

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 137 – JULY 2026

Welcome to Friary Diary issue 137 - a monthly round-up of news about Friary Brass Band.

ENTENTE CORDIALE IN OLD ALRESFORD: It may have been American Independence Day on 4th July, but it was all about the Anglo/French Entente Cordiale in Old Alresford on the following Sunday. The brainchild of my sister Gail, always an enthusiastic supporter of the Band, the concert featured her friend and helper, Muriele French Singer alongside Friary in the spectacular setting of Pinglestone Barn, kindly donated for the occasion by the Wakeham family.



Raising funds for a recently installed servery and much-needed toilet at the local church of St Mary the Virgin, the concert began with both national anthems and included favourites such as *Sing, Sing Sing* and *Summertime* (George Gershwin studied in Paris and was influenced by Maurice Ravel). The tranquil *Lark in the Clear Air*, sensitively played by Morgan Marston on tenor horn, was followed by the rousing *Toccata* from Boëllmann's *Suite Gothique*, which brought the first half of the programme to a close, and with it a welcome breather for the Band!

Friary's second half set had something of a Romeo & Juliet theme, including *O Verona*, Richard Straker's solo of *My Love is Like a Red Red Rose*, and an extract from this year's Grand Shield test piece, Stephen Roberts' *Star Crossed Lovers*. Muriele's set featured *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* and the original French version of *I Dreamed a Dream* from *Les Misérables*. An enthusiastically-demanded encore, Saint-Saens' *French Military March* – in double-quick time – brought the memorable evening to a close.

This was MD Andrew Porter's first concert conducting Friary, and a highly successful one at that, with his engaging compering style. There was nothing but praise for both Friary and Muriele in the interval and at the end, with many of the audience asking when there could be another concert.

Commenting afterwards, Gail said: 'It was a magnificent evening of music which was enjoyed and appreciated by so many people. My 'Entente Cordiale' musical dream of the Friary Band, and Muriele providing musical entertainment in Pinglestone Barn was definitely fulfilled and I am very grateful to all those who made it possible.'

One could say that she dreamed a dream, but unlike in the lyrics of the song, this dream did come true.

A RISING STAR: She may not yet be a member of Friary, but Ayla Straker (aged 10), daughter of Richard and Lauren, is currently enjoying her first National Children's Brass Band course in Taunton. Ayla, who plays cornet for Cove Brass, secured the top 3rd cornet place in her audition. Recently she passed her grade 5 cornet exam, making it a remarkable five out of five Distinctions for her Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music grade exam results. Congratulations Ayla: have you got your eyes on your Dad's seat at Friary ...?

MANY HAPPY RETURNS: As you can see from the list below, our calendar is filling up nicely, all the more so as we have been invited back for concerts at Great Bookham, the Hog's Back Brewery, and Hartley Wintney. Not only those concerts, but also the Lewes Bonfire parade, Guildford Remembrance parade and the Ibstock Brass Day are all events where we have performed previously. We are also entering the Wessex BBA contest again, to defend our title won last year.

An exciting new event in our schedule is a production of the Christmas classic *The Snowman*, when we will be playing the soundtrack alongside showing the animated film. This delightful tale is for all ages, so please put Sunday 13th December in the diary: there will be three performances on the day. More details to 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. There was no movement for Friary, and indeed for most bands, in their 1st July update, so we remain at 42nd in the world.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

2026

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
Sat 28th Nov	Wessex BBA contest	TBA	All day
Sun 6th Dec	Carol concert	Hog's Back Brewery, Tongham	Pm
Sun 13th Dec	The Snowman	LVS, Ascot	11.00am, 1.00pm & 3.00pm

2027

Sun 31st Jan	Afternoon concert	Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney	2.00pm
Sat 6th Feb	Ibstock Brass Day	Ibstock Place School, Roehampton	All day
Sun 21st Mch	L&SC Regional Championships	Gordon Craig theatre, Stevenage	All day
Sat 8th May	Br Open Spr Fest Grand Shield	Town Hall, Birmingham	All day

For further information, please contact Tim Straker, Public Relations Officer, Friary Brass Band
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