

*from the Norfolk Chronicle Friday February 6 1953*

A Reepham Band of 'the good old days'

Reepham Volunteer Band photographed in front of Cawston Rectory in 1886.

It appears that the Band was formed when Major Neave took command of E Company, 3rd Norfolk Volunteers. He got in touch with Mr. F.S. Bircham, then Clerk to the Magistrates, and secretary to the Loyal Eynsford Lodge, who did his best to collect the money for purchasing the Band instruments, etc. Mr. Alfred Barber, the organist at St. Agnes' Church, Cawston, took over the training of the Band and brought it to perfection.

Mr. H.E. Hawes, who still resides at Station Road, Reepham, well remembers the days in which the Band functioned, although he is now nearly 90. Of the remainder, he recalls that Mr. Huggins was a baker's roundsman, Mr. Morris, a tailor, drifted from Reepham about 25 years ago, and Mr. Hudson went abroad 30 years or more ago. The remainder he knows to be dead.

In 1890, Mr. Hawes recalls, Lady Burdett Coutts lived at Heydon Hall. During the Christmas holiday, she had a number of guests staying with her, and she asked for the Reepham Volunteer Band to play during dinner on Christmas Eve. The House Steward paid the Band five pounds and asked them into the Servants' Hall to partake of a substantial meal and a sip of punch.

Mr. William King, of the Kings Arms Hotel, lent his conveyances for the journey from Reepham to Heydon. On the way back the Band played carols at the Salle Rectory, then occupied by the Rev. Charles Marsh. The Band's home was the Armoury, today occupied by Mrs. Coe's boot stores.

When the Norfolk Agricultural Show was held in Blickling Park, the Aylsham Volunteer Band was engaged to play for two days. The Band had to be twenty strong and a conductor. The bandmaster (Mr. Bullock) had to borrow three men from the Reepham Band, they being paid 10s. for the two days and refreshments.

At King Edward VII's Coronation, the Band was engaged by Louis Buxton at Bolwick Hall, and by the Rev. M. Fellows at Honingham Rectory. The photo of the Band was taken while the Band was being engaged by the Lytton Bulwer at one of their club feasts.

Those were the days, at least we'll bet Mr. Hawes thinks so.

*Possibly a word missing in the penultimate sentence...should it be the Lytton Bulwer Lodge? i.e. a lodge of the Oddfellows.*