

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

Gavin Holman, April 2020, updated December 2021

Compiled from responses to such questions on brass band Facebook groups in 2020 and 2021.



- 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 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!



- We annually have an appreciation of sheep at the Masham Sheep Fair
- 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 bandmen.
- 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.

- Some years ago, we (Bestwood Black Diamonds Band) were engaged to play at an Indian wedding in a Nottingham suburb. We paraded through a housing estate in Nuthall (a Nottingham suburb) early on a Sunday morning to some consternation from much of the local populace, leading a strangely dressed bride and groom riding in a horse drawn carriage. As it was a wedding, and the usual road marches did not seem entirely appropriate, we marched to an arrangement of "Congratulations". We were later provided with a copy of a wedding video which showed the band marching, but with the sound over-dubbed with recorded Indian music.
- In 1960 Eccles Borough Band went up to Edinburgh to play in the contest in Princess Street Gardens. Before the contest all the bands had to march down Princess Street, all in our sections. The only problem was each band had been told to play a different march. It was chaos.
- When I was a member of the WRAF band, we did all sorts of jobs, walked in front of Formula 1 cars, to the start; in a circus ring (which was about 50% smaller than we had expected, so the display we had practised with marching and countermarching, was severely restricted!); at an American Air Force base, where they put us behind a hill, out of sight of the people having a BBQ!
- Shirebrook Band twice played inside Nottingham prison in front of murderers and rapists among others as part of a culture week. Don't know how people break out, we had a hell of a job just getting in.
- Many years ago, the band I was with played at a steam engine fair. All was fine. We were sat in the corner of a large field and had played a very good set. Someone organizing this event thought it was a good idea to be all Victorian and have the band play during the Concourse D'elegance...
- At the opening of a new roundabout in London, the local mayor and town councillors and us. A plaque was unveiled too. Weird.
- Playing in the kitchen of a show home at a new local housing estate. I was conducting, when a clown came up behind me. Some of my friends in the band knew of my clown phobia and were warning me not to turn around but I did, and was slightly freaked out! I missed the job where Mr Blobby turned up, thank goodness!! Another odd one was leading my school band through the streets of Newport playing marches, in a parade for 'Safe Routes to School'. Most had never marched before. It was interesting...
- We once arrived to play a concert and when we got to the venue there was nobody there. We set up, started at our allotted time as per the booking letter, played for over an hour (including spiel between pieces), played an encore and left ... all to an empty hall. On the way back to town we met the organiser. Turns out he'd given us the wrong timings. Still got paid.
- I've done an Indian wedding in Birmingham (we marched to spread a little happiness!), the opening of a new traffic island in France, on bales of hay pulled by a tractor (only audience was a field of cows) but fortunately the nudist camp job happened before I joined Ratby, phew.
- I remember when I was about 13 my band went to Paris for the weekend, we played by the Eiffel tower in a park, and somehow we were booked to play at Disneyland! Not bad for a youth band from Trowbridge. I don't really remember much but I do remember we played Disney Fantasy. I think there was only about 12 people in the audience as we were in some little hall in the park, got to spend the rest of the day enjoying the rides and watching the fireworks!
- One year at the Mineworkers Finals in Blackpool the usual range of halls weren't available in the Winter Gardens, so our section was held in the circus ring in Blackpool Tower. A strange contest venue, but the overpowering smell of elephant dung was the lasting memory.
- 15 or so years ago, Long Eaton Silver Prize Band used to parade twice-yearly for the Italian ex-pat community around St Anns and Sneinton in Nottingham for a couple of

their religious festivals. We largely played the music supplied by the 'customer' which were quite florid, rapid tunes (odd key sigs/accidentals) which weren't marches as such, so we ambled around the streets, stopping very frequently whilst some of the congregation held aloft Catholic figures that were seated on shrines (much like the scene in Godfather 2 where Robert De Niro murders a local Don).

