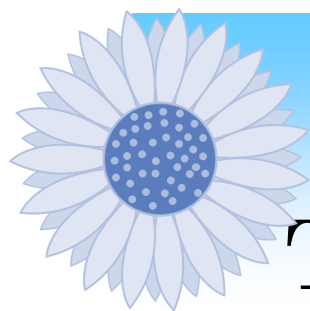




The Bradwell Bugle

Newsletter of the Bradwell Silver Band

August 2026

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From the Editor

Hi Everyone!

Welcome to the August edition of the Bradwell Silver Band's monthly newsletter.

In July the Band unfortunately had one engagement cancelled at short notice but enjoyed participating in the School Carnival. Small groups then played at the Museum and the Patronal Service in St. James. Reports on these can be found inside this issue.

The Band is currently enjoying a break and return to rehearsals on Tuesday 11th August before the only engagement this month in the Churchyard of St. James. Please note that this is a later start time than in previous years as the Church is being used for a special service.

I hope all of you still to go away on holiday have a great time!

I thank Chas for his contribution this month.
As always I would welcome articles or photographs for inclusion in future editions of The Bugle.

Sarah-Jayne

Spot the Player

(or Why Does Everybody Call Him Big Head?)

During the recent exhibition at the Milton Keynes Museum we persuaded one of the members to try on the old band uniform that was on display.

The jacket was a reasonable fit but the hat proved to be a bit on the small side. (in fairness this was a hat designed for one of the younger members of the Band).

In addition the player was holding an instrument that he is not normally associated with. No prizes but do you know who this is?



Engagement Reports

Sunday 5th July **Music At The Mill**

This was an event we had very much been looking forward, performing a Sunday afternoon concert in front on the historic windmill.

Unfortunately due to health and safety concerns raised by the cricket club just a few days before it was due to take place the concert was postponed. We are working with the organisers and the Sports Association to find a new date.

We are sorry to anyone who had been hoping to attend, it's not a decision that had been taken lightly.

Saturday 11th July **New Bradwell School Carnival**

Now organised by the Friends of New Bradwell School, the carnival has become an important date in the local calendar where the whole community comes together.

The tradition of a carnival in New Bradwell dates back to 1911 when a Coronation Pageant for the new King George V and his wife Mary was held. It continued as an annual event until the mid 1970s when it sadly stopped. The New Bradwell School revived the carnival in 1986 as a re-enactment of the original pageant.

The theme for this year's carnival was "Books". The parade was followed by a fete in the school grounds with a funfair, a range of stalls, BBQ, cafe, sweets and drinks, tombola and a grand raffle. This is now a walking parade as health & safety concerns and the difficulties negotiating the narrow streets of New Bradwell make it almost impossible for large vehicles to make their way around the traditional route.

The Band has the honour of leading this colourful procession which has grown in size in recent years. Coming in the middle of another heat wave the weather today was again hot and sunny as forecast but there was also a welcome breeze which made things slightly more comfortable.

The Band formed up in the playground at the rear of the school, playing one tune on the stand as the children assembled for the parade. When the procession was ready for departure the Band headed out of the playground for the short stretch along Bridge Street before turning into Church Street.

The parade is led by the youngest children in the school and this year we only had to come to a halt once to allow them to catch up. We turned right on to Newport Road passing the Dance School before turning right again into Bradwell Road and into the High Street. We returned to the school via Church Street and the Band was dismissed.

The three marches used by the Band today were "Brad'll Carnival", "Sweet Caroline" and "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" which were all well received by the large number of people that lined the short route hoping to catch a glimpse of their children as they made their way past.

The Development Group then gave their customary performance in the Carnival Arena. With a number of the group unavailable on the day because of other commitments, the group still numbered an impressive 31 players with just a few senior band members filling in. The dress code today was sports related with members wearing a colourful selection of sports shirts.

The group was introduced to the crowd by Lucy who is not only one of the organisers of the carnival but a playing member in the group! Led by their Musical Director Keith Jones, the programme opened with the march "Brad'll Carnival" which he had arranged especially for the occasion. The books that inspired this were "Peppa Pig" which has been a popular pre-school animated television series since 2004.

Engagement Reports

They continued their programme with “Beetle Drive”, “Any Dream Will Do” which featured euphonium player Jacob, “Portsmouth” and “A Piece Of Cake”. As we were in the middle of the World Cup and with England due to play Norway in the quarter finals later in the day the next piece played was “Football Crazy” which is a selection of songs well known to supporters of most clubs.

