



# The British Military Music Archive – An Introduction

A compilation of some of the rarest recordings of British military music recently discovered and re-mastered by The British Military Music Archive (BMMA)

## **BMMA BACKGROUND**

In late 2014 a long forgotten store of 78 rpm recordings on shellac and vinyl of the band of the Coldstream Guards was discovered by Simon Vandeleur, the Regimental Secretary of the Coldstream Guards. He has since added to the collection from historic recordings by a number of other British military bands.

The earliest of these recordings date back to 1905 when John Mackenzie-Rogan was the Coldstream Guards bandmaster from 1896 to 1922, and was the first British Army bandmaster to be given commissioned rank. Mackenzie-Rogan became the senior Director of Music of the Brigade of Guards, composer and arranger of music, making the Guards band music well known both nationally and internationally, all before the days of radio, film and television.

The Guards bands were amongst the first UK bands to have their music recorded, with the Coldstream band recording their first music in a London hotel in 1898. Simon had the recordings catalogued by archivist Colin Dean, along with the historic recordings of the Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards (also known as the Household Cavalry), and the Grenadier, Scots, Irish and Welsh Guards (also known as the Brigade of Guards or Guards).

Music publisher and music advisor to the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Tim Hollier, introduced Simon to Metropolis Studios, recognised internationally as one of the leading digital mastering studios. Metropolis took some of the earliest recordings pre First World War, eliminated the hisses and scratches and background noise and illustrated how the music could be brought back to life. This is a slow and lengthy process, using up to seven different stylus depending on the angle of the groove on the vinyl record, some of which were of relatively primitive construction. The very early records were manufactured by a factory in Dresden, Germany.

Simon and Tim created the British Military Music Archive to preserve, archive, restore and release the recordings to the public, and to make the product available to film and documentary producers.

BMMA aspires to be the leading, if not unique, digital archive for UK military band recordings both past and present, with more historic music being sourced throughout 2016. They will pay any operating surpluses back into the charitable funds of the individual regiments and organisations who have supplied the original historic music.

## HISTORY OF UK MILITARY BAND MUSIC

Military bands, particularly those of the Guards regiments, are closely associated with state and ceremonial occasions and are a huge part of the shop-window of the United Kingdom. What is sometimes forgotten is the role these bands played in the social life of the nation, particularly in the days before recorded sound.

Turn the clock back to the 19th Century. Very few people could afford to listen to the orchestras in the concert halls and, aside from the music hall and the family singing around the piano, the music that they heard was from the military bands playing on the bandstand in the local park or on the promenade at the seaside.

This is where they would hear music for all tastes, from the popular tunes of the day, the best of the classical repertoire, selections from the latest operas, as well as marches, waltzes, solo and novelty items, all played by smart, disciplined musicians wearing the full dress uniform of their regiments, often representing two hundred or more years of service to the country.

In London's Royal Parks, the concerts by the Bands of The Brigade of Guards attracted audiences often numbering in the region of 10,000 and the bandmasters were very much what we might now term the 'celebrities' of their day.

When cylinder and gramophone records began to develop in the 1890s it was only natural that the record companies would turn to the military bands and, in particular, those of the Household Cavalry and the Brigade of Guards.

Recording a full orchestra with the primitive equipment then available was difficult whereas it was far easier to capture the sound of a military band. The Guards bands in particular were readily available in London close to the studios, they could be relied on to produce the highest standards musically and, after all, the general public were used to hearing their music from these combinations so the demand was there, ready and waiting.

By the early 1960s these records, played normally at 78 revolutions per minute (rpm), were beginning to become obsolete and replaced by the Long-Playing records at 33 1/3 rpm which brought huge improvements in the quality of sound. Hundreds of '78s' were confined to basements or attics and the record players became increasingly rare.

Many hundreds of these records were stored with the archives of the Foot Guards regiments at Wellington Barracks, London and these represent an important part of the regiments' heritage, in the same way as the collections of books, diaries, medals, badges and uniforms.

## TRACK LIST

1	Royal Cavalcade	Coldstream Guards	Composed for King George V's Silver Jubilee in 1935. Very Stately	
2	Humoresque - It's a Long Way to Tipperary	Coldstream Guards	Tongue-in-cheek variation recorded during WW1.	
3	La Reine de Saba	Coldstream Guards		
4	Our Homeland	Coldstream Guards	Patriotic British Music	

5	In a Clock Store	Coldstream Guards	Descriptive Novelty	
6	The Love Dance	Coldstream Guards		
7	No No Nannette	Coldstream Guards	Popular songs of the period, including Tea for Two	
8	Puszta	Coldstream Guards	Exciting Russian style dance	
9	March Heroique de Szabady	Coldstream Guards	Grand classical transcription	
10	Wipers	Coldstream Guards	Lively Quick March with a WW1 title	
11	Washington Post	Welsh Guards	Well known Sousa march not normally heard with vocals	
12	Changing of the Guard	Welsh Guards	Novelty song and example of musical mock-ups of great British events	
13	Wedding of the Rose	Welsh Guards	Delightful tune reminiscent of the period	
14	Parade of the Tin Soldiers	Welsh Guards	Descriptive march	
15	London Bridge	Welsh Guards	Classic march by one of Britain's leading light music composers	
16	H M Queen Elizabeth's March	Grenadier Guards	Composed for Queen Elizabeth (later Queen Mother) in 1942 by a lady whose sister had been piano teacher to Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon	
17	Savoy Hunting Medley	Grenadier Guards	Lively and typically British activity	
18	Mallorca	2nd Bn. Scots Guards	Slow march for Pipes composed by King Edward VIII	
19	Black Bear; Blue Bonnets O'r the Border	2nd Bn. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	Earliest example of band and pipes playing together	

## CATALOGUE TO DATE

November 2015 - Cavalcade of Martial Songs. Band of the Welsh Guards.

## RELEASE PLAN 2016

February 2016 – A Tribute. Band of the Welsh Guards.

March 2016 – Steps of Glory. Band of the Coldstream Guards.

April 2016 – Echoes of Empire. Band of the Coldstream Guards.

May 2016 - King George V's Army Marches Past – Band of the Grenadier Guards.

June 2016 - Scotland's Pride - Bands and Pipes of Scottish Regiments.

July 2016 - Queen Elizabeth's March – Band of the Grenadier Guards.

September 2016 - Erin's Isle – Band of the Irish Guards

October 2016 - Irish Memories – Band of the Irish Guards

November 2016 – Christmas with the Guards