- [following the above] We did many of these with the optimistically named Giuseppe Verdi concert band. We ambled round the streets playing hymns while a loudspeaker informed the slumbering locals that we were not a political demonstration - at full volume. If it rained up went the umbrellas and they played one-handed. Players regularly dropped out for a smoke or to chat to a friend. It was wonderful Italian anarchy - with fantastic food and home-made wine of variable quality at the end. And we were paid!
- Maggot from GLC (Goldie Lookin Chain) was in the final of Big Brother on the Friday night, and my school band (also from Newport) were due to play in a youth band contest the next day. I was contacted to ask if the band could play a GLC piece while they interviewed the Mayor of Newport (who would be at the contest) in case Maggot won. Thank goodness he didn't, but I spent Friday night arranging 'Your Missus is a Nutter' for Brass Band.
- Played pouring down with rain on top of a open top double decker bus, Swaying trying to position mouthpiece on my lips whilst bumping along in Mansfield. I think the job was something to do with football.
- For a wedding underground in the local caves which open to the public (Kent's Cavern, Torquay). Billed as "the first wedding here for a million years!"
- We used to take our school Brass Band round the pit canteens week before Christmas to play carols. Great memories and a free Christmas Dinner every day
- Played in a animal cage at an abandoned zoo!
- Sitting on hay bales on the back of a lorry (I had to be lifted up to get on) in a parade of traction engines!
- I was in the Royal Artillery Band in Germany for 10 years and my last ever gig was in a "Gentleman's Club" for the owner's surprise birthday party. Let's just say it was a VERY high-class establishment! We had free beer, free food and also got paid a lot of money for it. Lots of ladies were walking around with VERY scanty clothing on. It was unbelievably hard to concentrate.
- Psychiatric hospital on Malta. It was surreal.
- Billy Connolly's 40th birthday party. As you can imagine, it was full of celebs! We were 'The Dubrovian Brass Band' and had to play the Dubrovian national anthem when he arrived!
- One that stood out among many was the Donaghmede festival in Dublin. Our main concert in a large school hall was attended by 12 people at the start then people wandered in gradually while we played, ending up full. "To be sure the dog show was on so we went there first". Surreal. They also put us on the back of a lorry as a "float".
- We were asked to play for a pilot for the Graham Norton show. We had to turn up in Liverpool on a Saturday night and play Orpheus in the Underworld for several hours whilst they tried to "organise" increasingly drunk and Bolshie scousers to make the worlds longest cancan line. As the evening proceeded the club goers tried to steal our jackets , cases or anything that wasn't screwed down and anyone with an upwards facing bell soon found it was a receptacle for empties. Eventually, after too many hours, the show runners gave up, the club goers moved inside, we gathered up the traumatised and lip sore band and made a compact NEVER to play the cancan again.
- Hipperholme park with Brighthouse & Rastrick. We were positioned between the Waltzer and a Mechanical Fairground Organ. Into a few bars of "West Riding" when the Organ sprung into "Entry of the Gladiators" - we couldn't compete with that so executive decision aborted the job hastily.

