



# The Bradwell Bugle



Newsletter of the Bradwell Silver Band

April 2025

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## From the Editor

Hi Everyone!

Welcome to the April Edition of the Bradwell Band's monthly newsletter.

The main event for the Band last month was competing in the annual regional contest held in Stevenage. The result was somewhat disappointing but there has been no time for regrets as the Band turns their attention to working on the music that will form their programme for the concert later this month in St. James and for the upcoming contrasting scheduled engagements. More details can be found inside this issue.

I thank Chas for his contribution this month and as always I look forward to receiving articles and photographs for inclusion in future newsletters!

I hope you all have a Happy Easter.

Sarah-Jayne

## Development Group

Thursday evenings are always lively with the weekly rehearsals of the Development Group.

With an average attendance of 30 players we have recently been able to welcome a number of new younger players into the group. We currently have twenty members who are of school age and with the adult members of the group they have been working hard on a programme of music to be performed by the group at the Spring concert in St. James on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April.

Unfortunately we have had to decline a number of requests from adults wanting to learn to play a brass instrument as we do not have enough of our current members who are willing to offer their services as tutors. There are other local bands able to take them on so hopefully the adults who have made enquiries about joining us will still get the opportunity to learn to play,

The group's final rehearsal for the Spring term is Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April after which they will be having a two week break for the Easter holidays. The rehearsals resume on 24<sup>th</sup> April and will continue on Thursdays until the school summer holidays start in July.

## Area Contest Report

On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March Bradwell Silver Band took part in the London & Southern Counties Regional Championships held at the Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre. There were a total of seventeen bands entered into the Third Section who were required to play the selected Test Piece "Arkansas" by Jacob de Haan

With 17 bands taking part those placed in the top three positions will be in consideration to receive an invitation to the National Finals to be held at Cheltenham in September. In view of the large entry the Regional Committee had decided to enforce a split draw for the order of playing. This helps stagger the arrival time of the Bands involved and Bradwell were selected to be part of the second draw which took place at 10:15 a.m. with the band drawn to play number 1 in the section having started at 9:30am.

The Committee had decided to organise a coach to take us to the contest this year and this left New Bradwell at 8:30am. The coach was a 34 seater executive coach which meant there wasn't a lot of spare room and the luggage storage was not as spacious as we have enjoyed in the past. It is a good job we didn't have to take all of the percussion equipment needed for the performance.

The route taken to the venue was partly motorway but also included a lot of local twisty roads which made for an interesting journey. We arrived at Stevenage with plenty of time to spare before the draw was due to be made. There was time to stretch legs or stay in the warmth of the coach on a rather chilly spring morning. Sam returned with the news that we had been drawn to play number 13 and with Band number 5 already being on stage a space would soon be available for us in the holding area. The coach was unloaded and we made our way into the familiar area which was doing its best to accommodate bands from Sections 2 and 3. We were shown to our allocated space and had time to wander around before we needed to start preparing for our performance,



We changed into uniforms and waited to be shown to an area where we could have a brief warming up session before checking in at the registration table. As with passport photos people's appearances do change over the years and we were advised that some of our members pictures need to be updated!

## ***Area Contest Report***

The percussion team were allowed on stage to set up and the Band took their places on the stage of the theatre. With everyone settled the announcer asked the adjudicators if they were ready and we were allowed to start our performance. I thought it went as well as can be expected, the soloists were all excellent and despite a tentative opening there were few noticeable errors.

After we finished our playing and with the organisers anxious for us to vacate the space in the holding area for bands still to play, instruments were loaded back on to the coach and we had time to explore the shopping centre and grab some refreshments. Most members were back inside the theatre to hear the final band's performance and await the results.

In their summing up of the contest both adjudicators were constructive in their comments. We had the usual mentions of tuning, balance and dynamics. We were also reminded of the need to observe the tempo markings. Due to a technical hitch there was then an awkward and embarrassing delay before the results could be announced. Eventually they got their act in order and declared the names of the bands that finished in the top four places. It was not a surprise that we were not amongst them but rather disappointing to learn a little later on that we had been placed 16<sup>th</sup> out of the 17 competing bands.

The journey home was quite subdued but fortunately more direct and kept to main roads with the coach arriving in New Bradwell just before 5:00pm.

Special mention goes to Erin and Rachael who were playing in their first contest with the Band. In the week leading up to the contest our principal euphonium player Fraser was unwell and it was uncertain if he would be able to play at the contest. As a contingency plan Lucy took over the solo seat and Rachael moved to 2<sup>nd</sup> Euphonium and this worked very well in the two rehearsals. In the end it transpired that Fraser was going to be able to play after all so they were able to revert to their more usual positions. We thank Lucy and Rachael for being prepared at short notice to cover these parts.

We thank Peter for joining the percussion team and trust he enjoyed the experience before resuming his normal place in the tenor horn section. We also thank Michelle and Tania for travelling to support the Band even though they were not playing.

