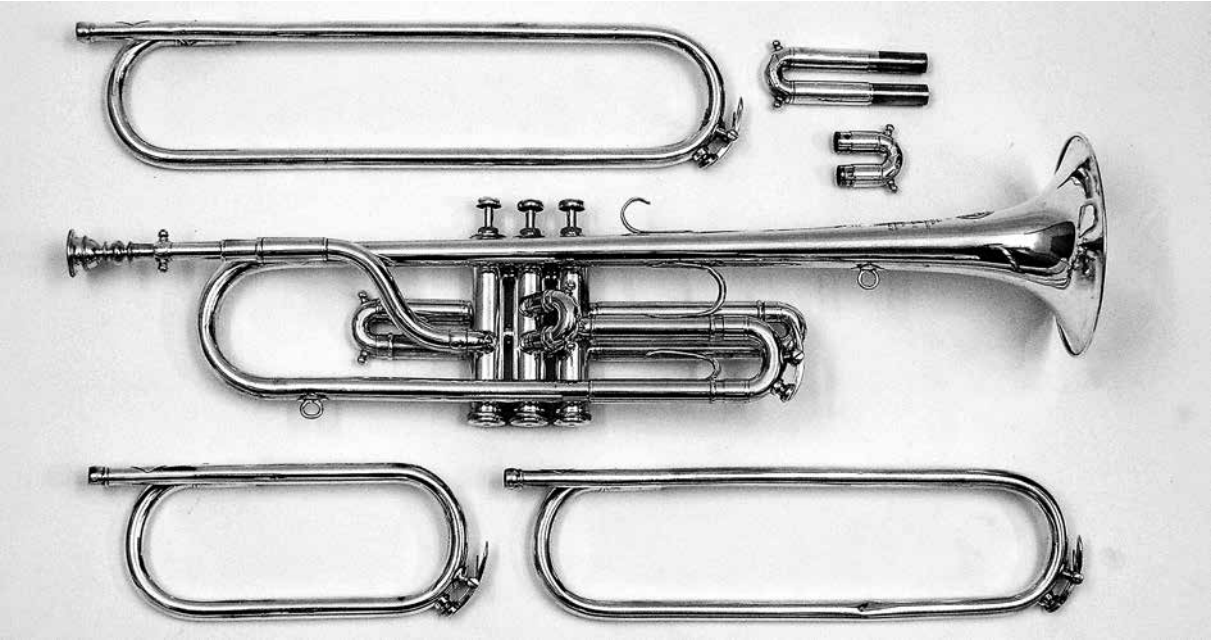


Figure 10. *Cornet and trumpet combined with extant shank for B♭ and crooks for F, E♭ and D; with alternative 1st and 2nd valve tuning-slides for use with the longer crooks. J. Higham Ltd, Manchester, probably c1899, serial number 51225. From the case inscription, used by the Northern Military Band (a civilian band based in Manchester and active around 1900). Author's collection; St Cecilia's Hall Concert Room and Music Museum, University of Edinburgh (6214). Photograph: Raymond Parks.*

to play in G and E♭; a B♭ valve trombone built in high pitch American model; and a BB♭ (contrabass) slide trombone.

A contrasting, complementary view of Higham's production is provided by the work books of the Salford small-scale instrument makers and repairers, Thos Reynolds Sen^r^., preserved in Salford Local History Library. These list, with serial numbers, repair work carried out in the period 1924 to 1966 including work on some 600 Higham instruments (amongst those of other makers). Nearly all are unremarkably standard brass band instruments such as cornets, tenor horns and trombones.

The instrument shown in Figure 10 is in B♭ with shank for B♭ and crooks for F, E♭ and D, with alternative 1st and 2nd valve tuning-slides for use with the longer crooks. It receives a cornet mouthpiece, its own mouthpiece having a cornet-fitting stem with a trumpet-like exterior profile. It is 'No. 2 model' similar but with slight differences in wrap from the 'No. 1 model' described in the 1887–9 *Price List and General Catalogue* as a 'cornet and trumpet combined: from cornet in B flat and A natural to trumpet in G, F, E natural, E flat and D'.[20] Its stated purpose is to provide an instrument for cornet players faced with playing trumpet parts in oratorios, operatic music etc, and for players unable to transpose. Given the popularity of oratorio in the north of England and the widespread employment of cornet players at the time in orchestral music, it addressed a clear need. The 1887–9 *Price List and General Catalogue* also advertises trumpets, either cavalry, 3-valve (in F, E♭ and D), or 'chromatic' (a traditional slide trumpet). By the time of the 1911 *Illustrated Price List*, the latter had been replaced by the Bach trumpet and a trumpet in 3¼-ft D (either straight or folded).[21]

Figure 11 shows an instrument that would have been a rarity in the north of England at the time it was made (*c*1906). The application of the five-valve system to the F tuba may have been a collaboration with Harry Barlow, tuba player of the Hallé Orchestra and the most influential tuba player of his generation; later five-valve non-compensating F tubas by Besson are now known as 'Barlow tubas'.

J. Higham employed over 90 in 1895.[22] In 1904,

[20] The 'No. 1 model' and the 'No. 2 model' are both sketched in the Higham factory notes.

[21] J. Higham Ltd, *Illustrated Price List*, 1911.

[22] Algernon S. Rose, *Talks with Bandsmen: a Popular Handbook for Brass Instrumentalists* (London: William Rider and Son Ltd., 1895).

Figure 11. *Tuba in F, 5 valves, Barlow model. J. Higham Ltd, Manchester, probably c1906, serial number 56157. Author's collection; St Cecilia's Hall Concert Room and Music Museum, University of Edinburgh (2131). Photograph: Raymond Parks.*

the firm added a woodwind department making flutes, clarinets, oboes, and bassoons in-house.[23] The dearth of post-1904 Higham woodwind suggests that the department had limited success.

