



ON Tuesday, October 4, 1983, at 8 pm, thousands of present and former members of the Boys' Brigade throughout the world will be attending special services at their own churches, to give thanks to God for the formation of the first BB company in Glasgow exactly one hundred years ago.

Founded by a Sunday school teacher, William Alexander Smith, who believed that he had been appointed a teacher in order that he might instruct the boys of North Woodside Mission in the Christian religion, it was his answer to the lack of discipline, which he noted among his boys.

Smith was an enthusiastic officer in the 1st Lanarkshire Volunteers, and on Saturday afternoons he had no difficulty in controlling one hundred men. But on a Sunday, he was failing in his teaching, because of his inability to keep order among a group of active teenagers.

He was very concerned about the situation, and the more he thought and prayed about it, the surer he was that something must be done about it. He shared his concern with two brothers, John and James Hill, who were also teachers at North Woodside, and eventually, he was inspired to suggest that the boys should be put into uniform, and called a brigade.

To quote Smith's own devise something that would

appeal to a boy on the heroic side of his nature, something that would let him see that in the service of God there is as much scope for all that is brave and manly as in the service of King and country.'

The Hills agreed with him, and Smith next approached the Rev George Reith (the father of the first Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation), who was the minister of the Free College church, which ran the North Woodside Mission. Smith obtained permission to invite his Sunday school boys to meet himself and the Hill brothers at 8 pm on October 4, 1883.

Twenty-eight boys accepted the invitation, and with Smith and John and James Hill as officers, the 1st Glasgow company of the Boys' Brigade was formed that evening.

Motto

The badge of the new company was to be an anchor, and its motto, 'Sure and Stedfast.' Both the symbol of the anchor, and the spelling of 'stedfast' were taken from Hebrews 6 v 19 in the Authorised Version of the New Testament: 'We have an anchor for the soul, both sure and stedfast.' This was a favourite text with William Smith, for he had proved it to be true in his own experience.

He was certain that God never called a man to a new task without supplying him with the necessities for the task, and he was sure that

the newly formed Boys

Ronald G Ashman

Brigade. He was, therefore, contented to be led on step by step.

Smith defined the object of the Brigade quite clearly — 'the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of reverence, discipline and self-respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness.'

Ten years later, the word 'Obedience' was added to the object. Numbers started to grow immediately, and by the third week, fifty-nine boys had been enrolled.

There was no uniform at first, but in the second session, the boys of the 1st Glasgow company were invited to buy a uniform, which consisted of a forage cap ('the famous pill-box'), a brown-leather waist belt (with the BB badge), and a white haversack to be worn over the right shoulder. These were to be worn over ordinary clothes, and cost eighteen pence.

At first, the weekly meetings consisted of drill and physical exercises, but very soon, other activities such as ambulance, swimming and cricket were added, and by December, 1884, Smith's Sunday school class had become the BB Bible class meeting on Sunday mornings.

In 1886, he invited his boys to go camping, and it is most interesting to notice that parents were appalled at such a prospect for their

but fortunately Smith and his helpers, by constant visiting of the homes of their boys, gained the confidence of parents, and were able to answer their objections about camping when they arose. Some of these objections are worth noting. One parent complained to Smith that her boys would die of cold if they went camping; another that hers would die of sunstroke; yet another that the boys would be bitten by cows and sheep!

The success of the 1st Glasgow company at North Woodside led to the spread of the movement throughout Britain, and to many other countries as well, and today Boys' Brigade companies are to be found in sixty countries of the World.