We thank Sam and Gareth for their organisational efforts which meant the day ran as smoothly as it did.

So after practising solidly since January, the contest is now behind us for another year. We have plenty of engagements booked for the next few months and we can enjoy rehearsing different music to perform before more appreciative audiences!

Our congratulations go to the first three bands who qualified for the National Finals and hope they enjoy the experience.

## Area Contest Report

### Results

#### Third Section:

Adjudicators: Jack Capstaff, Stephanie Binns

1. Betteshanger Colliery (Mike West)\*
2. Littleport (Ian Johnson)\*
3. Putney & Wimbledon (Sam Topp)\*
4. Epping Forest (Kevin Schroeter)
5. Watford (Ian Graves)
6. Hangleton (Richard Baker)
7. Hemel Hempstead (Dan Shave)
8. Yiewsley & West Drayton (Christopher Cole)
9. Tadley Concert Brass (Paul Chapman)
10. Chichester City (Alfie Hughes)
11. Jubilee Brass (Oxford) (Clifford Sadler)
12. Hungerford Town (Tim Crouter)
13. Great Yarmouth Brass (Colin Swaep)
14. Crystal Palace (Jim Lynch)
15. Cold Ash Brass (Andy Belfield)
16. Bradwell Silver (Brian Keech)
17. Regent Community Brass (Simon Tong)

\* Qualify for National Final

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### Even Adjudicators Are Human!

*The following appeared on the Facebook page of a well known and respected player and adjudicator.*

We all make mistakes! I offer my sincere apologies to a band in the championship section at the Midlands regional in Bedworth yesterday as I seem to have missed an important letter off a word when I was making comments regarding their final bars. I saw something on social media this morning, without my name attached, (thank you) so now I will come clean!!

I meant to describe the ending of your performance of Diversions as 'scrappy' but I inadvertently left off the first letter 's'. My sincere apologies and hope the rest of the comments made a bit more sense!!

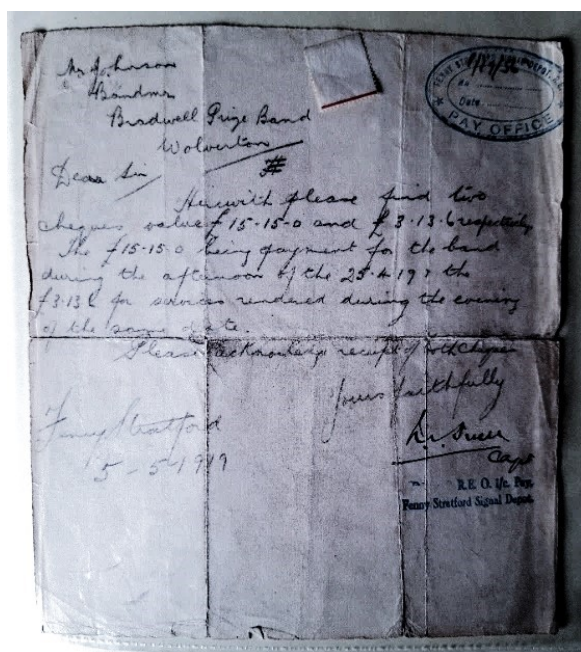


## From The Archive!

### FROM THE ARCHIVE –

*As we look forward to our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, this series delves into the band's archive for stories about its early history.*

### AN APRIL EVENT



Sometimes, going through the archive, you come across an item that piques your curiosity and you wonder what the story is behind it.

This letter<sup>1</sup>, found in the archive, is so battered that it is now protected in a special plastic sleeve. It is addressed to Mr Johnson, Bandmaster, Bradwell Prize Band, and confirms payments for the band playing at the Fenny Stratford Signal Depot on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1919. It is simply a conformation of a payment. The full text reads:

*Herewith please find two cheques value £15-15-0 and £3-13-6 respectively. The £15-15-0 being payment for the band during the afternoon of the 25.4.19 & the £3-13-6 for services rendered during the evening of the same date.*

*Please acknowledge receipt of both cheques.*

Written in pencil, it is signed in ink by a Captain, whose signature I have been unable to decipher, and is stamped *R.E.O. i/c. Pay Fenny Stratford Depot*. The abbreviations standing for “Royal Engineers, Officer in Charge Pay”.

The Fenny Stratford Signal Depot<sup>2</sup> was based at Staple Hall. The hall had been taken over by the army in 1914 as a training camp, the following year the Royal Engineers Signals Training School was established there. Then, in 1917 it became the regiment's Wireless Depot and Training Centre.

At its height the Fenny Stratford Depot had “a large permanent staff of all ranks and its constant, though migratory, population of, say, from 1,500 to 2,000 soldiers”<sup>3</sup>. The camp hosted regular public concerts: it had its own band which played at regimental and public occasions and also boasted a string orchestra. The Depot was gradually run down after the Armistice. By 1919 it was still operational but had presumably lost its own bands and musicians so paid the Bradwell Band to play instead.