Figures 12–21 (on the following pages) are illustrations from the Higham *Illustrated Price List, 22 June 1911*; courtesy of John Humphries; photographs: Antonia Reeve. These images had previously been used in a booklet, *Peeps into the Famous Higham Band Instrument Factory ...*, 22 May 1905 or soon after, published by J. Higham Ltd (reprinted from the *London Military Mail* 19 August 1904).

By the second decade of the twentieth century, Higham's sales were lacklustre while those of Boosey & Co and Besson & Co in London were holding up. One reason for this was the technical sophistication of the latter makers, especially in the area of automatic correction of intonation, most necessary in large valve instruments such as euphoniums and basses. The problems of intonation when valves are used in combination were addressed by Boosey & Co with David Blaikley's 'compensating pistons' and by Besson & Co at this time with 'Enharmonic patented' valves, an application of the double principle familiar today from the full double french horns now universally used. The other major makers, Hawkes and Son and J. Higham Ltd, were lagging behind, both in terms of actual fitness for purpose of their instruments and in customer perception. Hawkes and Higham adopted opposite strategies – Hawkes & Son with their cut-down version of compensation, the 'Dictor' system[24] while J. Higham Ltd introduced their highly ambitious 'Synchrotonic' valves in 1914, arguably the most complex valve system ever put into regular production. The defining characteristic of the Synchrotonic system is that in addition to the main tuning-slide, there is a tuning-slide for each valve operated singly and a tuning-slide for each pair of valves operated in combination. This gives seven slides in total for a three-valve instrument (whereas a three-valve compensating instrument has six tuning-slides).[25] The Synchrotonic system was patented extensively,[26] and was launched at the annual brass band contest at Belle Vue, Manchester, 11 July 1914.

From 1933 Higham instruments were marketed in London by Keith, Prowse & Co,[27] and their

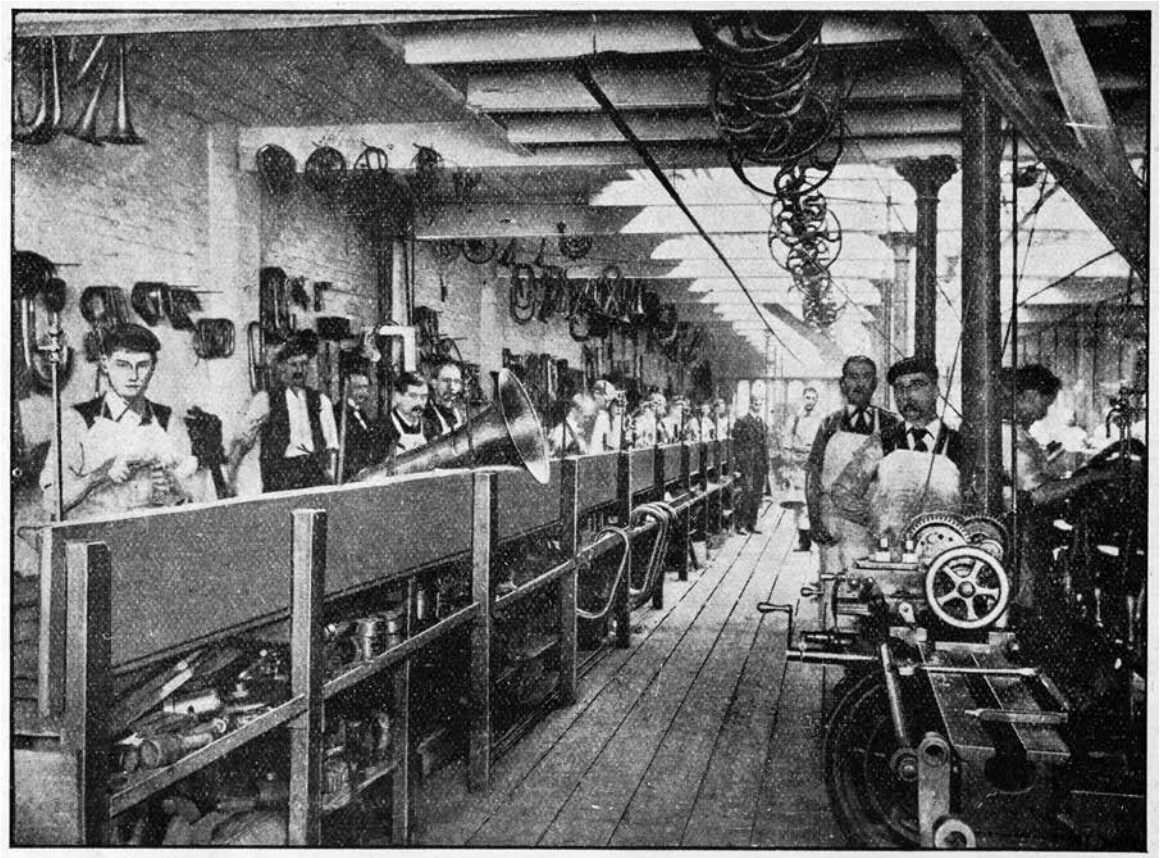
[23] *Manchester Courier*, 22 May 1905, quoted in *Peeps into the Famous Higham Band Instrument Factory* (Manchester: J. Higham Ltd, 1905).

[24] Jocelyn Howell and Arnold Myers, 'Hawkes & Son, Instrument Makers', *The Galpin Society Journal* LXVIII (2015), pp.121–149.

[25] For a detailed discussion of the Synchrotonic system, see Arnold Myers, 'Complexité ultime: système 'Synchrotonic' de pistons', *Larigot*, No. 60 (Novembre 2017) pp.24–27.

