

London & Southern Counties Regional Champions 2015 – 2021  
Finalists, National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain 2013 – 2021, 2023 & 2024  
Audience Entertainment Award, Brass In Concert 2019 & 2021  
Most Entertaining Band, Butlin's Mineworkers Contest 2015, 2017 & 2019  
British Open Senior Trophy Champions 2014  
First Section National Champions of Great Britain 2010

## FRIARY DIARY – ISSUE 123 – MAY 2025

Welcome to Friary Diary issue 123 - a monthly round-up of news about Friary Brass Band.

**GRAND SHIELD CONTEST REVIEW:** Sadly, it was another case of Friary travelling in hope to Blackpool for the British Open Spring Festival's Grand Shield contest. Buoyed by last year's 4<sup>th</sup> placing – off a no. 1 draw too – the Band was optimistic that this might be its year for securing one of the two top places which would achieve a long-held ambition of playing in the British Open.

Drawn 14<sup>th</sup> out of the 20 competing bands, Friary's performance of Prof. Edward Gregson's *Dances and Arias* was summarised by adjudicator Lt. Col David Barringer as 'A performance with much to commend – not everything quite came off but it was an exciting reading.'

The result was a disappointing 9<sup>th</sup> place, with northern based Ever Ready Band (formerly Reg Vardy) taking the top honours. However, we were thrilled for our fellow London & Southern Counties competitors Amersham who came second, so the Region will be represented at the Open. Warmest congratulations and the very best of luck to them.

Band Chairman David Wicks was philosophical about the result: 'It's another tough one for us, but we'll work our way through it and tackle our next contest with renewed enthusiasm. But for the moment, we're looking forward to our concert season,' he concluded. As from next year, the contest is moving from Blackpool's Winter Gardens to Birmingham Town Hall.



**A GRAND AFTERNOON OUT AT GODALMING:** A sunny Sunday afternoon in the park, family picnics on the grass, cattle grazing in the nearby meadow by the river, and a brass band playing in the bandstand: how quintessentially British!



An audience estimated at between four and five hundred gathered for Friary's return to Godalming bandstand last weekend, enjoying a programme which ranged from Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* to Widor's *Toccata*.

'What a truly fantastic band and marvellous soloists,' a representative of concert sponsors Godalming Trust told Friary's Public Relations Officer Tim Straker. 'The programme was so varied – I thought the Widor was particularly ambitious, but it certainly came off well,' she added. Many others were similarly complimentary.

Band Chairman David Wicks commented: 'It's always a great pleasure to play at Godalming's superb bandstand, but this year's audience was exceptional, both in terms of their numbers and their appreciation. What a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon,' he concluded.

**FRIARY'S FAMILY AFFAIR AT CHARITY CONCERT:** A charity concert held at Wellington College earlier this month saw three generations of Friary's flugel player, Lauren Straker's family on stage together. Big and Brassy is a massed bands event, on this occasion raising funds for locally-based charities Brass for Africa and Parity for Disability. Alongside Lauren was her nine year old daughter Ayla (cornet), her sister Madi (principal cornet) and her mother Sue (tenor horn). Ayla is part of Sandhurst Silver Band's Brasshoppers training band, whilst Madi is an army musician who also plays for Sandhurst Silver as does Sue. Sue also plays for Cove Brass whose Musical Director Paul Speed conducted the concert.

The Best of British programme included items by Gustav Holst, Ron Goodwin and Ronald Binge's *The Watermill*, a solo beautifully played by Madi.

'It was such a special occasion for all of us to play as part of the same band, particularly as it was in aid of two very worthy causes,' commented Lauren.



**SUMMER SERENADE CONCERT - BOOKHAM:** Our next concert is on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm at St Nicolas Church, Bookham KT23 3PG: A Summer Serenade. Both our previous two concerts there were sold out in advance, so please do book early to avoid disappointment. For tickets, please go to <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/stnicolasgreatbookham/1654130> (Prices: Adults £16; Concessions for those in full time education £8).

**RANKINGS NEWS:** There has been no further update by 4barsrest.com to their world rankings table so Friary remains 43<sup>rd</sup>. Brassstats.com updated on 1<sup>st</sup> May, with a drop of one place, leaving Friary 39<sup>th</sup>. Now to get back to the top 30 ...

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

<b>Sat 7<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Evening concert	St Nicolas Church, Bookham	7.30pm
<b>Wed 5<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	Lewes Bonfire parade	Lewes	6.00pm
<b>Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	Remembrance parade	High Street, Guildford	10.30am
<b>Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	Carol concert	Hog's Back Brewery, Tongham	3.00pm
<b>Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Dec</b>	Carolling	The Meadows, Camberley	11.00am

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