



INTERNATIONAL

TROMBONE

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ITA

ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



**International Trombone
Festival 2022** Another year,
another huge success

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ON THE COVER

Steve Davis, Charlie Halloran, Michael Dease, Ido Meshulam and Delfeayo Marsalis.
Photo by Tim Dirmeyer

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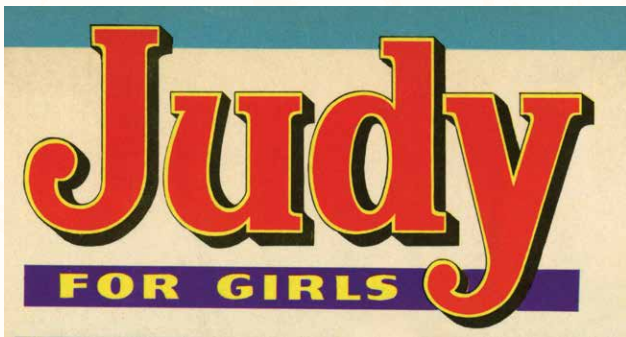
“Trombone Tillie”

A story about a girl and her trombone
from *Judy for Girls* (1962),
with a commentary by Douglas Yeo

Image (detail) of “Trombone Tillie” (page 62) from *Judy* issue 78; July 8, 1961

Appearances of trombones and trombone players in literature abound in short stories, novels, magazines, and plays. Readers of this *Journal* will recall the recent reprint (April 2021) of Mrs. Frank M’Carthy’s *The Story of a Trombone*, which first appeared in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* in July 1875.¹ As I wrote in the commentary that accompanied Mrs. M’Carthy’s story, we have seen the trombone featured in George Bernard Shaw’s play *Major Barbara*, W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan’s *The Mikado*, and books and stories by a host of authors including Craig Nova, Roger Hecht, and Nancy Lee Woody. Even Samuel Longhorn Clemens, writing under his pseudonym, Mark Twain, got in the act with his 1867 story, *A Touching Story of George Washington’s Childhood*, which managed to both deprecate and praise the trombone at the same time. Emily Rozanski has documented notable books for children that feature the trombone, both works of fiction—such as *The Great Turkey Creek Monster* (James Flora, 1976)—and biography, including the story of jazz trombonist Melba Liston, *Little Melba and Her Big Trombone* (Katheryn Russell-Brown, 2014).²

But ... there was also Trombone Tillie.



In the second half of the twentieth century, a genre of magazines for “tween” girls—what Kezia Newson identifies as “a subculture that is ‘too old for toys, too young for boys’”³—exploded in Britain. Many of these magazines—which took the form of comic books printed on newsprint with both comic strips and stories accompanied by illustrations—were published by DC Thomson & Co. Ltd. Founded in Dundee, Scotland, in 1905, Thomson published several magazines for young girls beginning with *Bunty* (1958–2001), and followed by *Judy* (1960–1991), *Diana* (1963–1976), *Jackie* (1964–1993), *Mandy* (1967–1991), *Debbie* (1973–1983), *Suzy* (1982–1987), and *Mandy and Judy* (1991–1997).⁴

In addition to the weekly magazines, Thomson published hardbound, color annuals with new material, just in time for Christmas. Conspicuously absent from the early years of these publications was an emphasis on romance stories. Rather, they mostly contained tales about the exploits of fictional girls and young women who were intelligent, resourceful, talented, and caring toward others. For example, the 1962 *Judy* annual featured “Big Sister” (a story of Penny, who uses her leg brace to free fellow students and a teacher from inside a broken elevator), “Tricky Trixie” (who rescues a girl from an icy pond), and “Dixie at the Dude Ranch” (Dixie is a tennis player who befriends and encourages a Native American girl who becomes a tennis star). *Judy* also contained non-fiction features such as (in the 1962 annual) a discussion of constellations (“Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”), a profile of life in Borneo (“Janie on the Go in Borneo”), “At Home with British Birds,” and a page about Ireland (“The Emerald Isle”). The 1962 *Judy* annual also featured photo essays including one about real life women who excel in sports (“Great Girls

Picture Parade of Girls Who Sparkle in Sport”), and a story about mountain guide and author, Gwen Moffat (born 1924).