[26] British patents were awarded to Richard Edward Watts (mechanical engineer) and John Hobkirk (manufacturers' agent), both of Stamford (Lincolnshire, England): No. 3362 *Improvements in Brass Wind Musical Instruments* (applied for 10 February 1913 and 19 March 1913, accepted 5 February 1914); and No. 24874 *Improvements in Valve-played Brass Wind Musical Instruments* (applied for 1 November 1913 and 4 April 1914, accepted 23 July 1914). The Synchrotonic system for the extant three-valve euphonium shown in Figure 22 follows the later of these two patents (24874). It was also patented in the United States, France, Germany, Australia and New Zealand.

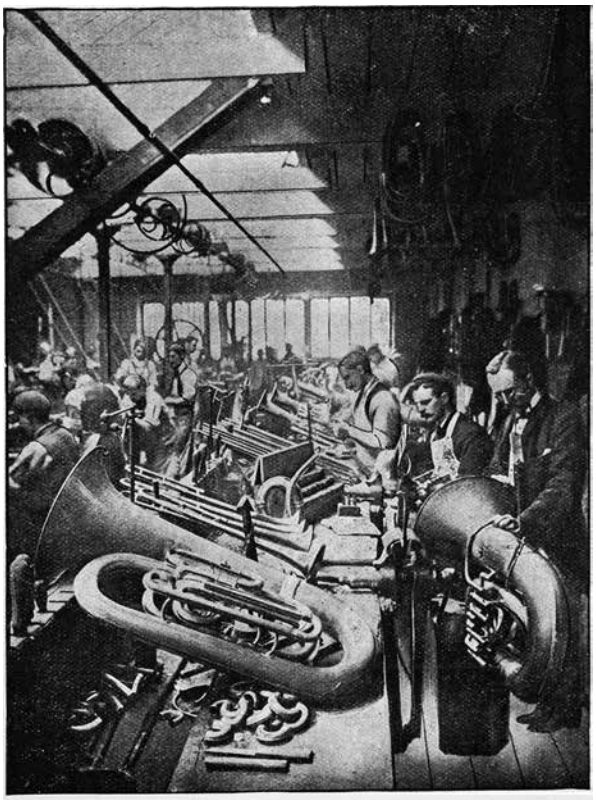
[27] *Brass Band News*, 1 March 1933.



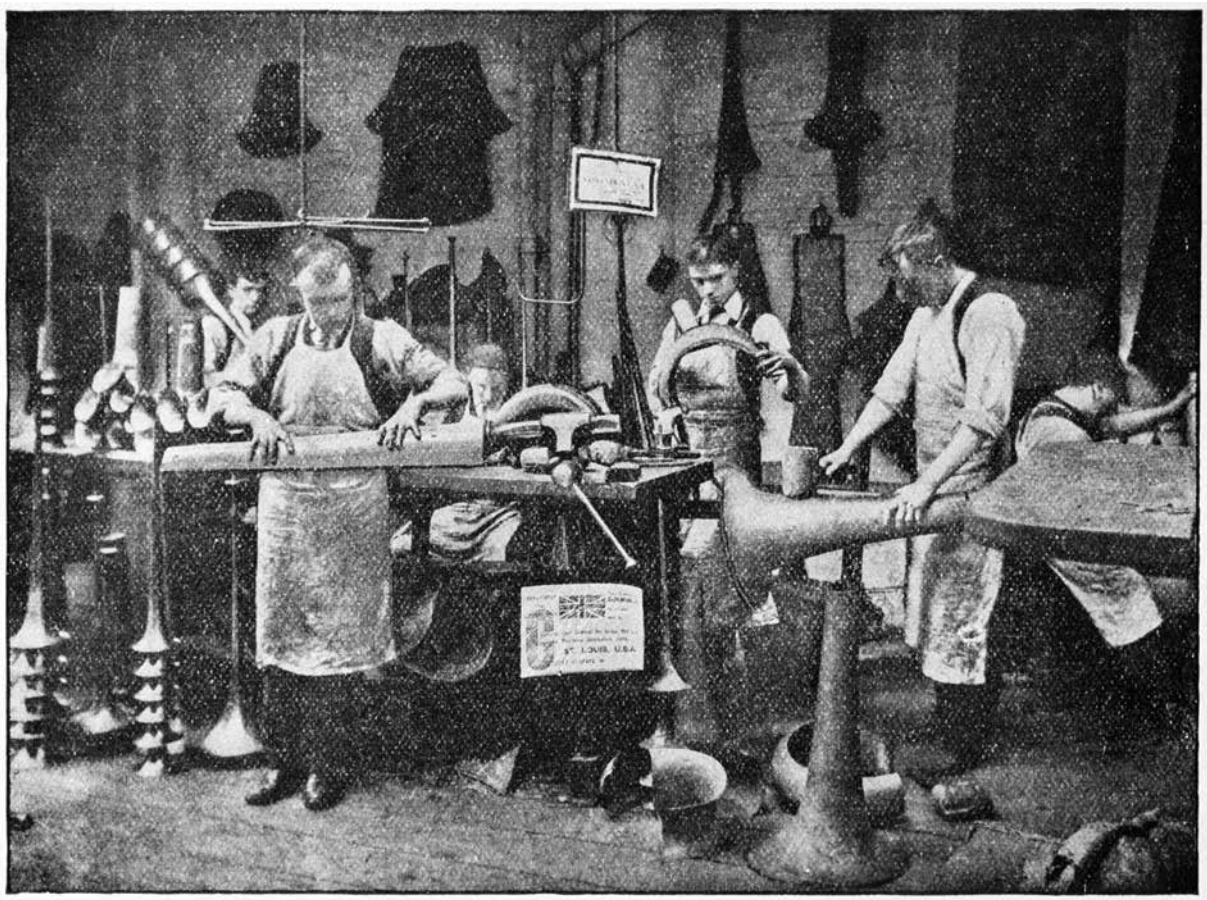
[Figure 12] **GENERAL VIEW—MAKERS' SIDE.**

