



The Bradwell Bugle

Newsletter of the Bradwell Silver Band



April 2026

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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 at 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 125th Gala Concert in May. More details can be found inside this issue.

I thank Tug, Steph and Chas for their contributions 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

New Telephone Contact Number for the Band

The Band has secured a new phone contact number which is now live.

This will be used on all publicity going forward and is intended that this number is to be the main point of contact for all bookings and enquiries.

If anyone asks you how to contact the Band please give them this number:

07541 786107

Please note that this phone won't be turned on all the time, so if there is anything needing urgent attention, you should contact Sam, Gareth or Brian in the first instance as normal, so that it can be dealt with quickly.

From The Chair

Welcome again to my monthly update.

I would like to start with the regional contest and again thank all the members of the band for their hard work up to the contest and on the day. Although you may be feeling that none of the effort was worth it due to the result, that isn't the case. To work on a piece is a good thing and I felt the piece was a much better choice than those we have had over the last few years. As the cornet section know from our sectional, I am a big fan of Gordon Langford and the piece was classic Gordon cracking melodies, descriptive and just makes me smile.

Like everybody else I came off the stage thinking we had played well. I felt that it was the tightest and most together performance we have given for at least the last three years. I have become very cynical over the last fifty years with contesting and I have certainly had more disappointments than joy from the results. We play to the rules and go with band that plays all year round we do not bring in players specifically for the contest or cover parts elsewhere in the band. You can be sure that many of the bands in our section would have done this. I was disappointed that the adjudicator who we thought would use a marking scheme didn't appear to have used it and their remarks were mainly about interpretation. The tempo of third movement seemed to be commented on by both adjudicators. The c. (or circa) marking to me means that you can go faster or slower and again leaves it open to interpretation. I believe the Worth Valley Railway was/is a slow-moving branch line ambling through the Yorkshire countryside though.

Now we are clear of the contest we move onto our 125th celebrations and the concerts we have planned starting with the St James concert in April and premiere of Echoes of St James. Then we have the Gala concert in May. Jack's four solos have now been finalised; Brian and the committee are progressing with planning of the concert. Our other commission from Joe Galuzka is moving forward and Joe hopes to have a first draft to me very early in April which I can discuss with Brian.

The committee voted unanimously to proceed with the approximately 15-minute documentary and we are now engaging with a videographer to finalise a formal contract. This will not only be a great tool in future years for social media; it will also become part of the archive for the rest of the band's future.

If you have any comments or questions on the above or anything else regarding the band, please speak to me or any member of the committee.

Thanks,

Tug (Chairman)



Area Contest 2026 Report

On Sunday 22nd 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 "Three Haworth Impressions" by Gordon Langford.

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 York 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 first draw with the band drawn to play number 1 starting at 11:00 a.m.

The coach left New Bradwell shortly after 8:00a.m. on a rather foggy morning and took a route down the M1 to Luton and then cross country, arriving at Stevenage with plenty of time to spare before the draw was due to be made. Despite the closure of some car parks the coach was able to park in our "usual" spot just a short walk from the venue.

There was time to stretch legs and take refreshments before Sam returned with the news that we had been drawn to play number 5. This left time for another stroll around Stevenage before meeting back at the coach and making our way into the holding area which was doing its best to accommodate bands from Sections 3 and 2.

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. The percussion team were allowed on stage to set up before the rest of the Band took their place on the stage. This year we were playing in the grandly name Main Concert Hall which is in effect a large space much more suitable for leisure centre purposes.

There was no raised stage and as we sat down the horns and basses found themselves sat directly in front of some glaring stage lights. This shone through the music and with inadequate lighting from behind or above it was very difficult to see the music properly. This was a problem experienced by all the bands taking part in our section and was rather unsettling.

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 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 further explore. Stevenage has a large number of building projects on the go, most of them residential and hoping to attract those commuting into London for work. The hoardings proudly boast that London is just 22minutes away on the train!

Suitably refreshed most members were back inside the Concert Hall 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. On stage they only announce the names of the bands placed in the top four places and we were not one of them.

Area Contest 2026 Report

Bradwell Band was rather disappointed to learn a little later on that we had been placed 15th out of the 17 competing bands. This means that combined with the results from the previous two years that we will drop back into the Fourth Section for the 2027 Contest. The journey home was quite subdued with the coach arriving back in New Bradwell just before 6:30 p.m.