The authors of stories in DC Thomson’s magazines for girls were never identified with bylines; neither were the illustrators. As a result, most remain unidentified today. Maureen Hartley, one of the many freelance writers that Thomson employed from 1968 to 1999, wrote an article in 2016 where she recalled her experience writing for *Judy* and other magazines.⁵ Hartley said that she never met any of the illustrators for her stories, nor did she meet other writers. She also recalled, “All the work I did for DC Thomson was for the girls’ comics. It was an accepted fact among the staff there that women weren’t capable of writing stories for the boys’ comics. Men could write for girls—but not vice versa. Not that I would have wanted to write about football or war, which were the main topics for the boys.” The same was true for editors. It was not until 1970 when a woman, Nina Myskow, became editor of one of Thomson’s magazines for girls, *Jackie*.⁶ Hartley also noted that when she started writing for DC Thomson in 1968, “the target readership was judged to be girls 11–12 years old. Over the years, the readers became younger and younger—by 1999, their average age had gone down to about eight years.” Other writers for DC Thomson magazines for girls who have been identified include Anne Bulcraig, Alison Christie, Marion Turner, and Tracy J. Holroyd.⁷

In 1961, *Judy* featured sixteen stories (serialized in issues 63 through 78, March 25–July 8, 1961) about a fictional character, Lady Matilda Jane Vernon-Greville, the thirteen-year old daughter of the Earl and Countess of Beverley, who went by the nickname Tillie. Trombone Tillie, to be precise. Tillie’s aristocratic family owned Beverly Mill which manufactured textiles. Her father was the governor of the fictional West Indian island of Darien, and Tillie, who had been misdiagnosed with a heart condition by a pompous family physician, Dr. Lodge, was left at the family’s home in Yorkshire, England, in the care of servants, including a



Trombone Tillie, July 63, March 25, 1961

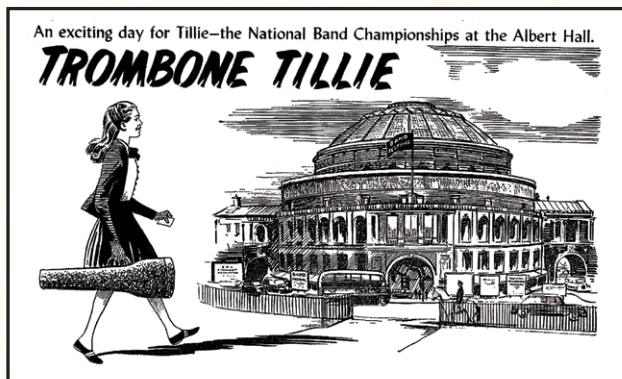
sympathetic maid, Elsie, and a nefarious butler, Albert. The stories tell how Tillie first encountered the trombone (she found one in an old trunk in the attic), how Dr. Lodge forbade her to play it on account of her supposedly weak heart, and how a young physician, Dr. Whyte, proved that Tillie's heart was fine after all. Her "interfering busybody" uncle, Sir Charles Mainwright, was chairman of Beverly Mill and announced, with misogynistic fanfare, "I disapprove of the whole idea of a girl playing the trombone." The stories tell the cliff-hanging tales of Tillie outwitting her uncle, physician, and butler in her efforts to play trombone. Uncle Charles vows to cut off funding to the Beverly Mill Band (a stand-in for the famous Black Dyke Mills Band, now Black Dyke Band) if Tillie plays in the group, but she joins the band anyway as first trombonist, and she always manages to stay a step ahead of her uncle. After Beverly Band (with its conductor, Harry Millimore, whose name reminds readers of the great English conductor and composer, Harry Mortimer) wins the National Brass Band Championship at Royal Albert Hall, her proud parents, who surprised Tillie by returning to London to hear the Band's performance, tell her, "We'll keep all your snobbish relations in the dark, but you may play trombone whenever you please."