[Figure 14] **BELL MAKING AND SPINNING.**

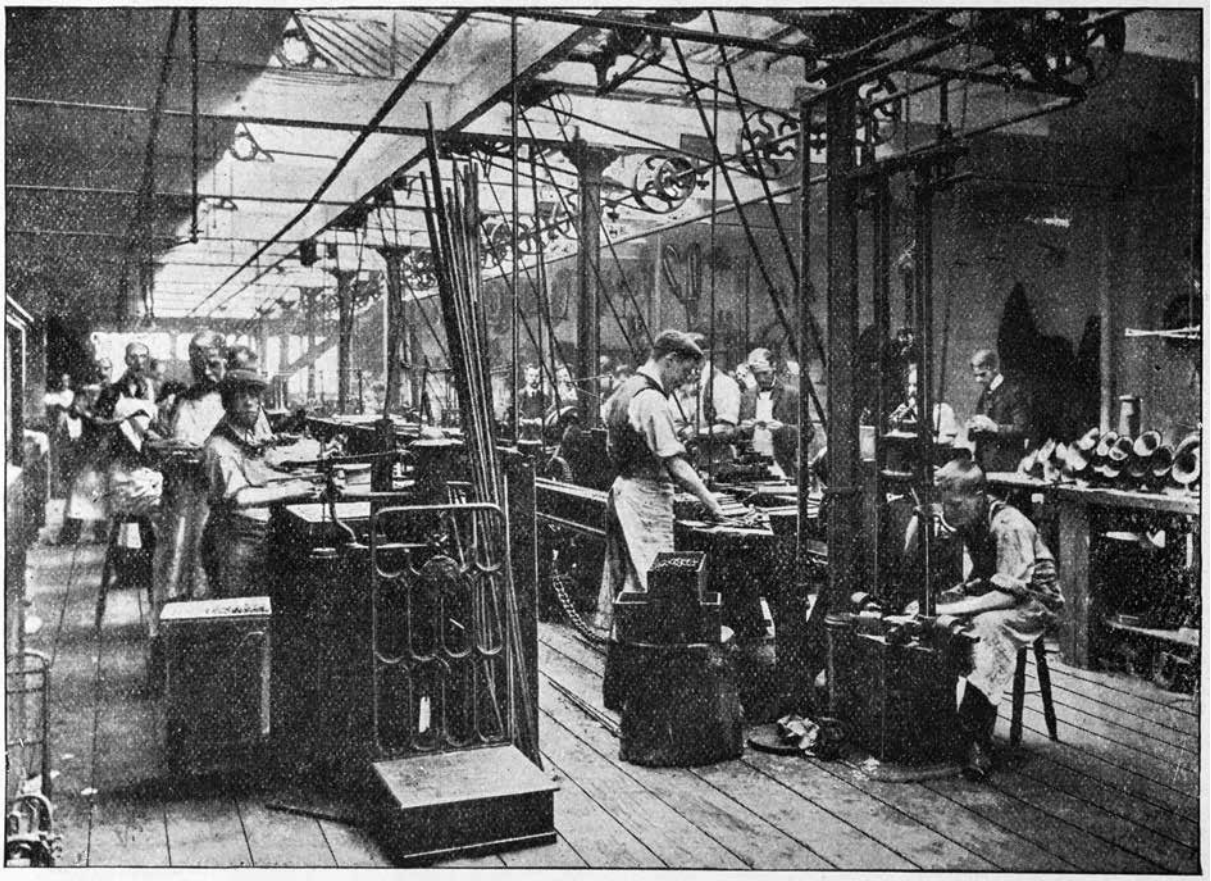
[Figure 13] **VALVE MAKING.**



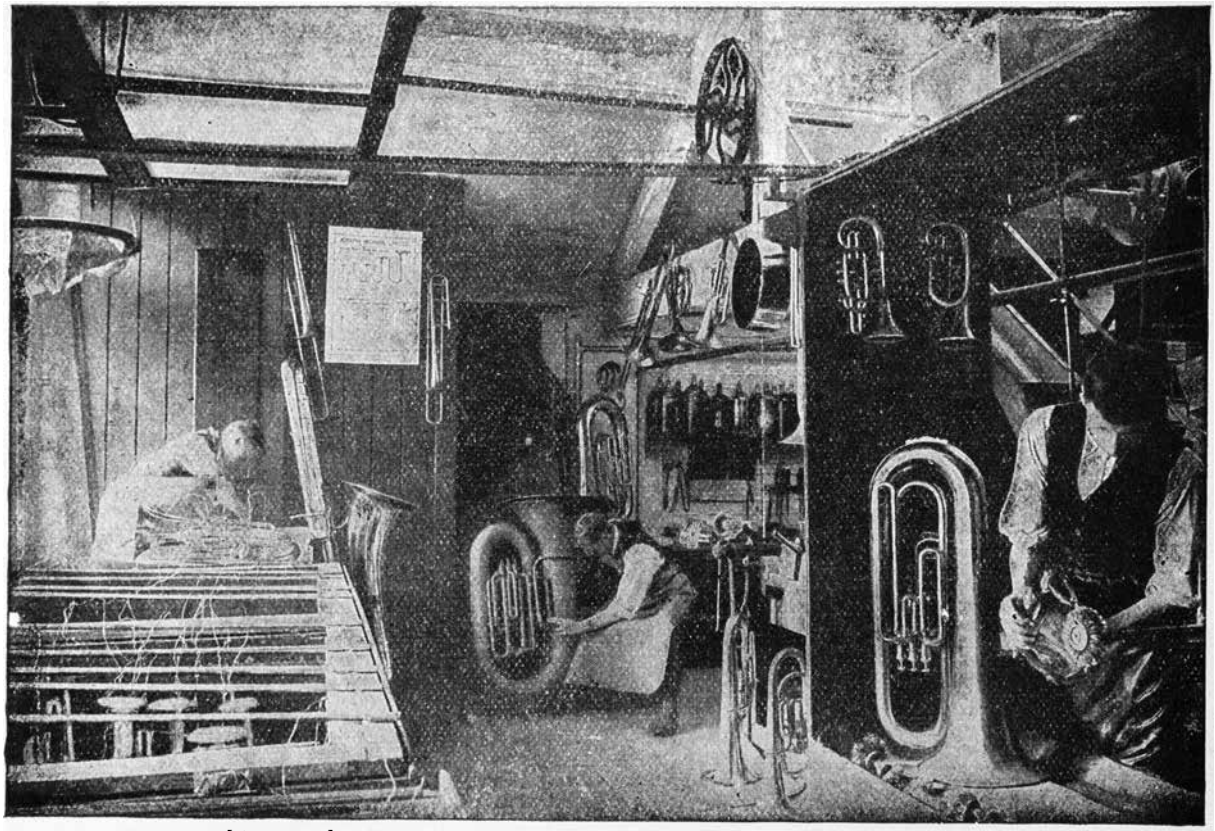
[Figure 15] **MAKING AND STAMPING.**



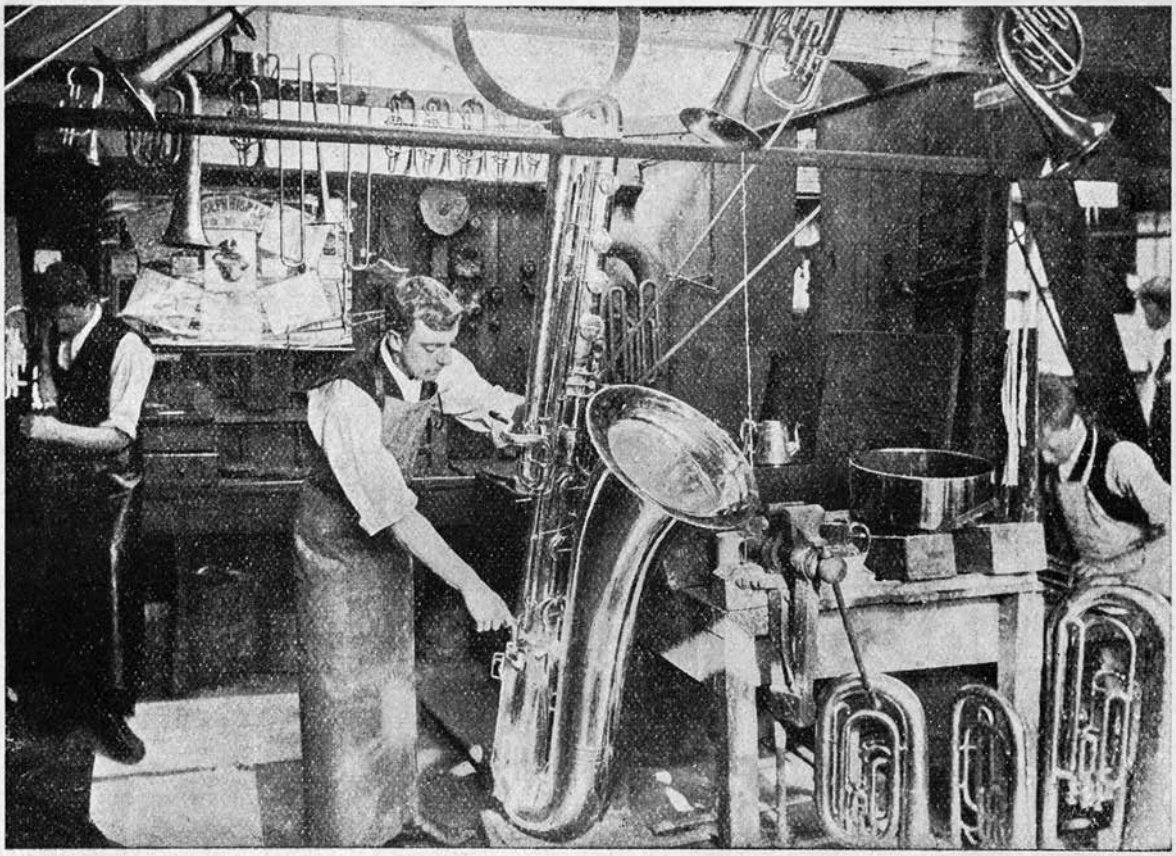
[Figure 16] **BELL AND TUBE MAKING.**



[Figure 17] **GENERAL VIEW—FINISHERS' SIDE.**

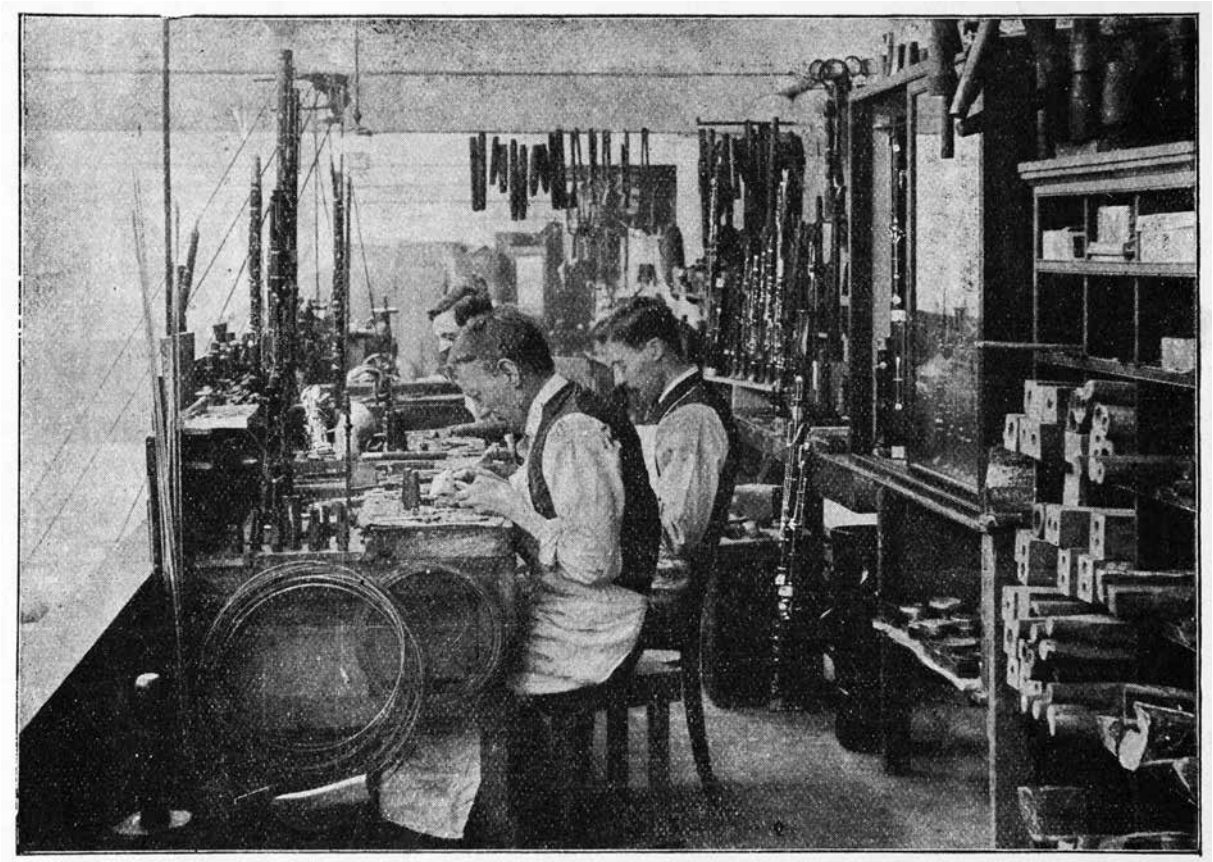


[Figure 18] **IN THE SILVER PLATING SHOP.**



[Figure 19] **IN THE SILVER PLATING SHOP.**

[Figure 20] **DRUM MAKING.**



[Figure 21] WOOD WIND INSTRUMENT MAKING.

catalogue of 1935[28] illustrates a 'Simplified' Synchrotonic three-valve euphonium as well as a Synchrotonic three-valve E♭ bass. The illustrations suggest that the 'simplified system' was merely compensating, exactly as in Gautrot's 'Système Equitonique', and was very similar to Blaikley three-valve compensation. In retrospect, 1914 was the worst possible time to launch a new design. The post-war period was also difficult for instrument makers, with workers commanding higher wages and the market focus shifting from contesting brass bands to dance bands in which the euphoniums and tubas—which might have benefitted from improved intonation—did not figure. The added complexity (and thus expense), instrument weight and piston mass did not give the Synchrotonic euphoniums and basses sufficient advantage over the widely-used Boosey compensating instruments made to D.J. Blaikley's designs. So it is not surprising that production of Synchrotonic instruments was small (as is evidenced by the paucity of surviving