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Stephen Etheridge: PhD Research Student in Social History and Musicology

'Slate Grey Rain and Polished Euphoniums.' The Pennine Brass Band 1840-1928: Social and Musical Influences in the Creation of Working – Class Cultural and Regional Identities.

'The brass band is one of the most remarkable working - class cultural achievements in European history.' (Dave Russell, 1987)

The aim of my research is to explore why, in this period, the brass band movement would become so strongly linked with the cultural and regional identities of the northern working-class? What led to brass bands becoming a cliché of northern working – class culture? As familiar as 'the old, close, tightly knit working-class culture of stuffy front rooms, allotments, back- to- back housing, cobbled streets, fish and chip suppers, charabanc trips' to the seaside, and flat caps.'
(D.J. Taylor, *New Statesman*, 15 July 2002)

What is the justification for this research?

This research will strive to fill the gap between social history and musicology: bringing the two disciplines together. Brass bands are an excellent tool to do this: bands have not been used to their full advantage in social history research.

What are the concepts?

- **Community:** how did the bands interact with the community, and what was their influence?
- **Working - class identity:** what influence did the bands have on the group identity of the working-class?
- **Rational Recreation and Social Control:** did the rational recreation ethos strengthen group identity?
- **Northern identity:** how did the bands reinforce a larger image of northern culture?
- **Gender:** Exploring issues of masculinity and musical stereotypes

