

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 133 – MARCH 2026

Welcome to Friary Diary issue 133 - a monthly round-up of news about Friary Brass Band.

LONDON & SOUTHERN COUNTIES REGIONAL CONTEST: Despite our rising hopes that we might book a return to the National Finals this year, sadly it was not to be. Rehearsals of Martin Ellerby's *Elgar Variations*, ably led by our guest MD John Ward, went well in the week leading up to the Regional Championships, but we didn't quite pull it off on the day. Drawn to play second – the same as last year – our performance drew positive comments from the adjudicators David Hirst and Dr Robert Childs, who summarised it respectively as follows:

'A well presented performance with a good guiding hand by the MD. Good solo lines and balance with detail and clarity throughout.'

'A well shaped musical performance. Good clarity in the fast music. Secure soloists. Just the odd clip now and then.'

Unfortunately it was 'the odd clip now and then' which took the gloss off our performance, resulting in a disappointing 6th place. Band Chairman David Wicks summed up: 'It was a very frustrating result, especially after some solid playing during our final few rehearsals. We just needed to replicate that on the contest stage, but couldn't quite manage it.' 'But we are extremely grateful to John Ward for stepping into the breach whilst we were between Musical Directors and for all his guidance and support,' he concluded.



Warmest congratulations to Zone One Brass and particularly to our friends in Sandhurst Silver Band who took the top two places and will carry the banner of London & Southern Counties to the Royal Albert Hall in October. Maybe next year ...?

GRAND SHIELD CONTEST: In the meantime, we are concentrating on our next contest, the British Open Spring Festival Grand Shield which takes place on Sunday 3rd May in its new venue of Birmingham Town Hall. Our aim, under newly appointed Musical Director, Captain Andrew Porter, is to qualify for the British Open, albeit a tough ask as we will need to be in the top two places in a field of 20 bands. The test piece is Stephen Roberts' *Star Crossed Lovers*.

A FAREWELL IN THE BASS SECTION: We are very sorry to say farewell to bass player David Stokes, who has left Friary to move to Yorkshire, closer to family. David joined the Band in mid 2022 with a wealth of experience from many bands, including those with the Salvation Army and the Central Band of the RAF. We thank him and wish him all the very best for the future. I think they might have a brass band or two in Yorkshire ...!



A NEW DATE FOR THE DIARY: We are thrilled to have yet another invitation to return to St Nicolas Church, Great Bookham, this time for a Sunday afternoon concert on 18th October. This event is usually a sell-out: ticketing details will follow.

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 March with Friary slipping a couple of places to 45th.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

2026

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
Sun 18th Oct	Afternoon concert	St Nicolas Church, Great Bookham	3.00pm
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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