examples). It can be argued that trying to achieve perfect intonation by mechanical means is in any case an impossible goal. Brass instruments do not play in equal temperament: tuning chords depends on players' ears and their ability to move pitches up or down by 'lipping' to give pure intervals. Beyond a certain degree of complexity, there is no advantage to the sensitive player, and the market has dictated that the use of compensation is as much complexity as is economically viable.

MAYERS & HARRISON AND PREMIER DRUM CO., 1923–1939

In 1923 the Higham firm was acquired by the Manchester band instrument firm of Mayers and Harrison and re-located in July 1923 to 58 Erskine Street[29] off Stretford Road, south-west Manchester. The limited company of Joseph Higham Ltd petitioned to be wound up in December 1924 and was dissolved 3 July 1925.[30] No innovative changes to the instrument range appear to have been made under the new regime, and production continued its gentle decline. The trade name 'Paragon' was

[28] Kindly made available to the author by Jolyon Fearnley.

[29] Waterhouse (1993), p.256.

[30] *The National Archives BT 31/15688/49982.*

Figure 22. *Euphonium, 3 valves, Synchrotonic system. J. Higham Ltd, Manchester, probably c1923, serial number 71077. (Front and back views). Author's collection; St Cecilia's Hall Concert Room and Music Museum, University of Edinburgh (6381). Photographs: Antonia Reeve.*