- At a dog show. Highlight being the dogs being paraded round whilst we're playing then having to find and stand in (admittedly plastic) dog poo when music stopped. Think musical chairs.
- Starring as a marching band in a amateur dramatics show playing over and over again 76 trombones led the big parade.
- Playing in Cardiff Student union bar with Tongwynlais band back in the 90's performing some acid brass music. Other things on the programme included Russian Naked Poets, and they did recite in Russian. A wild evening, students loved the acid house music, and as performers we had a free bar.
- At a Spiritualist Carol service when I was about 11 with Windsor Band. It was quite scary as the venue was an old Tudor style building with lots of timber panels and pictures of Indian mediums. The words to the carols were changed and the sermon began "last year I died...". When packing up, someone pointed a little too closely at a picture on the wall. The panel moved. I have never seen a brass band pack up and get out of a place so quick! We were all fairly young kids.
- Years ago, with Besses, we recorded the incidental music to a radio play for the BBC, set in a mental hospital. We even had our footsteps recorded walking down the main corridor at the old BBC Studios on Oxford Road in Manchester.
- Open top bus tour (playing on top of the bus) for Pontins (with crocodile mascot), in Manchester, in December. All of which equaled us being freezing cold especially sitting on top of the bus coming home along the M62 - fortunately not having to play at that point. I still never found out if our help with their publicity helped boost holidays.
- A gig with my regimental band in the early 90's. We were booked to play marches on the dockside while a cruise ship was leaving. We had a space of about 30 metres to march along then had to turn and march back the other way. For an hour. Being a cavalry regiment our uniform included spurs on our boots, and as the passengers were constantly throwing streamers down, and we were constantly turning, we all became hopelessly entangled with these bloody streamers so we gave up and just played stationary!
- Warrington Youth Band once had to march around a German cash and carry near Hilden, we could only line up in two's so made an enormous crocodile round the aisles! We then got fed goose and chips in the staff canteen- an acquired taste to teenagers used to burgers.
- We once played "*Dem Bones*" which was part of our programme. In a big church in Bangor where there was a coffin hidden but peaking out from behind a big curtain ready for a funeral service after we finished playing. We had started to play when it was noticed, and we continued to the bitter end.
- We did a street fair years ago in Drymen - one street built on a hill - when we got halfway up we stopped for 15 minutes outside a pub (very handy) then we marched to the top of the street and put on a 20 minute programme where we competed with one of those big organ things which had only one dynamic - ffff. Then done the same on the way back down - we had to do this about 5 times. Half the band was knackered and half the band was drunk and some didn't make the last lap.
- A local beatboxing group contacted us to play with them on an erected stage in the woods behind a train station, so we played a variety of pieces like a Karl Jenkins hymn and music from Pirates of the Caribbean whilst they beat boxed!
- Played for opening of some new benches along the river. Managed 4 bars of music tops between each bench when we would stop, hear a speech and some fizz was poured over the bench. Repeat 6 times!
- My high school marching band was invited to do the half time at a local American football game at a school for the deaf, but we didn't go on the field. We just played from the stands!

- A wedding in Nant Gwrtheyrn in North Wales. It was some socialite from London (artist called Eloise Fornieles and her film Director [now ex-] husband). We played in the forest first where the wedding party and guests appeared looking like something out of an Adam and the Ants video. I'm sure the groom was wearing antlers. The bride was wearing, well, not much at all on top! Benedict Cumberbatch (of Sherlock and Dr Strange fame) read a filthy poem then they all paraded down the road into the valley with a Chinese dragon. At the bottom was a giant teepee and a hog roast. When the roast was ready the butcher carried the head of the pig around to gather the guests. It was completely surreal! (The hog roast was delicious though!) . It was the quintet playing on a cliff edge that was a highlight for me - 80 ft drop if we slipped!
- A charity gig in a millionaire's "play-barn". Looked like a hybrid of treasure island and the Playboy mansion.
- A few of us from Ceramic City Brass, 30 odd years ago, played a fanfare on top of Alton Towers ramparts. It was for kids TV show hold tight and we had to climb a very rickety ladder instruments in hand to get up there. Afterwards Buster Bloodvessel from Bad Manners asked us to play on his record, never happened though.
- Did a very strange gig once with my University brass band at a RAF officer's mess Christmas dinner at a nearby base. They'd hired us to play a set of traditional carols but also hired a company of people with dwarfism to dress up as 'Christmas elves' and do circus tricks. And they had four or five differently themed rooms and the music in each room was blaring out, so we were in the middle of quite a lot of general cacophony. The entire thing was quite strange.
- Weirdest venue I can remember was at Rampton Hospital, luckily in their employees social club and not to the inmates with Clipstone Colliery Band. Our trombone player worked there.
- Christmas carols on the pitch at Hull City in the early 2000's. Couldn't hear a thing, and while warming up in the spare dressing room Peter Taylor, Hull's manager at the time barged in and told us to shut up as he was trying to give his team talk and couldn't hear himself for all the parping. He was very nice afterwards though.
- At a Catholic Church ceremony where we all paraded round and round the grounds in a long line with people dressed in a strange mixture of olden days fancy dress chanting things, interspersed by us playing the same hymn, over and over again. I had absolutely no idea why or what was going on.
- My scout band led a procession of Italian Catholics in Peterborough. Some were carrying effigies and we had to stop now and then for the nuns to sing. At the we played the Italian Anthem and there were daytime fireworks. They were very hospitable though and did a great pasta.
- We did a thing called the *Foghorn Requiem*. An arty piece where massed bands played on a clifftop in South Shields with ships horns out at sea and the Souter Lighthouse Foghorn...
- I had a quartet where we played *Also Sprach Zarathustra* for the 1 billionth sausage roll on a production line! The timing was perfect!
- I once played a tuba from inside a giant purple elephant walking through a shopping centre. Later we filmed the elephant walking out of a misty forest while I slowly played Radetzky March!
- Played on the back of an open topped bus along with the dance group Legs and Co to open a big DIY store in Huddersfield. Great job!
- Remember marching through a crowded room, 2 persons abreast. Zigzagging through the crowd two trombones leading, and ensuring the path was clear-ish!
- Many years ago my band Dunaskin Doon played at a crematorium open day arranged by one of our players who was employed by a local undertakers . During our programme we actually played Eternal Flame.

