

Girls brass band hits GOLD



Photo courtesy of David Royle

Members of the Trinity Girls Brass Band with Conductor David Ashworth, right, and Musical Director Andy Tyson.

THEIR sound evokes images of working class men sharing a unique musical camaraderie, one which provided a means of escape from the gruelling routine of life at the coalface.

But whilst banding was seen by many as a “man’s world”, that never stopped the sisters of the Trinity Girls Brass Band from doing it for themselves. And to this day they are the only all-female brass band in the country.

This year marks the golden anniversary of the band based at Garswood and Ashton, which still draws on the musical talents of some of its founder members.

“When we first started, there were very few women players in brass bands. It took a long time for the top bands to accept women – even frowning on players having their wives travel with them on the coach to competitions,” said Denise Grundy, who joined 48 years ago aged just five.

The band’s original musical director, 95-year-old John Newbigging, recalled: “The bandmasters told me I was wasting

my time teaching girls. But I enjoyed showing them the ropes because the girls often took it in better than some of the lads. And by 1966 we were regularly beating the fellows in competitions. It was a magical time.”

The band was originally formed by a mid-wife, Nurse Margaret Stokes, leader of the local Girls Guildry – a group similar to today’s Girls Guides. The story goes that during a church walk, she heard the local Boys Brigade playing and decided her girls could do better.

As part of their Golden Anniversary celebrations, the band has featured on BBC Radio 4’s *Woman’s Hour*, toured Ireland and played for the Queen when she visited Wigan this year.

A calendar will be launched at the Christmas Concert on Friday 4th December at Birchley St Marys in Billinge and the band’s 3rd CD will be available at the beginning of next year.

Anyone interested in joining can find out more at trinitygirlsbrassband.org

And young girls’ soccer is taking off

WHILST the stars of *Bend it like Beckham* bent the rules to reach their goal, the players in the Wigan & District Girls’ Football League reach theirs through tenacity, teamwork and sheer talent. In just its second season, the league offers weekly non-competitive football to 7-10 year olds in a safe and friendly

environment. The teams – which include the Aspull Belles, Leigh Genesis and Wigan Athletic – meet on Saturday mornings at Hawkey High School and Leigh Sports Village.

“We’re always looking for fresh talent, and we really want to hear from girls with bags of enthusiasm who are keen to develop their skills,”

Golborne Girls FC with their coaches Steve Nathaniel and Chloe Penny.

said Steve Nathaniel, Secretary of the League and Coach at Golborne Girls FC.

Working with Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust and The Lancashire Football Association, the league is made up of ten teams, split between under-9s and under-10s.

“This season is proving to be as successful as the first with clubs, teams, players, parents and supporters enjoying the game and the friendly environment,” said Rachel Hunt from Town Green FC. “Everyone looks at the game and not the final score.”

To see if the girls could hold their own against the boys, an inter-league “friendly” recently took place. “Two Golborne teams got together and although the boys won, a return match is planned when it’s hoped the girls will make a strong come-back,” said Chloe Penny, from Golborne Girls FC.

Girls’ football is increasing in popularity. Since 1993 the number of players has gone from 10,400 to over 150,000 today. “Fara Williams the current England girls team player, works as a coach with the Lancashire FA,” said girls’ league chairman Keith Harries. “Who knows, perhaps one day we’ll be cheering one of our girls in the World Cup.”

For more information, go to: wiganfyfl.co.uk, ring 01942 712855 or email: stephen.nathaniel@btinternet.com

