

Boobs & Brass

In 2006, two friends – Jane and Margaret - who both play the cornet in a brass band, sat talking over a cup of tea when Jane revealed it had always been a dream of hers to form an `all ladies` band but had only ever got round to `thinking` about it. Margaret decided it was time Jane did something about it and volunteered to help her. Within six weeks they had enough volunteers to form the brass band and to perform a concert and it was decided that any proceeds from this concert would be donated to charity.

The charities chosen were the Ophthalmic Dept of Kettering General Hospital and Breast Cancer Campaign - which they thought to be very appropriate - 40 women playing members – hence the name of the Band. The name in itself has raised a lot of curiosity – a non offensive name although some publications are unable to promote the idea because of the name containing the word `Boobs`.

However, the concert, which originally was to be a `one off` raised an incredible £5,000 and after many requests from players and supporters Jane and Maggie were persuaded to continue with this concept.

`First Choice Holidays` very generously donated pink jackets to the Band for their uniform and these were worn for the first time at the 2007 famous Whit Friday Marches. As the number of players increased we found we needed extra jackets to accommodate everyone and Dimensions Corporate Clothing Ltd very generously supplied us with further jackets so that we are now able to accommodate any lady from size 8 to size 28!

As you may well be aware, men can also get breast cancer and over the years we have received fantastic support from many male musicians including Trevor Groom, John Lee and Mark Walters. Whilst “Boobs & Brass” is made up of female players – you will occasionally see a male amongst the ranks – if they are brave enough to wear the `pink jacket` !!

The band continues to have fantastic support from individuals and Companies. We are indebted to Yamaha UK, Korg Jupiter, Mapex Drums and Paiste Cymbals for the loan and use of their percussion equipment.

Back in September 2006, none of us could have envisaged what has happened in the years that have followed – it has been an amazing journey. What these `brass banding boobies` do is not only very humbling but it encourages others to do something for the cause; John Lee, flugel player, was so inspired by the girls that he invited them to accompany him on his solo album - `Whatever it Takes`. Two years later Keith Farrington of Music House Productions who recorded our first CD, instigated the recording of our second CD - `More Than Brass`. The generosity of Keith and John has enabled `Boobs & Brass` to donate in excess of £20,000 to the charity from these two exceptional recordings.

The Band is now well known in the brass band network and with more and more girls wanting to be involved and we now have three groups – the original Midlands group, a Yorkshire group and a South East England group and currently, we have a mailing list of 600 girls who are willing to participate. All the people involved with `Boobs & Brass` love music and brass bands. Undoubtedly, the greatest single contribution that each player, conductor, soloist, arranger and supporter makes is that they do it all at their own personal expense, driven by one common aim – to raise money for researching a cure for breast cancer. During the ten years existence of this unique band – at least fourteen of it's playing members have encountered this horrible disease and this makes us even more determined to raise what we can to enable the researchers to take another step towards finding the cure. To date, we have raised £201,154 for charity – (£171k for breast cancer research and £30k for other charities).

In 2015, Breast Cancer Campaign and Breakthrough Breast Cancer merged to form the new charity – Breast Cancer Now. The aim of the scientists working on their critical research is to create a world where by 2050, everyone who develops breast cancer will live.

So how long can this incredible outfit continue? We do not know !! Jane and Maggie have been seriously discussing this and the only answer they can come up with at the moment is that perhaps they need to seek a sponsor for a pair of pink zimmer frames!!

Thank you all for your encouragement, help, donations and endless support. We could not have achieved all this without you – please continue – together we can all help to bring an end to this devastating disease sooner.