Trombone Tillie's stories are tales of empowerment for girls and young women. In a pivotal moment in the 1962 *Judy* annual Tillie story, many people row their boats closer to a raft anchored in the middle of a lake on which Beverly Mill's band is performing so they can see who was playing the trombone so beautifully:

*"It's a girl!" said one youth, gaping at Tillie.
"Go on!" scoffed his mate. "There ain't a girl living
could blow a trombone like that." Then he, too,
saw Tillie, and his jaw dropped in utter
amazement."*

It has been 60 years since Tillie—capable, resourceful, clever, and confident—pushed back against stereotypes and graced the pages of *Judy*. Now, with the kind permission of DC Thomson & Co. Ltd., we are pleased to reproduce her 1962 *Judy* annual story in the *ITA Journal*. Tillie is back, and she's probably playing in a trombone section near you.

I would like to thank David Powell (Archive Manager, DC Thomson & Co. Ltd.), Lorraine Nolan, Andrew Thomas, Carol Jarvis, Megumi Kanda, John B. O'Brien, and Diane Drexler for their encouragement, help, and insight as I prepared *Trombone Tillie* for publication in the *ITA Journal*.



Trombone Tillie, July 78, July 8, 1961



Douglas Yeo was bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1985–2012. He currently teaches trombone at his undergraduate alma mater, Wheaton College (Illinois), and, for 2022–2023, at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He was the recipient of the 2014 ITA Award and has written five books as well as dozens of articles for the *ITA Journal* and other publications. In 1996 and 2002, he released two solo recordings accompanied by brass bands in England: *Proclamation* (with the Black Dyke Mills Band) and *Two of a Mind* (with the Williams Fairey Band). Douglas's wife and two daughters are brass players (baritone horn, bass trombone, and trumpet), and his eight-year-old granddaughter has announced that she wants to play trombone, just like grandpa and mommy.

NOTES

- 1 Mrs. Frank M'Carthy, commentary by Douglas Yeo, "The Story of a Trombone." *International Trombone Association Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2, April 2021, 30–39.
- 2 Emily Rozanski, "The Trombone in Children's Literature: A Survey and Contribution" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2016). ProQuest (10106329).
- 3 Kezia Newson. *How Has the Pre Teen Girls' Magazine Influenced Girls from the 1950s to Present Day?* Issuu.com, 2014 (https://issuu.com/excessmagazine/docs/how_has_the_pre-teen_girls_magazin).
- 4 For an informative treatment of the impact of British magazines for young women, see Mel [Melanie] Gibson, *Remembered Reading: Memory, Comics and Post-War Constructions of British Girlhood* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2015).
- 5 Maureen Hartley, "Writing for DCT Girls' Comics" in *Girls Comics of Yesterday*, June 10, 2016 (<http://girlscomicsofyesterday.com/2016/06/maureen-hartley-writing-for-dct-girls-comics>).
- 6 James Chapman, *British Comics: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).
- 7 "Creators" in *Girls Comics of Yesterday*, undated (<http://girlscomicsofyesterday.com/creators/>).



THE BLACK DYKE BAND

Brass Bands (in the British tradition, with a fixed instrumentation of conical instruments such as cornets and alto horns, baritones, euphoniums, and tubas, with trombones and percussion) are very popular in Europe and Australia, but they are less known in the United States.

With a history that goes back to 1855, Great Britain's Black Dyke Band (originally known as the John Foster & Son Black Dyke Mills Band and subsequently as the Black Dyke Mills Band) has made more than 350 recordings to date. The Black Dyke Band is arguably the most famous brass band in the world today. It has competed for and won a plethora of national and European brass band titles.

The band's progenitor ensemble was actually formed in 1816 in the village of Queenshead (now Queensbury), Yorkshire, but it was disbanded early in the 19th century. The Queenshead Band was formed in 1833, at which time a small room at the John Foster & Son Black Dyke Mill was set aside for the band's rehearsals. Most of the ensemble's original musicians lived in the village—and also worked at this cloth mill.

The Black Dyke Band's core mission is to ensure it consistently promotes the highest-quality musicianship. Its main commitment focuses on the strong tradition and heritage of brass band playing and its related music literature via a mix of old classics and new compositions. The Band's motto, "Act justly and fear nothing," reflects the social and musical ethos of the ensemble.