We then featured the splendid group of young back row cornet members who along with Jacob (euphonium), Sebastian (tenor horn) and adult learners Sami and Scott all stood to play “He’s Got The Whole World In His Hands”.

This was followed by the theme from “The Muppet Show”, “Tweedlee Dee Tweedle Dum”, “Is This The Way To Amarillo?” and concluded with their signature piece “Heroes”.

The group quickly cleared away to allow the Milton Keynes Dance Centre to take over the entertainment. It had been a very good performance by the group in the unfamiliar conditions of performing outdoors and on grass. Unfortunately the promised gazebos were not forthcoming and on such a hot day it was to everyone’s credit that they maintained a high standard of playing and concentration throughout.

We thank senior band members Lucy, Fraser, Robin and Oz for filling in some of the gaps left by members of the group who had musical engagements elsewhere today.

Today was going to be the last appearance with the group for Amelia who is off to university in September. Amelia sat in the end chair and led the cornet section superbly. There were also debut outdoor performances from our two youngest learners Miley and Frankie who did a splendid job helping out on percussion.

To perform a 45 minute session of music in such testing conditions was a great achievement for the group.

Saturday 25th July

Community & Culture Celebration

Milton Keynes Museum

This was an event that promised to showcase the rich and vibrant culture of Milton Keynes at the museum’s now annual Community & Culture Celebration. This is a free, family-friendly event showcasing the creativity, diversity, and shared heritage of our city and brought together local groups, artists, performers, and organisations for a full day of creative, community-led activities. Visitors were invited to enjoy live performances and take part in hands-on workshops, interactive experiences, as well as a delicious selection of food and drink from local Milton Keynes vendors.

This was an opportunity for the Band to be part of the event as it continues to mark its 125th Anniversary. Chas was there early on the day and with help from Louis and Sammi set up his magnificent display of the Band’s history which included photographs, newspaper articles, an old uniform and cap as well as providing instruments for visitors to have a try at playing. President Peter Blake was also on hand as were Tug and Karen either side of the playing performance. In the afternoon we had Steph, Sam and Jess join to welcome visitors to the stand. During the course of the day there was a lot of interest shown in having a go on the instruments on display from adults as well as children. Tug also recorded an interview for MK Hospital Radio.

Engagement Reports



We had also been invited to contribute as part of the entertainments on offer with performances staged on and around the Bandstand which had been relocated to the museum from Willen Lake in 2022. Those of us who have been around for a while will remember the bandstand in its original location and although nicely designed and built it had one major flaw, it was too small to accommodate a full sized band! As a consequence it was rarely used and although the Willen Lake location continued to expand and add new attractions the bandstand was never to realise the expectation that it would provide the ideal venue for regular performance from local bands.

This engagement slot offered to the Band was restricted to one session of 30 minutes which included set up and clearing away afterwards and so it was decided that we take just a small ensemble. We had Tug, Karen, Keith, Fraser, Ben, Louis and Luke Colbyn representing the Band who were the first performers to be on stage today.

After a warm introduction from the same announcer we had at Stony Stratford, the group launched into their session of light music starting with the march Stein Song followed by Wooden Heart, Those Were The Days, Reach, Wild Rover, Daydream Believer, Hi Ho Silver Lining and concluding with Delilah.



It had been a lively and entertaining performance on another hot and sunny day and was enjoyed by many of the visitors who sat around the bandstand to listen. There were also some very complimentary comments made by the announcer.

The next entertainment on offer was African storytelling (hence the backdrop in the above photograph!) followed later by other acts which included Morris Dancing and Folk Singing.

We thank Chas for his sterling work in continuing to promote the Band in this year's special anniversary and for attracting a lot of attention from the many visitors. We also thank those members of the Band who helped on the day.

Engagement Reports

Sunday 26th July Patronal Festival Morning Worship - Celebrating St. James the Greater New Bradwell

For a number of years the Band has been honoured to be asked to be part of the celebration of the Saint after whom the local Parish Church is named. This year a group of thirteen players led by Keith Jones arrived in plenty of time to set up and play a number of hymn tunes before the service began. Instead of using some of the traditional tunes from the red hymn books the group had rehearsed a set of pieces mostly new to the players.

This started with "Hymn For St. Jim" followed by "Behold The Servant Of The Lord", "My Jesus I Love Thee", "Let There Be Peace On Earth", "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" and finally "Be Still For The Presence of the Lord".

The group was to accompany the singing of all four hymns sung during the course of the service. After words of welcome the opening hymn was "Alleluia Sing To Jesus" to the tune of Hyfrydol.

