

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 132 – FEBRUARY 2026

Welcome to Friary Diary issue 132 - a monthly round-up of news about Friary Brass Band.

OUR NEW MUSICAL DIRECTOR: We are delighted to announce that Captain Andrew Porter has been selected as our new Musical Director. A euphonium player who enlisted in the British Army in 2003, Captain Porter graduated from Kneller Hall in 2011, earning awards for academic excellence and conducting. He has since served as Bandmaster of the Band of the Irish Guards and Director of Music for British Army Band Tidworth.

Currently Director of Music to the Grenadier Guards, he has led performances for state visits by Presidents Emmanuel Macron, Donald Trump, and Volodymyr Zelensky, among others. Career highlights include designing and delivering large-scale performances for the FA Cup Final and the British Grand Prix. This year the Grenadier Guards will be Trooping the Colour at the King's Birthday Parade and Andrew has been pivotal in the selection of music, including arranging a piece himself.

"I am thrilled to be taking on the baton with Friary," he said. "From our very first conversations, it has felt like a perfect match. There is a shared vision and ambition that makes this an incredibly exciting opportunity." Looking ahead, he is eager to begin work with the band as they prepare for the next chapter. "I'm very much looking forward to working closely with the band as we build towards competing at major contests and achieving our full potential together."

Friary Chairman David Wicks added: "We were impressed with the level of interest we received for the role, and after a detailed interview and audition process which involved all Friary players, we considered that Andrew was the best candidate overall. He particularly impressed us with the programmes he devised, and his military music credentials speak for themselves. We are looking forward with great excitement to working with Andrew after the Regional contest in this new chapter in Friary's history."

IBSTOCK SCHOOL BRASS DAY: Friary returned to Roehampton earlier this month for Ibstock Place School's second Brass Day, a project bringing together Friary Brass Band, Ibstock Brass Ensemble and young novice players from primary schools in the Wandsworth area.



photo: Ibstock Place School

Ibstock's Head of Expressive Arts, Nic Walker commented: "We were delighted to welcome back Friary Brass Band after last year's inaugural Ibstock Brass Day. The programme was more ambitious for the junior trumpeters this year, and they worked very hard to perform in a Michael Jackson medley, as well as in arrangements of *Sambatina* and *Golden* (KPop Demon Hunters). Friary captured the children's imaginations with their space-themed set, from the unusual timbres of Philip Harper's *Rings of Saturn* to the energetic rhythms of *Starburst* by Dan Price." "It was inspiring for the younger brass players to watch and play alongside Friary, and there were moments of spontaneous applause even during the afternoon rehearsals!" he added.

"Many thanks again to Friary and their guest conductor, Captain Andrew Porter for putting on a great show, and we look forward to collaborating again in 2027," he concluded. Friary Chairman David Wicks was equally enthusiastic: "We thoroughly enjoyed our day at Ibstock Place School, working with Nic and the young musicians who were so receptive and worked so hard. It's a real pleasure and privilege to support and guide them on their musical journey and we would be delighted to be involved again next year." A date has already been fixed for 2027.



THE REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS: Whilst our search for a new Musical Director was progressing, the Band was (and still is!) busily preparing for the London & Southern Regional Championships with the help of John Ward who will also conduct the Band on the day. The contest takes place on Sunday 22nd March (start time not before 3.30pm), held as usual at the Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage. The test piece is Martin Ellerby's *Elgar Variations*, and the adjudicators will be Dr Robert Childs and David Hirst, so please wish us luck in our quest to qualify for the National Finals!

RANKINGS NEWS: There has been no further update by 4barsrest.com to their world rankings table on 6th January so Friary stays at 51st. Brassstats.com updated their table on 1st February but Friary remained at 43rd.

CORRECTION: My apologies: as you'll see below, the Grand Shield contest will take place on SUNDAY 3rd May, not Saturday 3rd as stated in the December issue. Right date, wrong day! (Not only has the venue changed, but also the day.)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

2026

Sun 22nd Mch	L&SC Reg. Championships	Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage	not before 3.30pm
Sun 3rd May	Br. Open Grand Shield contest	Town Hall, Birmingham	all day
Sun 17th May	Bandstand concert	Godalming bandstand	3.00pm
Sun 5th July	Entente Cordiale concert	Pinglestone Barn, Old Alresford	6.00pm
Thu 5th Nov	Lewes Bonfire parade	Lewes	Evening
Sun 8th Nov	Remembrance parade	Guildford High Street	10.30am
Sun 6th Dec	Carol concert	Hog's Back Brewery, Tongham	Pm

2027

Sat 6th Feb	Ibstock Brass Day	Ibstock Place School, Roehampton	all day
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For further information, please contact Tim Straker, Public Relations Officer, Friary Brass Band
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