adopted for the best quality instruments, widely advertised in the brass band press. A further move took place in October 1927, to 213–215 Great Jackson St. At this time the firm advertised that they had agencies in Melbourne, Wellington, Calcutta and St John's (Newfoundland). In 1933 Keith, Prowse & Co. were appointed London agents for Higham Band Instruments. Around 1934 the firm was sold to the Premier Drum Company, who attempted to update the product line with art-deco styling for dance band instruments bearing the new 'Epic' brand name. In 1936 the firm was initially 'Premier-Higham' at 213–215 Gt Jackson St., but from November 1936 it was 'Higham-Premier'. Advertisements, and presumably production, ceased in December 1939.[31]

MAYERS & HARRISON AGAIN

By 1942 Mayers & Harrison had re-acquired the firm, and advertised in February 1942 that they incorporated J. Higham at 207–215 Gt Jackson St, but as they were engaged in war work, they were repairing but not making instruments. After the war, making resumed, but it was a new start as the old factory had been destroyed and only a few tools survived. Figure 23 gives a snapshot of the issues when production was being resumed. Mayers & Harrison operated a works and a shop, nearby but separate. They took over Higham name and made Higham 'Epic' models, alongside instruments given different brand names, with a staff of 20–25 employees. A lot of the production in the 1950s went to Australia and New Zealand.[32] Denis Wedgwood provides an anecdotal account of his apprenticeship with Mayers & Harrison in their converted mill premises.[33] Production of 'Higham' instruments ceased towards the end of the 1960s.