The movement also inspired the formation of other uniformed organisations such as the Church Lads' Brigade, the Boy Scouts, the Girls' Guildry and Girls' Life Brigade (now united as the Girls' Brigade), and the Girl Guides and it is interesting to notice that Lord Baden Powell (the founder of the Scouts and Guides) did not hesitate to acknowledge his indebtedness to the founder of the Boys' Brigade: 'William Smith was the first to recog-

nise and seize the eager spirit of the boy and to handle him in the right way for leading the lad ... to a sense of better things,' and again, 'It was my privilege to inspect the Boys' Brigade at Glasgow on their twenty-first birthday ... On that occasion Sir William Smith suggested to me the idea of re-writing my little book for training soldiers for service called, "Aids to Scouting" so as to apply to boys training for good citizenship. So I wrote "Scouting for Boys," intending it mainly for use in the Brigade. But so many boys outside the organisation took up the idea, that it became necessary to organise them as the Boy Scouts. Thus we in the Scouts owe much to the Boys' Brigade. Both movements work to the same end.'

Overseas' Division of our Church, and not only make contributions, but through missionary education in their companies learn about the members of the church family overseas. Some of our boys are so moved by the opportunities for service overseas that they offer for missionary service and other forms of Christian service abroad.

But BB does something else for our boys in Methodism. It helps them to get to know boys of other denominations, and by so doing, is helping to break down the barriers between the Churches.

Long before the modern ecumenical movement was born, BB officers and boys were getting to know their opposite numbers in other communions. In BB, through Brigade, District and Battalion Councils, we come to realise how much the churches have in common. Through praying together, attending one another's services, and camping together, as well as by our friendships, we feel that we are already being prepared for the coming great Church. We know what must happen if the mission of the Church is to be fulfilled, and many of our boys have got the vision, and are impatient at the slow progress being made towards reunion.

Because of all these facts, it is no wonder that the centenary of the Boys' Brigade has been celebrated in all denominations with much fervour this year. Those of us who have taken part in some of the celebrations will not forget the

quickly forget the Royal Review at Holyrood Park, Edinburgh, on July 2, when our patron, the Queen, reviewed more than 3,000 officers and boys from all parts of the United Kingdom and Eire. Her address was greatly appreciated by us:

Patron

I can only speak from my own experience of belonging to the BB throughout my forty-five years' ministry. In the Methodist Church today the BB company is the Church at work among boys.

Through Bible class and weekday activities, friendship and caring of officers, it seeks to extend the Church's mission among its members.

The service was conducted by the superintendent minister of Central Hall, the Rev Dr R John Tudor and the address was given by the evangelist Luis Palau, at present leading the 'Mission to London.'

Before the service, the London District Brigade had assembled in The Mall before marching to Horse Guards Parade where they were reviewed by Major General D J Wilson-Haffenden, a former president of the London District and National Brigade secretary.

The president of the London District and the chairman of 'Mission to London,' Mr David Pickford, said the parade was an important part of the nationwide BB centenary celebrations.

Every year, hundreds of boys, who are physically fit, mentally alert, and spiritually alive after their training in BB, join the Church. Indeed, I have always judged the success or otherwise of a BB company, not so much by the prizes it has won for athletics or drill, but by the number of boys it has won for Christ and His Church. For this is what BB is all about. The object as defined by the founder is still the object today.

Again, BB companies in Methodism, help their members to grow into the membership of the worldwide Church. Every year, our companies contribute thousands of pounds to the

'As your patron, I am delighted to be with you today to review the Boys' Brigade in this your centenary year. I congratulate you on this remarkable achievement which has been made possible only by the dedication of generations of men and women whose faithful service and quiet example has led boys towards the Christian life ... You have an excellent broad-based programme carried out with imagination and flexibility. The laughter and excitement which come from the various activities are an expression of fun and enjoyment that are so much a part of the programme. I

Congratulations to The Boys' Brigade for the part it has played in advancing Christ's Kingdom in the last 100 years

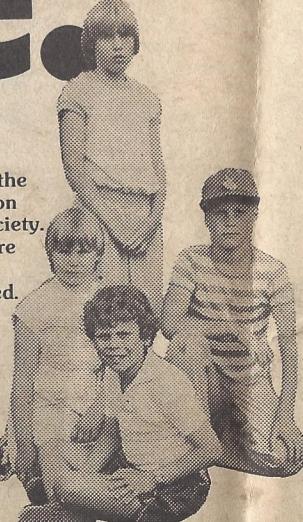
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Providing a complete printing service to The Brigade through the last 25 years has always been a privilege, often a challenge and sometimes fun ...