- Our band, Malvik Musikkorps, was engaged to play in the absurd theatre play "*UBU Roi*" (King UBU) at Trøndelag theatre, I was standing on a hanging scaffold in the roof playing the trumpet.
- We are carolling at the vaccination centre on Saturday
- Deserted mine workings, dead of night, druid festival celebrating the total solar eclipse in 1999. Bespoke music arrangements which included chanting "chaka chaka chak chak... chak... cha-chak", a glitter ball so huge it had to arrive on a low-loader and a singer being suspended in one of the engine-house windows. We had to divide the band into groups that represented the moon, sun and stars and split into the various corners, chanting as we walked back to the band formation seating in the 4th corner at the end of the 1st piece, and there was a tam-tam way out in the middle on it's own with no-one anywhere near it that unexplainedly and very spookily went off by itself just as we played the last note.
- Did a job once at Whipsnade Zoo and the only audience we had was a group of chickens.
- Playing *Teddy Bear's Picnic* over and over again, while workers arrived for a charity day.
- Once did a job in a tank factory. Where they handed over some tanks to the Saudi Army. Lots of pomp.
- Marched behind 15 - 20 town criers, in front of a load of morris dancers, and behind them were a load of folk musicians. That was a lot of noise!
- Playing '*Silent Night*' over and over again on a warm September evening for the recording of a TV programme's Christmas special. Had to dress as if it was the middle of winter, and the uprights ended up with bells full of soap powder that was being used to simulate snow. Anything involving filming for TV is normally strange and rarely worth the effort!
- Top of an iron ore spoil heap after it was landscaped covered in soil and planted.
- In a churchyard with candles on all of the graves and tombs. It was beautiful.
- Outside a circus big top on a Saturday morning, not one person walked past! We had booked deps to help us out too.
- Armley Jail - it was very interesting.
- At a whippet/greyhound meet in a barn, that still had cows in!
- For a full audience but with the curtains closed.
- At a crematorium open day.
- A gay club called the Palace, which was reopening in Swansea in the 1990's with *Constellation Big Band* - it was very weird!
- Following some strippers on stage for a gents' evening.
- Many years ago, we (Bocking Concert Brass) were booked to play at a charity banger racer. We got to meet Johnny Briggs and Barry McGuigan. It was a very dusty job, but interesting watching the cars getting smashed up. And to top it off, Johnny Briggs made a diva of himself by turning up to the event dressed all in white, moaning about the dust, and refusing to sit next to Barry because he was. "a scruffy oik". He then called his agent and stomped off in a huff. Barry McGuigan on the other hand, was lovely. He spoke to everyone, gave out signed photos, and even took part in one of the races.
- Floral Dance on repeat at Donnington Park
- I've played Christmas carols on a train round a park in South Shields.
- Just in from a really surreal job with my band. I have played in other venues including a leper colony in Cyprus, but have just played in a woman's prison. We were very well received and most of the inmates really enjoyed themselves and joined in singing along with the band. Still very strange and surreal.
- A good few years ago our band played on Concorde.

