

What is the strangest band engagement you have been part of? e.g. a fishing competition...

Compiled by Gavin Holman, April 2020



- Played for Oxford Uni's annual tortoise race. Think we opened up with William Tell.
- Carol concert for the prison officers inside HMP Long Lartin maximum security prison
- I did a band job in the owner of Cosmopolitans play house valued at the time around £4-5,000,000. We played at the top of a balcony and I had to play the cornet slow melody from fantasia on British sea songs up an octave on baritone. The one time I tried caviar.
- Druid festival for the solar eclipse.
- Guesting with Maurice Murphy in Wandsworth Prison. Helping the embryonic Prison band comprising only of prisoners.
- As soloist with River City Band in a US Correctional Centre Nr Pittsburgh
- North London Brass played early in the morning in the basket of several hot-air balloons once as part of a 'Sky Orchestra' project. That was an unusual one, I guess
- A few members of Wadhurst Brass Band marched around a field to get a horse used to the sound of a brass band....!
- As part of the admella celebrations re enactments one year we played hymns and marched verrrrrry slowly around the old cemetery in the dark. It was drizzling rain a bit. And a bit spooky.
- We stood in the dark, mist on the rocks down the beach, and played conch shells as part of a play called The Seal Wife... I was young, it was eerie... ????



- A TV at Christmas Special, dressed like Eskimos, on a hot day in July, with fake snow on the ground and falling all around
- Archery championships
- Marched a carpet along the road once! Axminster carpets made it for Prince Charles and we paraded it to church to be blessed!
- World Croquet Champs (u21) - depping - presentation of teams - played a wrong un in the NZ National Anthem! In Nottingham.
- Filming, in July, at Staithes, for the *Old Jack's Boat* Christmas special, with Bernard Cribbens – standing on quayside, playing, and being showered with fake snow – this episode won a BAFTA award.
- Playing a gig in a cemetery to about 8 local residents.
- Crimewatch Roadshow... live on TV. Playing marches very loudly to show how they train police horses to cope with noise. The horses weren't bothered in the slightest until one copper started chucking tennis balls at them from behind (to simulate a riot) then it got a bit scary as the horses really didn't like that, fortunately the director told them to stop doing it before we went on air!
- Standing on the ramparts of Caerphilly Castle with Cory in a gale miming to us playing Thunder and Lightning Polka while being filmed by a helicopter above us. The helicopter had to be called off in the end because of the strong winds! Ironic choice of music as it turned out lol!
- Playing at the blowing up of the Chimney's at London bricks old brickworks. With a special guest player Roy Castle
- Conducting my band being hired to play national anthems at the world sheep-shearing competition. (Had to rehearse 30+ anthems just in case, even tough "everybody knew" (we didn't) that probably New Zealand, Norway, Scotland and Wales would suffice).
- On tour with Lewisham Concert Band in Hamburg!
- Charity Banger racing gig back in 1990, in the presence of Barry McGuigan and Johnny Briggs (Coronation Street).
- In an effort to highlight our need for new uniforms, we marched through the town playing in swimming costumes. One of the national newspapers got hold of the story and it ended up in newspapers from Spain to New Zealand. It was 1975 so no social media. Yes, we did get new uniforms.
- When I was playing in Sheffield we were invited to a 'ding dong the witch is dead' street party to celebrate Maggie Thatchers demise We didn't take part.
- We were engaged to play at an Indian wedding. This included parading through a suburban estate in front of an ornate horse drawn carriage containing the bride and groom early on a Sunday morning (to the shock and surprise of the local inhabitants). Our secretary later saw a video recording of the event and they had removed the sound of the band and replaced it with some Indian music.
- We annually have and appreciate of sheep at the Masham Sheep Fair
- Image may contain: one or more people, sky and outdoor
- We played in a field marching up toward a stage at an outdoor play in Susannah York's garden...