In the weeks leading up to the contest our principal euphonium player Fraser was unwell and it was decided that Lucy take over the solo seat with Rachael moving to 2nd Euphonium. This shift around allowed Brian to bring in Aran who was making her contesting debut in the bass section. We thank Michelle, George and James for travelling to support the Band even though they were not playing and Peter for taking part in most of the rehearsals leading up to the contest and being on standby. 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 high profile 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.

Result:

Third Section:

Adjudicators: Andrea Price; Steven Mead

Test Piece: Three Haworth Impressions (Gordon Langford)

1. Betteshanger Colliery (Mike West)*
2. Epping Forest (Kevin Schroeter)*
3. Tadley Concert Brass (Paul Chapman)*
4. Hemel Hempstead (Dan Shave)
5. Great Yarmouth Brass (Colin Swaep)
6. Fairlop Brass (Kevin Jordan)
7. Yiewsley & West Drayton (Christopher Cole)
8. Chichester City (Alfie Hughes)
9. Watford (Ian Graves)10. Hangleton (Richard Baker)
11. Cobham (Ben Miller)
12. Simon Langton Brass (David Lockwood)
13. Godalming (James Haigh)
14. Hungerford Town (Tim Crouter)
15. Bradwell Silver (Brian Keech)
16. Jubilee Brass (Oxford) (Clifford Sadler)
17. Cold Ash Brass (Ian Walshaw)

** Qualify for National Final*

Record Number Of Ladies In The Band!

The current membership of the Bradwell Silver Band is 33 players with the ladies in the majority by one!

At Stevenage we had an all lady Euphonium and Baritone Section and for the first time had one in the Bass Section as well. The picture below shows those who took part in the contest.



A Register Of Players And Bandmasters 1901 - 2026

As part of our 125th Celebrations and our on-going work on the archives, we have produced a booklet listing, as far as we know from the available material, everyone who has played in the band since its creation in 1901.

The booklet has been designed and printed thanks to a grant from the Milton Keynes Heritage Association and copies will be available at the Spring Concert.



This is very much a “work in Progress” and we would be grateful for any information about people who have been missed off the list.

Chas Leslie
Band Archivist

Development Group

The group are currently enjoying a two week Easter break resuming on 16th April to put the final touches to their performance at the Spring Contest.

Thursday evenings term times 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 two new younger learners into the group. We currently have twenty two 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 26th April and are looking forward to being part of the 125th Gala Concert in May.

At the beginning of the month a number of our youngsters performed at the MK Music Co-operative Brass and Woodwind Festival held at Christ The Cornerstone Church in central Milton Keynes. Jack (cornet) and Jacob (euphonium) are pupils at the Olney Middle School and played a duet which saw them awarded a certificate for

Outstanding Performance. Well done to these two, we are very proud of you.



A Day Out In Glamourous Huddersfield!

Since Adam made the big move up north, I've been doing my best to see him perform whenever life allows, and it also gives me the perfect excuse to whisk his Grandma, Morag, away for a little mini-break.

This year felt extra special. With Adam taking on his first season as Principal Cornet of the Hebden Bridge Band, there was no way we were going to miss the Regional Brass Band Contest in Huddersfield on 7th March.

Getting There & Settling In

Hebden Bridge are in the First Section and had the honour (or the early morning shock!) of opening the weekend at 9am on Saturday. That meant a Friday road trip for me, driving from Milton Keynes up to the Manchester/Cheshire border to collect Morag and catch up with my dad. After many hours on the road, we treated ourselves to a bargain Premier Inn on the outskirts of Huddersfield. It was half the price of other hotels, so we happily booked in for two nights, sparing me from rushing around and from having to decline any post-contest pub invitations.

Contest Day Adventures

A quick 10-minute Uber took us to Huddersfield Town Hall just in time for a comforting cup of tea before the first band struck up. This year's First Section test piece was Variations on 'Was Lebet' by Andrew Wainwright, a challenging work based on a German chorale, spread across five movements. The opening line translates as: "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Adam told us Hebden Bridge were drawn 7th out of 13 bands, giving us a couple of hours to settle in, enjoy a few tea-and-cake breaks, browse trade stands, and chat to familiar faces. Huddersfield Town Hall is a beautiful but slightly quirky place - you seem to enter and exit through different doors for every part of the building. With all the stairs, we hit our step count early! The refreshments were excellent too, with plenty of gluten-free options freshly made to order.