Another Black Dyke Band commitment comprises providing video lessons for brass players who range from beginner to advanced level. Ten lessons of 20 minutes each are taught by Black Dyke Band members in their respective fields of instrumental expertise.

To find out more about the Black Dyke Band, its 167-year tradition and history, as well as listen to some of its recordings and view archived photos, visit its website: blackdykeband.co.uk.

TROMBONE TILLIE



WHEN the bus drew up outside Dawsholm Park, in the seaside town of Scarrington, Matilda Jane Vernon-Greville, the only daughter of the Earl and Countess of Beverley, was the first to jump out.

Trombone Tillie, as Matilda was affectionately called in the Beverley Mill's Band, was only fourteen. Her parents were in the West Indies, and she was in the care of the family servants. She was a pretty girl with a merry face and laughing eyes, and she was dressed in the Beverley Mill's Band uniform—blue, with a wide scarlet stripe down the trousers and a scarlet band round her cap. She carried a gleaming musical instrument—a trombone.

"Take a good, deep breath, Tillie," said old Sam Entwistle, climbing down from the bus and smiling at the girl. "The Scarrington sea air is the best in Britain."

Trombone Tillie laughed, drew a huge breath, then lifted her gleaming silver trombone to her lips and blew hard.

A loud, brassy note rang right over Dawsholm Park and carried out over the sparkling blue sea beyond. People sitting in deckchairs nearly a mile away jumped as though someone had jabbed them with a pin!

"Go easy, Tillie, lass!" said Harry Millimore, the

conductor of the Beverley Mill's Band. "Save your wind for the bandstand. We don't want you to deafen all the customers before they've paid for their deckchairs."

Tillie grinned again. She was full of the joy of living, and she began to whistle as she skipped down the path into the park.

Matilda Jane Vernon-Greville was the youngest member of the well-known Beverley Band. She was also the only girl the band had ever had as a member—and one of the best trombone players in it.

The Beverley Mill's Band was popular over the whole of the North of England. Every Saturday they appeared in some park, playing marches, waltzes and selections, which holidaymakers found very pleasant to listen to.

On this particular day, they had arrived to give a concert in Dawsholm Park, Scarrington, one of the best-known English resorts.

"You've never seen a bandstand like the one we'll be playing in today, Tillie," said Perce Hutton, another of the band's trombone players.

"Well," smiled Tillie, "I've been in bandstands shaped like shells and like ancient Chinese temples. I've been in open ones, closed-in ones, round ones and square ones."

"You've never been in a floating one," chortled old Sam Entwistle, who played the bass trombone.

"Is that it?" gasped Tillie, as they turned a corner.

"That's it," chortled Perce Hutton. "I hope you're not seasick on the way over!"

The Dawsholm Park bandstand was on an anchored raft in the middle of an ornamental lake. Fairy lights hung all over it, though, of course, they were not lit in the brilliant sunshine. Small boys paddled round it in canoes, and their fathers rowed lazily round it in boats as they took mothers and sisters for a glide on the lake.

"How do we get over?" demanded Tillie. "Do we swim to it?"

Sam chuckled, and pointed to two large rowing boats, in each of which two attendants were sitting.

"We go over in batches in those rowing-boats," he explained. "Then we're marooned till the end of the performance."

"And if the listeners don't like us," said Perce Hutton, starting to climb into a boat, "they pull the bung out of the raft bandstand, and we all sink without trace!"

Trombone Tillie's eyes sparkled. She loved every second she was with the band, just as she enjoyed every note she blew on her shining trombone. On the way to the bandstand, which floated about a hundred yards from the edge of the lake, she played the tune "Over The Waves," which brought an appreciative chuckle from Perce.

An attendant helped Tillie into the bandstand. The front faced towards the hillside that sloped to the lake, and hundreds of deckchairs were dotted about, their occupants drowsing in the hot sun.

"We'll soon waken that lot up, Sam!" said Trombone Tillie to the bass trombone player.