- Playing happy birthday to an elephant at chester zoo
- Played happy birthday to a water tower once for Anglian water
- Played for Yarwell and Nassington a few years back we used to play wa the World Conker Championships!
- I did a gig at a Mangold hurling event in Sherston once.... Very weird...
- When I played with Ashworth Brass Band in Rochdale a long time ago, we played at an Eid celebration. Our conductor, Stan, was about 80 then and didn't really understand what it was all about and put The Caliph of Baghdad out. He couldn't understand why we said it wasn't really appropriate music for the day.
- A London socialites wedding in a forest / cliff edge in North Wales. There was a Chinese dragon. The guests and bridal party looked like something out of an Adam and the Ants video, Benedict Cumberbatch did a reading of a very dirty poem and the brides dress was basically a see through net from the waist up.
- Playing with RAF 1 Group Voluntary Band in the centre of the parade ring at Doncaster races. I don't know who was most confused : the jockeys the horses or us bandsmen.
- Played happy birthday and congratulations on coronation street
- Playing at a Masonic do.
- The Red Bull Steeple Chase... a 23 mile fell race across some of the highest peaks in the Peak District. It involved us climbing a bloody great crag with our instruments to play as the runners hit the top on the first peak. The weird looks, laughs and double takes we got as people went past were (almost) worth the climb
- I once played for a music festival opening, which I suppose for itself isn't that strange... But it was hosted in an attorney's office, while they were still working. The band ended up marching around the cubicles and I'm pretty sure we ruined at least 5 or so calls by the time we were done with our set.
- I conducted Fairford Silver Band at a tug of war that took place across a stream in the Cotswolds
- Played in a small ensemble in a production of Hello Dolly!
- Whilst serving in Cyprus, several of us played incidental music during a performance of Shakespeare, in an open air Roman amphitheatre
- A Worm Charming event
- William Davis Construction Group Band appeared at a gig called "All together now" [Saturday 20 August, 1994] at Stanford Hall. Part of the Community Education Dept. of Opera North production celebrating the 150 anniversary of the Co-operative Movement.
- The Nationals test piece that year was "Theme & Co-operation" for brass band (Horovitz). Couldn't warm to it. It wasn't the most memorable piece either.
- Image may contain: one or more people and people sitting
- 1973...I was 14 and playing with Pressed Steel Fisher works band and we had a secret gig in Moreton-in-Marsh - no-one knew what it was or who it was for just that we had to march and play from the train station to the town hall. When the train arrived hundreds of people holding bottles of champagne fell off and stumbled behind us to the town hall. Turned out it was the opening of Elton John's Rocket Record company...I think all the whos-who in rock music were there. Myself and Robert Ferriman got backstage collecting autographs (and there was this strange sweetish smell)



- Played with the school brass band and we had a trip to lake Geneva. One concert was by the side of the lake and next to a swimming pool. It was crazy as there was so many women walking round topless and in the tiniest of bikini bottoms. Needless to say there quite a few missed notes ??????
- Town crier contest in recent years is the weirdest
- Ripon City Band a couple of years ago at Newby Hall ...
- Concert in Belgian Oudenaarde prison. We did not know it was a prison for murderers and other long live prisoned guys. Even a best known killer was there, all at 10m from us being totally unprotected. A big relief when we left it.
- Playing at a drive pass on the Sultou ranges . Vehicles tanks.
- In 1977 playing in Walsall Town Centre. Band had qualified for National Final 3rd section so local council gave us a band job (Paid) at top of town on a Saturday afternoon. Sunny hot day as well in June it was. Anyway we left a few cases open and the people started putting money in to them. Then we had this old woman come up and started dancing when we played she came up and said "My Husband died yesterday, I hated him, this is the best thing ive seen for ages !!!" She dropped in a £5 note. When we had finished playing we had collected a very reasonable amount of money towards the final etc. The Council never found out lol
- A street party for a town, where after the parade through town there was an orange rolling competition while we played on the rotunda.
- Playing on a beach in Newquay- there was an art sculpture put up on the cliff top that played "music" as the wind blew through it up near a fissure above the cave they used to hold concerts in years ago. We were meant to be out in the cave playing that special arrangement
- Before my time at Ratby but legend had it they did a job at the local naturist club ...
- About 20 years ago at Kippax Band, we played a concert in a church with an artist who painted a lovely picture while we played appropriate music. Bizzare...but amusing!
- The one where we played at a summer fete we were pitched next to the chain saw sculpture guy
- Playing on the roof of a hotel, along with fireworks, church bells, & drums on a boat.
- Playing floral dance over and over again in the pits at Castle Donnington race course to no audience waiting for a bunch of cars drive by as part of Children in need. The cars were late arriving and by the time they did arrive the conductor had left, and we played Floral Dance one more time and left frozen to the bone.
- Ratby played at a nudist camp. Certainly caused a stir when we went around selling raffle tickets. It was a chilly September Sunday afternoon if my memory is correct.