A Lucky Guess & A Shiny Prize

At the New Moon Insurance stand, they were running a competition to guess how many Rice Krispies were in a jar. I had to ask who on earth counted them, surely the worst job of the day! I took a complete stab in the dark and guessed 11,256. The representative's expression suggested I'd said something amusing... or ridiculous.

Hours later, I returned to find myself triumphantly handed a thermal coffee mug, the actual number was 11,200. My guess was only 56 off! If only I'd bought a lottery ticket...

Pride, Music & A Few Tears

Seeing Adam on stage as Principal Cornet was a moment of pure pride. He played brilliantly, and the brass band press later gave him lovely reviews. The performance was emotional, Morag and I probably didn't breathe for all the 13 minutes. Yorkshire banding is a step up from the London & Southern Counties scene and it was a real pleasure to listen.

Hebden Bridge finished in a respectable 7th place, and after lunch we dipped into a couple of Third Section performances to compare to how Bradwell had been rehearsing - some confident, some understandably nervous. After that, we decided it was definitely pub-o'clock.

A Day Out In Glamourous Huddersfield!

A "Quick Drink" That Wasn't

We found Adam and the band happily installed in the local Wetherspoons, already a few drinks ahead of us. The plan? One quick drink. The reality? We left at 8pm.

We spent the afternoon with Adam and his friend Lee, who shared brilliant stories about his very famous brass banding granddad, James Shepherd. Legendary cornet player, former Principal Cornet of Black Dyke Band, and founder of Shepherd Versatile Brass and Virtuosi Brass. My inner brass band geek was absolutely delighted.

A Weekend Well Spent

All in all, it was a wonderful weekend filled with family, friends, and great music. And I have to say, Huddersfield Town Hall wins hands down over Stevenage Leisure Centre, both in looks and acoustics.

Steph



From The Archive!

FROM THE ARCHIVE –

Bill Walters and Lydia Hayward

The start of our 125th celebrations has brought back memories for many families associated with the Band. Prompted by her own family memories Julie Brown has donated to the archive a number of family photographs and an account of her Great Grandmother's life, as told by her and written down by her daughter, Julie's Grandmother. The relevance for the band is that her Great Grandmother, Lydia Hayward, married Bill Walters, a member of the band from 1901 until 1957, and for 45 years the Band's secretary. Most of this article is drawn from that account with some additional details from Lydia's obituary [Wolverton Express, 4th May 1945], and Bill's [Wolverton Express, Friday 20th December 1957]. I am indebted to Julie Brown for donating the material and for her consent to publish this article.

Bill Walters was born in Newport Pagnell on 29th August 1883. His father was a farm labourer so the family would not have been well-off. He left school aged 11yrs, to work in a woodyard and then, aged 13yrs he took a job at the Railway Works in Wolverton, where he remained employed until his retirement in 1948, by which time he was a crane driver in the Lifting Shop. In the spring of 1901 he joined the newly formed Bradwell United Brass Band, possibly on the suggestion of his cousin, William Hardwick who was then the Assistant Bandmaster.

It was through the band and his cousin that Bill met Lydia Hayward. Born on the 27th June 1883, Lydia had a much more eventful upbringing. Her father, a council lamplighter, had died just before she was born and, as her mother was going blind and unable to cope, the family had been split up. Lydia was raised in an orphanage in Kings Langley where she was subsequently joined by her older sister, Louisa, who had originally been sent to another orphanage in London. Her account of living in the orphanage reads like something out of a Charles Dickens novel.

Aged 13yrs Lydia was sent into service as a kitchen maid where she “got half-crown a month and had to wear a cap because she had curly hair and it was not allowed in those days for a maid to look pretty”.

However the placement did not work out and a year later her sister helped Lydia get a job in a house in St John's Wood, where she was already employed as an assistant cook.

