

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 124 – JUNE 2025

Welcome to Friary Diary issue 124 - a monthly round-up of news about Friary Brass Band.

### SUMMER SERENADE AT ST NICOLAS - TEA FOR TWO AND TWO TOCCATAS:

Concertgoers at St Nicolas Church, Great Bookham were treated to Friary's broad programme of music, ranging from the percussion section's feature of Howard Snell's arrangement of *Tea for Two* and Widor's *Toccat*a from his *Symphony no. 5* and the *Toccat*a in D Minor by Bach. Other highlights included Richard Straker's stunning cornet solo of Chris King's arrangement of *Defying Gravity* and a tenor horn solo of Alan Catherall's arrangement of *Evergreen*, sensitively played by Morgan Marston, as well as Peter Graham's *Cartoon Music* and Roger Deronge's reflective *Lux*.

This was Friary's third appearance at the beautiful church which dates back

to the 11<sup>th</sup> century: all three concerts have had a capacity audience who made their appreciation loud and clear. 'Wow! What a fantastic evening of music,' commented Nick Garrett on behalf of the church. 'I can only begin to imagine the amount of sheer hard work which went into rehearsing that programme together and playing it to such an incredible standard,' he concluded.

Friary MD Nigel Taken, who compered the concert, was delighted: 'I recognise that the programme I devised was both challenging and ambitious, but I was confident that with the right guidance, level of preparation and rehearsal, the Band could produce the high standard of performance we achieved.' 'Friary is a fine band and I was proud to be able to showcase the players' considerable musical talents.'

Friary Chairman David Wicks added: 'The Band love playing at St Nicolas: it's always wonderful to play to a full house with such an appreciative audience.' The concert raised in excess of £1,000 towards improvements to the church.

**FRIARY MUSICIANS TAKE PART IN THE KING'S BIRTHDAY PARADE:** Amongst the 400 musicians taking part in the recent King's Birthday Parade were Friary players Jack Beer (cornet) and Morgan Marston (tenor horn). Jack, in the Band of the Coldstream Guards, commented: "It's always a great time of year and one of my favourites at work, just because of the spectacle of it and how much of a big deal it all is. It's a good couple of months of rehearsing and the actual parade is hard work but it's all worth it in the end!"

Despite the very warm weather, Morgan (far right in photo) who plays French horn in the Band of the Grenadier Guards, acknowledged: "I really enjoyed taking part in my third trooping of the colour, especially as it was a Coldstream troop, which was my previous band and Jack's current band. There was an excellent turnout again and it was brilliant to play in front of the King and an appreciative crowd!"

Earlier in the week, Jack had also been part of the Regiment's 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary march through Berwick. The journey north was to walk in the footsteps of their forebears who were raised by Oliver Cromwell in 1650 from the border coastal town during the Commonwealth of England. One hundred soldiers from Number 3 Company, 'The Spotty Dogs', of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, accompanied by the Band of the Coldstream Guards, marched smartly across the station concourse at King's Cross in London shortly after 6am to the surprise and delight of early morning commuters.

Explained Jack: "This was a new one for me and for many members of the Coldstream Guards Band, however it was a good experience to be part of. Setting off at 4am in full uniform and not taking it off till 9pm was a bit emotional but seeing how much it meant to the Regiment and the people of Berwick was great," he added. **PTO**



Morgan (far right) on parade

**ARMED FORCES WEEK IN GUILDFORD:** Friary cornet player Simon Persin was again part of Guildford's flag-raising ceremony to mark Armed Forces Week. As part of the short service, Simon played a fanfare on the Guildhall balcony before the flag was raised. The formalities concluded with three rousing cheers for His Majesty The King and His Armed Forces.



(photo: Shirley West)

"It's always an honour and privilege to be part of this notable occasion, all the more so with some fellow Friary players in HM Forces and at this time of various tensions in the world" commented Simon.

**OUTREACH:** My monthly brass band music sessions at a couple of local nursing homes continue, most recently last Monday as part of their 'American Week'. It occurred to me that the experience would be enhanced by some visuals, and so selected a couple of videos featuring music from across 'The Pond.' One of these is particularly worth watching for a dazzling and innovative percussion feature: Cory Band's rendition of Louis Prima's *Sing Sing Sing* from their 2009 Brass in Concert programme. There is a Friary connection, as a very youthful Chris Straker can be spotted playing baritone! You can view this piece of virtuosity on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hdnnoW9Fso> As an aside, did you know that band leader Louis Prima was the voice of orang-utan King Louie in the 1967 Disney animation of 'The Jungle Book'?

**RANKINGS NEWS:** A further update by 4barsrest.com to their world rankings table sees Friary now standing at 48<sup>th</sup> but still the highest ranked band in London & Southern Counties (L&SC). Brassstats.com updated their table on 1<sup>st</sup> June, with a drop of two places, leaving Friary at 41<sup>st</sup>. Let's get back to the top 30 ...

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

<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
<b>2026</b>			
<b>Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Ibstock School Brass Day	Ibstock School, Roehampton	all day
<b>Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> Mch</b>	L&SC regional championships	Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage	all day
<b>Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> May</b>	British Open Grand Shield contest	Town Hall, Birmingham (new venue)	all day

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