- Several years ago, my band was hired by the local experimental theatre group - they asked us if we wanted to play at the wedding of a 3-metre penguin and equally high badger - both made of papier-mâché.
- A mate of mine played in a prison once, the band started up but made a mistake and had to start again, the MD turned to the audience of prisoners and apologised, but this old lag shouted out, "Take all the time you need, I'm in for 30 years."
- We played as separated individual players all around a reservoir. A special arrangement, but still strange trying to play together.
- I've played a wedding where the bride was about 6'3" and the groom 4'11". The bride wore black, and she walked down the aisle to the *Rocky* theme!
- Played on board a ship that was to sail around the world, informing about the dangers of 'flags of convenience'. Sat in front of a space heater in London docks, I cooked! Did the same gig a year later. The ship was later re-commissioned, and sunk on its maiden voyage!
- We played for a 70th birthday party, playing outside in the driveway of a wealthy businessman (who owned a local, obviously very lucrative Truck Stop.) It was freezing cold and we didn't get fed or refreshments for the whole concert. We then played indoors on the top of a swimming pool! The concert outdoors was filmed using an overhead drone which made a strange whizz sound for the whole gig. Months later, the businessman dropped off bottles of wine for the band, 2 or 3 months too late! Character building!
- A brass quintet in Victorian Costume playing Christmas tunes for a reindeer hunt & shoot!
- An entertainment contest held at the end of Llandudno Pier. Along the sea front it was relatively calm and pleasant but on the end of the pier there was a strong wind. Someone had thought up the idea of an entertainment contest, probably late 1990's - early 2000's, and on paper it seemed a good idea. A few bands withdrew after a walk to the end of the pier. My band, City of Chester, decided to go for it. And we won! We had band friends and strangers, even, holding on to music stands and pieces of music. Conductor on the day was Iain Davey. Looking back, it was a crazy job but we did it and won. As far as I know the event at that location has never been repeated.
- Playing on a windy day between two funnels on a paddle steamer in the middle of the Bristol Channel!
- I did a thing in a old factory space in Tredegar. It was called Haearn and was a multimedia performance piece for brass band, singer and dancers. It was the depth of winter, absolutely brass monkeys, and was on for about three nights. We turned up on the first night and froze, second night we all wore about eight layers. The weirdest thing was this dancer who was submerged in water (with a breathing tube) for the whole thing and had to burst out and do a solo thing to represent the spirit of iron (or something, I'm not totally sure what it was about...) and then got whisked off under a space blanket so she didn't get hypothermia. Bonkers.
- Playing at an Edwardian swimming pool, up on a balcony above the swimmers. Super weird.
- A small group from Corby Silver Band were asked to feature in a Russian production of *La Boheme* held at the Derngate theatre in Northampton. We waited in dressing rooms and Russian voices came over the tannoy. We weren't sure if that was our call or not, so we waited on the stairs for about half an hour with the only other English-speaking person who had been cast as 'Woman with dog'. After we had marched on and played our bit - about 32 bars we all went home. Very strange experience.
- We turned up at a nursing home to play carols and other Christmas music. The staff on duty didn't seem to know about it but let us in. We crowded into a sitting room and started playing to have some residents leave covering their ears as even though we were playing softly, it was too loud for them. This nursing home had gates that were always open. Every time after our event there when we drove past they were closed...

- Years ago my band were booked by an online dating site to play on their 'love bus' for promotional purposes, an open top double-decker with hearts stuck on the sides, as it drove through Central London. We were asked to play love-themed music (which consisted of mainly cheesy arrangements from the 60's/70's) which was quite a challenge when it kept starting/stopping as we played! My favourite moment was when we drove over the Thames and someone's music stand went flying, sending the bass parts into the river.
- We have played on HMS Grafton, the Captain played in the band when he was young so was determined when the ship visited our county town he would have his old band playing for a civic reception.