A minute or so later, as the last member of the band took his seat, the Beverley Mill's Band launched into a rousing version of "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

Tillie tilted her pretty head back, raised her trombone and let out a glorious stream of pure sound.

Canoes, gondolas, rowing-boats, came thick round the bandstand, the rowers keen to have a closer look at the trombonist with the tremendous tone.

"It's a girl!" said one youth, gaping at Tillie.

"Go on!" scoffed his mate. "There ain't a girl living could blow a trombone like that." Then he, too,

saw Tillie, and his jaw dropped in utter amazement.

The concert went on. Tillie played a "Gay Nineties" selection, then helped the band to perform a selection from a new musical comedy show. Her silver trombone with the brass voice gave great drive to the Beverley Band's playing, and Harry Millimore, the conductor, felt that his band was in top form.

After an hour, the interval was announced, and Tillie turned to see two park attendants rowing towards the stand.

"Here comes the lemonade and ice-cream," said Perce Hutton, and Tillie saw that the boat was actually loaded with those goods.

"I could certainly drink a gallon of lemonade," panted Tillie. "This stand is as hot as a greenhouse."

"Here, Tillie," interrupted Harry Millimore. "We're playing 'Slippery Slide' as a trombone quartet in the second half of the programme. Have a look at your part."

Tillie, a bottle of lemonade in one hand and an ice-cream in the other, rose to look at her music. She glanced casually at the people in the deckchairs as she did so—and her eyes widened.

"Crumbs!" she said anxiously to Perce Hutton. "There's my Uncle Charles—right in the front row."

"Don't worry about him, lass," said Sam Entwistle.

"I must, Sam," cried Tillie. "You know that Daddy only gave me permission to play in the band provided my relatives didn't find out. Goodness knows what Sir Charles would say if he saw me!"

"Keep out of sight, then," said Perce Hutton.

However, at that moment, Sir Charles stood up—then looked keenly at the bandstand.

"He's spotted me!" said Tillie miserably. "There'll be a family row, and I'll be forbidden to play in the band any more."

"He won't have recognised you at this distance," pointed out Sam Entwistle. "Get away, quickly, before he makes certain. The attendants will take you ashore."

Tillie cast one more anxious look over to the deckchairs. She saw her uncle opening a leather case slung round his neck, and she realised he had binoculars with him.

"I'm off," said Tillie. She slid out of the floating bandstand into the rowing boat manned by the attendants, and she lay flat in the bottom.



Tillie lay flat in the bottom of the boat. If her Uncle Charles spotted her, it would be the end of her band career!



Three minutes later, while Sir Charles peered intently at the bandstand through his binoculars, Trombone Tillie slipped ashore on the other side of the lake.

A few seconds later, carrying her trombone, she hurried out of Dawsholm Park, safe for the moment.

Playing For Pennies



"CAN'T go back to the band's bus," said Tillie to herself, half an hour later. She was sitting on a rock near the sea's edge, wondering what was to be done.

"Uncle Charles is a stubborn old mule," she thought. "He won't be absolutely certain he saw me, but he'll ask questions and he'll watch when the band's bus leaves. If I go back, he'll spot me for sure. No, I'll have to get back to Beverley under my own steam."

Glumly, Tillie turned out her pockets. She found a sixpence in one of them, and two shillings in another.

"Half a crown will never see me back to Beverley," she decided. "And I can't go to the station and give my name, in case Uncle Charles goes snooping there."

Trombone Tillie looked up at the throng on the Scarrington promenade. Then the twinkle returned to her eyes.

"The very thing," she muttered. "After all, Uncle Charles will never leave the bandstand until he's made up his mind that I'm not there, so he won't come down here to the prom."

Tillie scrambled off her rock and ran up the sands to the promenade. She selected a spot between a weighing-machine and a photographer's beach hut, took off her band cap and laid it on the concrete of the promenade.

Then she began to play her trombone at half power, for she was just a little shy. She played the first thing that came into her head—the music of "Slippery Slide."

"Ee, Albert!" said one stout holidaymaker to her husband, as he drowsed in a deckchair. "There's a lass playing a trombone."