Staple Hall c1917  
[Living Archive Milton Keynes Ref BCH/006/001]

## From The Archive!

The Band's accounts show that in 1919 it made £48-13-1 from *March Outs and Concerts*, so this single event contributed over a third of the year's total income from public performances. And what was the well-paid event the Band was playing for on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April? On that date in 1787 the Corps of Engineers received a Royal Warrant from King George III authorising the style and title of 'Royal Engineers'. Given the details in the letter it would appear that the depot was holding an afternoon and evening event to commemorate the occasion.

Staple Hall Depot was probably closed in late 1919. The huts were sold off by auction on the 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> February 1920, the advertisement for the auction in the Bucks Herald [31<sup>st</sup> Jan 1920] gives an idea of the camps size, listing 52 huts and buildings including twenty sectional huts; six non-sectional huts; a large lined building used as a hospital; another lined building used as an officers' mess; and two ten-bay sheds with walls on three sides.

In June 1920 the Royal Engineers Signal Service became the Royal Corps of Signals.



A 1900 map [left] of Fenny Stratford showing the location of Staple Hall in relation to Watling Street and the railway, and a modern street map [right] showing Staple Hall Road.

The site, just north of Fenny Stratford station, became a housing estate. The hall survives only as a road name - Staple Hall Road. The Hall itself stood off Watling Street about half-way along between the railway line and the junction with Bilton Road, roughly where Roman House is today.

## Chas Leslie

<sup>1</sup>Now referenced in the archive as BSB 2024-83

<sup>2</sup>Source for information about Staple Hall and the Fenny Stratford Depot:  
<https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/camp.php?pid=18201>

<sup>3</sup>As reported in the North Bucks Times 2 Jan 1917

## Forthcoming Engagements

*Playing member are reminded that they should use Muzodo to indicate their availability.*

*If you have any questions about engagements or your availability, please speak with Sam as engagement secretary, Gareth as co-secretary, Brian or your section leader as appropriate.*

*The earlier Sam and Gareth know deps are needed the better. Of course, if you can provide your own deputy that really helps but we know that some of us don't have a ready list of contacts making this difficult.*

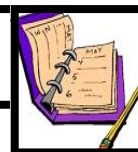
*Please remember everyone is valuable, any missing part impacts on the performance, making deps important for all.*

*If you have any problems accessing Muzodo let us know (Sam & Steph). As administrators they can re-set passwords and add in responses on your behalf.*

Saturday 26 <sup>th</sup> April	Spring Concert St. James New Bradwell	7:30pm
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	May Day At The Mill	Playing 1:00pm-2:00pm
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Stony Stratford Riverside Fayre	
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> June	Walton Summer Fayre	
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> June	Newport Pagnell Vintage Day	
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Bands On The Green Bletchley	
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> June	<i>Private Event</i>	
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	Leighton Buzzard Bandstand	
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> July	New Bradwell School Carnival	
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> July	St. James Patronal Service	
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> August	St. James Open Air Concert	
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> October	St. James Autumn Concert	



## Contacts



<i>Chairperson:</i>	Steph Chappell	chairman@bradwellband.co.uk
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<i>Treasurer:</i>	Karen Wilson	treasurer@bradwellband.co.uk
<i>Librarian:</i>	Chey Wilson	-
<i>Press Officer:</i>	<b>VACANT</b>	-
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<i>Committee:</i>	Dave Sanderson	-

### **British Legion Pays Tribute To A Familiar Figure**

*With acknowledgements to I grew up in New/Old Bradwell Facebook page.*

We were so sorry to hear of the passing of Ernie Gascoyne in February. Ernie was a veteran, an amazing character, a dedicated member of the New Bradwell Royal British Legion: New Bradwell and District Branch for many years, following a family tradition. He worked tirelessly to support the branch in fundraising and supporting veterans. He was a loved member of the Braddle community and he will be sorely missed.

There was a small gathering at the Clocktower on 23<sup>rd</sup> March to show support for Ernie's family with an act of Remembrance. Former branch Chairman Peter Wilkinson (RBL) read the exhortation and David Wilson (Bradwell Silver Band) played the Last Post and Reveille beautifully. Members of Ernie's family laid a wreath. Ernest Gascoyne, we will all remember you proudly.



*The photo shows Ernie in his role as parade marshall a Remembrance Day service a few years ago.*



St. James Church, New Bradwell.

# Spring Concert & Awards Evening

Saturday 26th April – 7:30pm

Supported by our very own,  
talented Development Band.



**FAMILY TICKET: £22** (2 adults + 2 children or 1 adult + 3 children)

Tel: 01908 616463 [press@bradwellband.co.uk](mailto:press@bradwellband.co.uk) [www.bradwellband.co.uk](http://www.bradwellband.co.uk)

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