

Hunstanton Concert Band

Speech delivered by Tony Foster, the band's Concert Secretary and Webmaster
at
Hand Aid 4 - *The Magnificent Concert*
20th October, 2012

Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys - fellow members of the Hunstanton Concert Band.

Thank you for being here this evening for the fourth in our series of Hand Aid concerts.

Everyone in the band hopes that you have enjoyed listening to our music and I trust that you will forgive me if I take up a few minutes of your time to tell you about the Hand Aid story.

It was in this very church on April 10th, 2010 that Hand Aid came to life with the first Hand Aid Concert. Yes, that's just 2-1/2 years ago.

The idea was to raise enough money to enable Becky Palmer, our lead trombone player, to purchase outright a new, state-of-the-art i-Limb prosthesis for her lower right arm to replace the NHS models she has had to use so far.

The i-Limb devices are superior in every way - they really are bionic - and life-changing.

So much has happened since we started the fund-raising.

Firstly, I must here publicly record the grateful thanks of everyone involved with Hand Aid for the numerous - too numerous to mention individually - personal donations received from well-wishers just like yourselves. Money sent in from a retired trombone player, cheques sent in the post, money generously thrown into our collecting buckets and also money raised from the tickets just like those you bought for this concert this evening.

Thank you, thank you everyone.

There have been magnificent individual physical efforts too - a sponsored open water swim in harsh conditions during the Great East Swim at Alton Water comes to mind and terrific support from local organisations including :

The Rotary Clubs at Hunstanton and Fakenham, Hunstanton and District Lions, The Sandringham Flower Show and the organisers of the annual Carol Concert in Hunstanton Town Hall.

There has also been a fantastic response from the world of local tennis. As many of you will know Becky has been known to play a game or two of tennis - even her email address refers to TENNIS MAD BEX!

Becky is the Ladies Team Captain at Fakenham Tennis Club and they ran a tournament last year which raised a lot of money for Hand Aid. The ladies at West Norfolk Tennis Club have also given large donations and further support has come from Aldiss Park and Stebbing Tennis Clubs.

On top of all this Becky's friends - and opponents! - from the West Norfolk, Castleacre and City leagues have all been very generous, particularly in their sponsorship of the Peddars Way Walk!

Ah, yes - the Peddars Way Walk!

This sponsored walk of the Peddars Way is a separate story in its own right - you can read a detailed account, with lots of photos, on the band's web site in the Hand Aid section.

To cut a long story short - in fact to cut a very long story short, Becky, Becky's mother Mary, Susie who plays clarinet in the band and friend Neville walked a total of 133 miles between them and even the support team managed a creditable 35 miles or so! The return for a bunch of very weary walkers, and a very fair collection of blisters, was about £2,396 and I am told that some of the pledges are still coming in. A super effort I am sure you will agree.

Shortly after all the publicity given to "The Walk" in three of the main local newspapers a wonderful donation of £1,000 was received which gave a big boost to the fund. I also have to tell you about the entirely unexpected, and completely anonymous donation, which Hand Aid received, also following on from the publicity given in the newspapers. A very brief note accompanied a cheque for £10,000. No more details can be given but, needless to say it has also made a huge difference to what happens next.

...and still we receive support!

Last Sunday Anne Holt, who is here tonight, organised one of the Charity Horse Rides she often arranges at Sandringham. These events are supported by Peter Taylor (the other half of Trina Barrow playing trumpet and flugelhorn in the band). Peter was the Duty Officer for the St. John's Ambulance support and Kevin Kent provided radio communications facilities with his RAYNET colleagues - that's the Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network.

In the past Ann has donated all the proceeds from one of these Charity Rides each year to a different charity. Following on from a suggestion from Peter, Ann very kindly donated all the money paid by the 210 or so riders last Sunday to Hand Aid - all £2,632 of it. So, a very big thank you to Ann, her husband Andrew and their helpers and to Peter, Kevin and every single rider who participated. - oh, and many thanks also to Her Majesty The Queen for allowing the event to take place on the Royal Estate!

So, where are we now?

On the back page of the programme for tonight's concert you will see that the Trombone-ometer slide has reached a little over £25,000.

Well, I am very pleased to tell you that there has been some improvement made to that figure!

I am told by the fund's Treasurer, Rachael Davies, that the current total stands at £29,299 - and there will be more to add resulting from this concert. I know that this amount will surprise many here tonight but some of the pledges for The Peddars Way Walk have just been received and the total also includes the donation from the Charity Horse Ride at Sandringham.

This is a good time to give a enormous vote of thanks to Rachael for so ably looking after Hand Aid's financial affairs.

This magnificent total raised has already been transformed into action!

Becky has been able to finalise the order with Touch Bionics, the i-Limb manufacturers, and she will be travelling to Scotland on the 19th November this year to be fitted with her new bionic arm and to receive a week's familiarisation and training . Wonderful news!

Hunstanton Concert Band is aiming to see the fund reach £30,000 which will pay for the i-Limb and also cover a few year's maintenance. Hopefully that total will be achieved in the very near future.

Once again, thank you - thank you so much for being here this evening and it really is a case of "Congratulations" to Becky as she prepares to receive her new i-Limb and also "Congratulations" to all of you for being part of the story and helping us get there.

Thank you!

(Hunstanton Concert Band then played Cliff Richards' version of *Congratulations*.)