Albert grunted, then sat up and took notice. Among the people on Scarrington promenade there were hundreds who appreciated good brass music,

though they hadn't gone to Dawsholm Park to hear it.

"She's good," said Albert at last, taking his pipe out of his mouth. "For a lass, she's really good."

Others thought so, too. Tillie began to gather a crowd, much to the disgust of a Punch and Judy man, whose audience melted away, and an ice-cream salesman, who was left with a full freezer.

"Can you play 'I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside,' love?" asked a motherly woman.

Tillie nodded, and obliged. Not only could she read music, but she could play nearly anything by ear.

Soon, on Scarrington prom, a really hearty sing-song was going on. Tillie played all sorts of popular tunes and the holidaymakers joined in. A merrier afternoon had seldom been spent on the beach.

Small children came to gaze in awe at the girl who blew such powerful notes. Elderly people asked for old tunes, and joined in the singing of them. It was a first-class party.

Then a man spotted the cap lying on the promenade.

"Come on, folks, give the little lady something for her trouble," yelled the man, picking the cap up and flourishing it.

A rain of coppers and sixpences poured into Tillie's cap. Soon the cap was almost full of money.

"Gosh! Thanks!" panted Tillie, flushed with the effort of playing the "Cornish Floral Dance" from memory. "I'll have enough to get home by train now."

"Just a minute, young lady," said a stern voice. The crowd parted, and a tall, solemn-faced police sergeant strode up to Tillie.

"Hello, officer," said Trombone Tillie, smiling. "Have you a favourite tune you'd like me to play?"

"Give him 'The Policeman's Holiday,'" yelled someone, and there was a chortle from the crowd.

"Do you have permission to play and take up a collection on this promenade?" demanded the sergeant pompously.

"Why, no," said Tillie. "I didn't think that would be necessary. You see—"

"I'll have to ask you to come with me, miss," interrupted the sergeant.

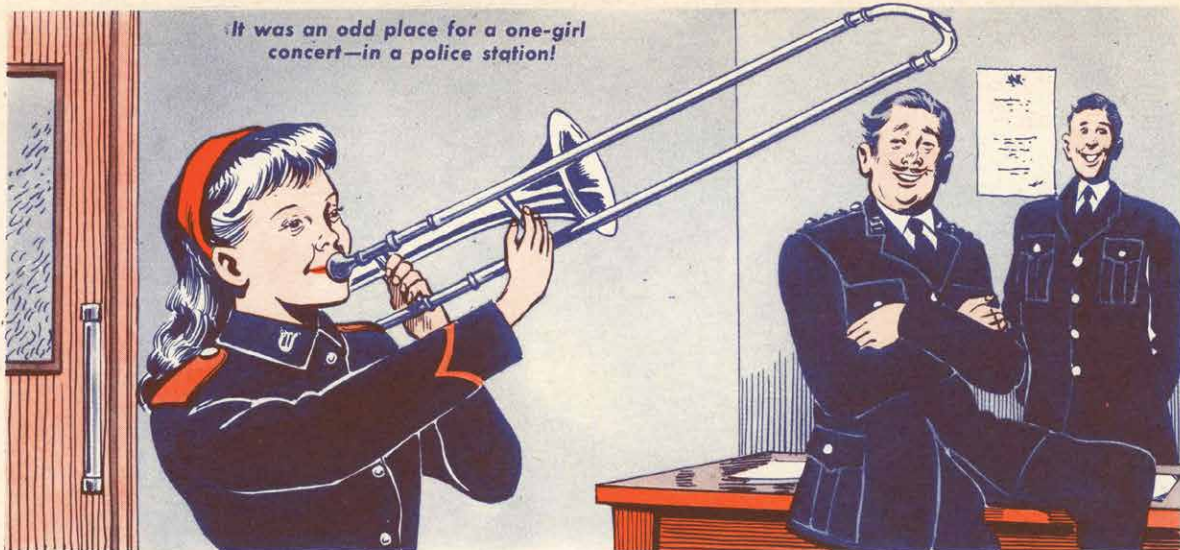
"Have a heart, Sergeant Hepburn!" protested someone in the crowd. "She's done no harm!"