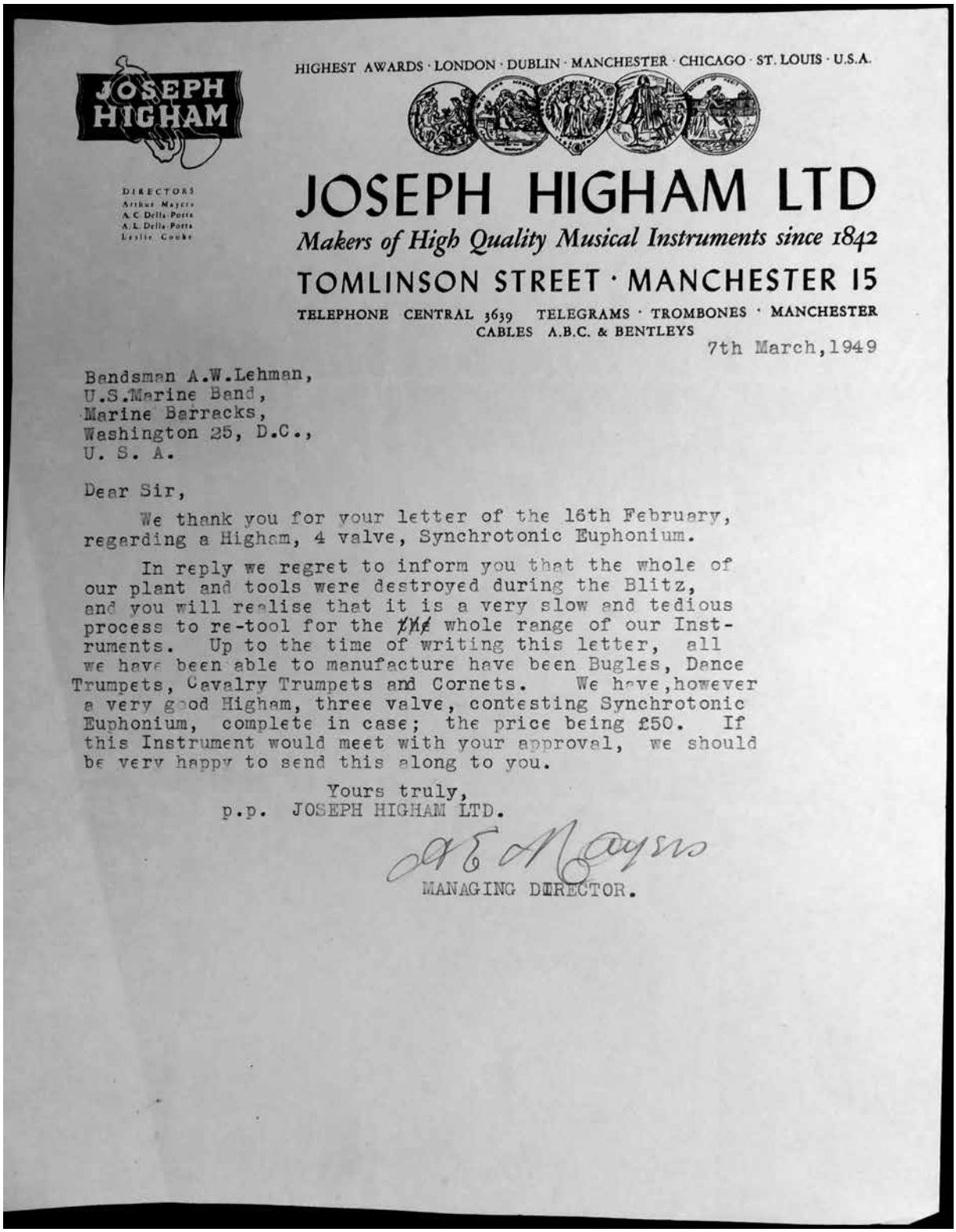
SURVIVING INSTRUMENTS

A list of surviving instruments is maintained on the Galpin Society website, URL: <http://www.galpinsociety.org/reference.htm>; the author would be glad to hear of other extant instruments.

[31] *Brass Band News* monthly. Copies of the journal were accessed at Salford University.

[32] Interview with Derek Farnell, former employee, 23 April 2016 about work at Mayers & Harrison in the 1950s.

[33] Denis Wedgwood, *And Did Those Feet ...; Memoirs of a Brass Instrument Apprentice* (Cardiff: the author, 2013).



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Arthur Mayers
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TELEPHONE CENTRAL 3639 TELEGRAMS · TROMBONES · MANCHESTER
CABLES A.B.C. & BENTLEYS

7th March, 1949

Bandsman A.W.Lehman,
U.S.Marine Band,
Marine Barracks,
Washington 25, D.C.,
U. S. A.

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your letter of the 16th February, regarding a Higham, 4 valve, Synchrotonic Euphonium.

In reply we regret to inform you that the whole of our plant and tools were destroyed during the Blitz, and you will realise that it is a very slow and tedious process to re-tool for the ~~the~~ whole range of our Instruments. Up to the time of writing this letter, all we have been able to manufacture have been Bugles, Dance Trumpets, Cavalry Trumpets and Cornets. We have, however a very good Higham, three valve, contesting Synchrotonic Euphonium, complete in case; the price being £50. If this Instrument would meet with your approval, we should be very happy to send this along to you.