The service today was led by the Reverend Chris Collinge a former minister at the Church and a previous President of the Band. Chris thought she was retiring but is still very active as an Associate Priest at St. Marys in Wexham. Recalling happy memories of her time in New Bradwell, Chris's sermon mentioned the Band several times.

Other hymns sung were "Amazing Grace", "Praise The Lord Ye Heavens Adore Him" sung to the tune of Austria and the last hymn was "Now Thank We All Our God" to the traditional tune of Nun Dunket.

After a final blessing the group played an arrangement of "It Is Well With My Soul". The playing throughout was well balanced and to an excellent standard. The Band was privileged to have again been part of this special annual service in the heart of the community.



The poster features a green background with musical notes and daisies. At the top right is a circular logo for the Bradwell Silver Band, celebrating 125 years from 1901 to 2026, with a windmill icon. The main text reads 'BRADWELL SILVER BAND' in large green letters. Below this, it says 'Sunday 16th August | 4-5pm' and 'St James Churchyard, New Bradwell, MK13 0BP'. The central text is 'Our Annual Free Churchyard Concert!' in a cursive font. At the bottom, it says 'Bring a chair, bring a picnic, bring your friends and come along!!'.

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Help us celebrate
Bradwell Silver Band's
125th Anniversary!



www.bradwellband.co.uk

From The Archive!

[NOT] FROM THE ARCHIVE –

As we celebrate our 125th Anniversary, this series delves into the band's archive for stories about its early, and more recent, history. Sometimes though the surviving information is incomplete.

THE FIRST WOMEN PLAYERS

When the band was first formed it was, of course, men only. Such were the norms of the time that there was no need to even specify this in the band's rules. Even in 1976, there were no women players – at least none appear in the band's official photograph for that, the band's 75th year. Now here we are, fifty years later. It was noted that when we played at the Regional Contest in March this year we had more women playing than men, and the band list in the Gala Concert Programme lists thirty-four players of whom seventeen [a full 50%] are women.



Official
Band photo
1976

[Photo from
the BSB
Archive]

So the question naturally arose – when did women start playing in the band and who were they? The short answer is - we don't know! There is nothing in the archive to give a definitive answer to either question. Women have long had roles in the organisation and running of the band. Two Presidents have been women, Lady Cotteloe [1931-49] and Dr Marjorie Fildes [1953-60], but until the 1980s evidence of women actually playing in the band is vague.

- The notes of a committee meeting held on the 9th March 1966 notes only that there was a discussion under Any Other Business about girl players. Unfortunately that is all it says, there is no note of the points raised, views expressed nor of any decision. Nor is the issue raised again at any subsequent meeting.
- The next possible evidence of women being in the band comes in 28th June 1978. At this meeting the band adopted a new Constitution and Rules: Rule 7 stated that Any member having or being expelled from the band shall immediately return the property on loan to him or her belonging to the Bradwell Silver Band. This is the only rule with this particular wording, other rules tend to refer to they and them, but it does suggest there might have been women players at this time.
- Finally in 1986, when discussing a new uniform, it was decided that women would have a separate uniform. Presumably up to this point any woman player would have worn the same uniform as the men.

From The Archive!

The band c1987.
Note there are
four women in
band wearing
different uniforms
from the men in
keeping with the
1986 decision.

[Photo from the
BSB Archive]



The Band's archive is only slightly more helpful. The first woman to appear in the surviving player lists was Liz Keech [nee Godfrey] who is first listed in 1983 but actually joined the band in 1982. By 1987 four other women players are listed: Valerie Chase, Andrea Whyte, Carol Seymour and Jan Bower. This would account for the 1986 decision that women would have their own uniform. However, some of the longer-standing members of the band recall a woman called "Joy" who played in the band 1978-79 and this would explain the wording of the rules adopted in 1978. Unfortunately none can now recall her second name, only that family commitments forced her to give up playing, and I can find no mention of her in the archive.

So we do not know definitively when the first women joined the band and there does not appear to have been a formal decision to admit women. All we can say is that the first woman player was admitted to the band sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s and it was probably either Joy or Liz Keech.

If any readers can pass any further light on the question of when women started playing in the band [Joy's surname, other names, dates or photographs for example], we would be delighted to hear from you.



Women band
members at
the Regional
Contest,
March 2026

[Photo from
the band's
Facebook
page]

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.

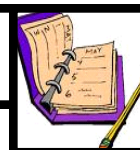
Sunday 16th August

St. James Open Air Concert

Saturday 10th October

St. James Autumn Concert

Contacts



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