"The law is the law," said Hepburn pompously.

He took Tillie by the shoulder, ignoring the indignant remarks of the crowd. And Trombone Tillie realised, with a sinking heart, that in escaping from Uncle Charles she had landed in the arms of the law!



The pompous sergeant marched Tillie off the prom.



It was an odd place for a one-girl concert—in a police station!

Tillie Plays A Trump

SERGEANT HEPBURN took Tillie only as far as a police-box on the promenade. From there, he phoned, and soon a police car purred up. Tillie was hustled into it and driven off.

In the car, she had a brief, terrifying thought. Uncle Charles, the man who had almost spotted her at the bandstand, was a Scarrington magistrate.

"Crumbs!" thought Tillie. "Maybe I'll be hauled up in court before him tomorrow!"

The girl had no more time to brood, however, for the car soon stopped at the Central Police Station.

She was shown into a small room, where a lady sergeant asked her name.

"Matilda Jane—er—Entwistle," said Tillie, deciding that she had better keep her name secret.

"Well, Matilda, why were you playing for pennies on the promenade?" said the lady sergeant. "You seem to be a member of a band. Surely you came here by bus?"

"I came by bus," agreed Tillie, "but I got separated from the others. I couldn't find the bus, and I needed money to get home to Beverley, so . . ."

The rest of Tillie's story was not told. The door opened and a large, friendly-faced man strolled in.

"Good afternoon, Superintendent," said the lady sergeant, jumping to her feet.

"What's this tale I hear?" said Superintendent Anderson. "Is this the little miss who was playing on the prom?"

"She was trying to raise her fare home, I believe," began the lady sergeant—but Superintendent Anderson wasn't listening.

"Can you play 'Liberty Bell'?" he asked Tillie.

"Not in here," said Tillie in surprise. "It would blow the walls out."

"Come into the outer office, then," said the Superintendent, showing the way.

In the outer office, Tillie took her shining trombone. As she blew, the outer office gradually filled with amazed and delighted policemen.

"Terrific!" enthused the Superintendent. "Bring a cup of tea for—what's your name?"

"Tillie Vernon-Greville," said Matilda Jane.

"That's not the name she gave us," said Sergeant

Hepburn sharply. "In addition to playing for money on the promenade, she has given a false name."

"Never mind about that," said Superintendent Anderson impatiently. "I'll see the Chief Constable myself and fix everything. After all, Tillie didn't know at the time that she wasn't allowed to play on the prom for money."

"That's right," agreed Tillie, holding her breath.

"Well," said the Superintendent, "I'll see that the whole thing's forgotten—if you'll promise one thing. Will you come and play solos for us at the Police Concert in two months' time?"

"Of course," said Tillie, beaming. "I'd love to."

At that moment the door opened and Sam Entwistle hurried in.

"Thank goodness! There you are, Tillie," he panted, skidding to a stop. "We've looked everywhere for you. Come on, lass, the bus is waiting."

Tillie looked at Superintendent Anderson, who nodded and smiled. The girl grinned at the policemen, waved, and turned for the door.

"I hope she hasn't got into trouble, sir," said Sam Entwistle anxiously to the Superintendent. "You see, she's really Matilda Jane Vernon-Greville, the only daughter of the Earl and Countess of Beverley. She's the only aristocrat ever to play the trombone in a Mill's Band."

"Go on with you!" chuckled Superintendent Anderson. "Allow me to introduce myself—I'm the King of Siam!"

Sam said no more, but turned and left the police station. He found Trombone Tillie in the bus outside, already tucking into a big mutton pie and telling her adventures to the grinning bandsmen.

"It's a funny thing, Tillie," said Sam to the gay girl. "I told them in there who you were—and they didn't believe me!"

"People are so distrustful, Sam," laughed the only daughter of the Earl and Countess of Beverley.

Then, as the bus pulled away from Scarrington, the only aristocratic girl trombone player in Britain threw back her head and blew a hearty tune on her shining instrument.

Trombone Tillie had had a jolly day!

★ ★ ★ **THE END** ★ ★ ★