Four years later [So it would have been 1901 and Lydia would have been 18yrs old] the sisters decided to trace their brothers, Jim and George. Louise remembered that Jim had been apprenticed as a fisherman so they placed an advertisement in a Grimsby newspaper. Surprisingly Jim responded and from him they learnt that their other brother, George, although originally also sent to sea, was now living in “a place called Stantonbury, Wolverton”.



William Walters as a young man, probably taken in 1908 when the band acquired its first uniform.

From The Archive!

Having found out where Wolverton was it took Lydia two months to save the one shilling train fare. Using her day off she went to Wolverton and then asked directions to Stantonbury. *“She came to this very quiet little village and asked if anyone knew a man called George Hayward and it seemed everyone knew ‘George who used to be a sailor’”*. She found her brother living at 48 St Mary Street with his wife Kate and two children, Elsie and Jim.

George talked Lydia into moving to Stantonbury, their sister Louise chose to stay in London as by then she had a post as Cook. George helped Lydia get a job in the Laundry at the Wolverton Works and found her lodgings with William Hardwick and his family. Lydia describes Hardwick as the “Bandmaster” so this was probably the autumn of 1901, after he had taken over from Gilbert Lock. Lydia liked music, something she would not have had much access to through her childhood, and took to following the band around their various engagements. She soon met Bill Walters who was about the same age her and who she describes as being “very handsome”.

They were married on 25th February 1905 and moved to *“the house at the top end of Alexandria Court – the last house in Old Bradwell on the Loughton Road”*. Their wedding must have been a fairly simple affair as according to Lydia *“Bill gave her 2/6d a week to save for their wedding [and] that on their wedding day she wore a blue dress and hat and they had tea at Granny’s house which was half way down the Court [and that] they had their clothes line down and all skipped and had lots of fun”*. They subsequently moved to Bridge Street and then finally to St Mary Street.

We remember Bill Walters as a longstanding member of the band and a long serving Secretary, but he was also very active in the wider community: for 16 years he was Secretary and Treasurer of the Stantonbury Hospital Fund [which explains why a copy of the 1916 annual account for the Stantonbury Hospital Fund have been found in the band’s archive]. During the First World War he was Chair of the local Soldiers and Sailors Fund and for many years he was also active in the NUR [National Union of Railwaymen] and was secretary of the Lifting Shop Sick and Benefit Fund. A keen gardener he was also one of the oldest committee members of the LMS Horticultural Society.

Lydia helped her husband with his various duties and during the Second World War was a collector for the War Savings scheme until ill-health forced her to stop. She died suddenly at home, 44 St Mary Street, on 26th April 1945.

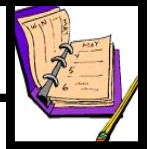
Bill retired from the Wolverton Works in 1948, but continued as the band’s secretary until a few months before he died. As he grew more infirm his grandson, Harold Oldham [also a bandsman] went to live with him in St Mary Street. Bill died on 13th December 1957, at his daughter’s house in King Edward Street.



William Walters circa 1955, the uniform [red jacket with blue facings] was adopted in 1954.

Chas

Contacts



<i>Chairperson:</i>	David Wilson	chairman@bradwellband.co.uk
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<i>Committee:</i>	Dave Sanderson	-

Forthcoming Engagements

Playing members 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 25th April

Spring Concert St. James New Bradwell
(See Poster!)

7:30pm

Monday 4th May

May Day At The Mill

Monday 11th May

Fundraiser Quiz

Saturday 23rd May

125th Anniversary Concert

Saturday 6th June

Newport Pagnell Vintage Day

Sunday 14th June

Bands On The Green Bletchley

Sunday 26th July

St. James Patronal Service

Sunday 16th August

St. James Open Air Concert

www.bradwellband.co.uk

St. James Church, New Bradwell.

BRADWELL SILVER BAND



In Concert

Saturday 25th April – 7:30pm

SPRING CONCERT & AWARDS EVENING

Including the World premiere
of the newly commissioned
'ECHOES OF ST JAMES'
by Alan Fernie, celebrating
our 125 Year Anniversary.

FAMILY TICKET: £22

(2 adults + 2 children or 1 adult + 3 children)



**BRADWELL
SILVER BAND**

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Supported by our
very own, talented
Development Band.