Yours truly,
p.p. JOSEPH HIGHAM LTD.

A E Mayers

MANAGING DIRECTOR.

Figure 23. *Letter from Alfred Mayers to Bandsman A.W. Lehman 7 Mar 1949 about re-tooling in 1949 and 'Synchrotonic' euphoniums. Privately owned.*

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The author is grateful to Tom Allen of 'The Music Shop' Urmston and formerly of Thomas Reynolds Senr., Salford, for access to old Higham factory notes; Cliff Bevan, who shared his knowledge of Manchester and provided help with genealogy; Kenneth Crookston, Managing Editor, *British Bandsman*, for archival access; Derek Farnell, former employee of Mayers & Harrison, for sharing information about the post-war Higham brand; Jolyon Fearnley for alerting him to a Keith, Prowse catalogue advertising 'Synchrotonic' instruments and providing copies of relevant pages; John Humphries for allowing use of the 1911 Higham *Illustrated Price List*; Howard Higham Robinson, great-grandson of Joseph Higham and grandson of Peter Robinson, for use of family documents and photographs; Duncan McCormick, Local History Librarian, Salford City Archive for access to the workbooks of Thomas Reynolds Senr.; Ian Johnston, archivist, Salford University for access to *Brass Band News* and other documents; John Webb, who established contact with the Robinson family in 1986; and especially to the late Frank Tomes, who also researched the Higham firm and who freely shared information with the author.

APPENDIX (*for data, see overleaf*)

The firm's own records of serial numbers do not survive, so a list of dates and numbers has had to be constructed. The following list is based on a handful of extant or recorded instruments which can be approximately dated. It appears that the serial numbers form a single continuous sequence, running from before 1860 to after 1930. The lowest numbered known instrument of several with an inscription mentioning Joseph Higham's patent of 1857 (for rotary valves) has serial number 701; it is reasonable to surmise that this dates from 1857 (it could not be earlier) and that numbering commenced in 1856. The lowest numbered known instrument of the many with an inscription mentioning the medal awarded at the London International Exhibition (1862) has serial number 4709; it is reasonable to surmise that this dates from 1862 (it could not be earlier). Instruments 11430, 31421, 45787 and 48468 have inscriptions indicating that the instruments were presented as contest prizes or otherwise, and can thus be dated to (at the latest) 1871, 1882, 1892 and 1895. Presentation instruments 13855 and 17318 appear to have been made slightly prior to the inscribed dates. The surviving notes of the firm mention commissioned instruments 59132, 60246 and 60930 with dates 1910, 1912 and 1913. The firm's address changed in 1923 and 1928; the lowest numbered known instruments with inscriptions mentioning the new addresses are 71593 and 72738 respectively. The highest recorded number in this sequence is 73142.

Under the ownership of Premier Drum company the serial numbering started afresh using three- and four-digit numbers. A later sequence using numbers above 80000 appears to have been introduced by Mayers and Harrison after the Second World War, but not enough dated instruments are available to allow a similar list to be constructed.

No.	*Year*	*No.*	*Year*
1	1856	37000	1886
1000	1857	38000	1887
2000	1859	39000	1887
3000	1860	40000	1888
4000	1861	41000	1889
5000	1862	42000	1889
6000	1864	43000	1890
7000	1865	44000	1891
8000	1866	45000	1891
9000	1868	46000	1892
10000	1869	47000	1893
11000	1870	48000	1894
12000	1871	49000	1896
13000	1872	50000	1897
14000	1872	51000	1899
15000	1873	52000	1900
16000	1874	53000	1901
17000	1874	54000	1903
18000	1875	55000	1904
19000	1875	56000	1906
20000	1876	57000	1907
21000	1876	58000	1908
22000	1877	59000	1910
23000	1877	60000	1911
24000	1878	61000	1913
25000	1878	62000	1914
26000	1879	63000	1915
27000	1880	64000	1916
28000	1880	65000	1917
29000	1881	66000	1918
30000	1881	67000	1919
31000	1882	68000	1920
32000	1882	69000	1921
33000	1883	70000	1922
34000	1884	71000	1922
35000	1884	72000	1925
36000	1885	73000	1929

ARNOLD MYERS

Made in Manchester: Instruments of the Higham Firm

Figure 3. *L Baritone in B♭ in copper, 4 valves in line, probably 1857. Inscribed on the bell 'PATENT / BY HER / MAJESTY'S / ROYAL LETTERS / J. HIGHAM / MAKER / INVENTOR & PATENTEE / VICTORIA BRIDGE / MANCHESTER / 701' with applied circular relief plaque with lion-and-unicorn emblem; inscribed on shield-shaped brass plaque below valves 'PATENT / BY HER / MAJESTY'S / ROYAL LETTERS / J. HIGHAM MAKER / INVENTOR & PATENTEE / VICTORIA BRIDGE / MANCHESTER / 701'. Ex- Frank Tomes collection; St Cecilia's Hall Concert Room and Music Museum, University of Edinburgh (6073). Photograph: Antonia Reeve.*

Figure 5. *Bombardon in E♭ in copper, 4 valves, Joseph Higham, Manchester, 1871 or soon before, serial number 11430. In addition to the main inscription is a plaque on side of bell 'SECOND PRIZE. / Presented by / Joseph Higham, / in addition to £25.0.0. / BELLE VUE CONTEST, / 1871'. Ex- Reuben Green collection, ex- Frank Tomes collection; St Cecilia's Hall Concert Room and Music Museum, University of Edinburgh (6054). Photograph: Antonia Reeve.*