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What the BB means to me

hope that the Brigade's work and witness will continue to grow and especially to extend in the new housing areas, the old inner cities and the small rural communities.'

Salute

Again, the Centenary Brigade Council, held in Glasgow, August 26-29, was a most successful affair, and those present will remember, for a very long time to come, the large outdoor events held at the Rangers' football ground at Ibrox Park — the Centenary Salute on the Saturday afternoon, when 2,000 boys took part, and the great thanksgiving service on the Sunday afternoon, which was addressed by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and was attended by well over 30,000 persons. The amazing welcome accorded to the Boys' Brigade in Glasgow and generous hospitality by Church and civic authorities alike, exceeded all expectations, and all present felt proud to belong to a movement which had received such recognition.

We now look forward to our services of thanksgiving, which will be held in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and Dublin in October, and the final thanksgiving service of centenary year at St Paul's Cathedral, London, on October 27, when the Queen Mother has promised to attend, and the Archbishop of Canterbury will be the preacher.

In this service the representatives will give thanks to God for the BB and its founder, and will be invited to dedicate themselves for the work of the Church through the BB in the second century of its existence.

The Rev Dr Ronald G Ashman is the Brigade Vice-President. He has been President of the Federation of Methodist BB companies since 1956, and was formerly the President of the Boys' Brigade in Wales.

I AM nearly eighteen years old, a member of the 85th Birmingham Boys' Brigade Company and also a member of Perry Barr Methodist church which I attend regularly. I live in a very multi-racial area of the city where people are usually quite friendly to each other.

I have been in the Boys' Brigade for over ten years and I must have nearly every badge I could get including the Queen's Badge which I received on May 1 last year.

The Boys' Brigade has also helped me to gain wider outside interests; for instance when I was eleven years old I entered my first Boys' Brigade cross country and did well, and since then I have represented the Birmingham Battalion seven times for cross country or athletics and then joined one of the top athletic clubs, Birchfield Harriers, and have just completed my first ever marathon.

Involved

Because I am so involved in the Boys' Brigade, naturally enough I am involved in the church and

Abdul Woolass

its activities. I participate in the family services and help at nearly all of the special occasions such as decorating the church for harvest, helping in the running of jumble sales and bazaars, all of which I enjoy.

As probably most people know by now, it is the Boys' Brigade centenary year and I have taken part in many of the national and international events which have occurred so far.

One of the big events of the year was the successful attempt at the world's largest band in London on June 18.

My next major event was the Queen's Royal Review of 3,500 boys; I found this a very moving experience as it was how I expected BB boys to be: on our best behaviour and dressed immaculately to greet our patron the Queen. Of course the major event

of the year has to be the international camp at Scione Palace, an event which I will never forget. It was ten days of living under canvas with many boys, from thirty-five different countries. It was a joy to meet all these new people and spend the time telling each other about ourselves and our Boys' Brigade companies. In our tent there was one boy from the Bahamas, one white South African, three Scots, a Welsh boy and me.

Best part

The best part of the camp was the international concerts which were held most evenings. I found myself in the choir which had people from each country represented in it.

The Boys' Brigade to me is an opportunity to meet others in a world-wide Christian fellowship and to participate in things I just wouldn't have done otherwise.

It has helped me to mature that much better over the past few years, particularly into what I hope will prove to be a 'true Christian man.'

It's the sound of BB brass again

THE sound of a Boys' Brigade brass band is about to be heard again in the West Midlands village of Wordsley as the newly-formed Wordsley Boys' Brigade company launches its brass band and tunes up for a £1,000 fund-raising campaign.

A year after being launched the Wordsley Boys' Brigade company has company, junior and Anchor Boys' sections. Girls will just not be left out and a Girls' Brigade company is now being formed. Indeed, girls are already among the musicians training to become part of the thirty-strong band.

These musicians practise besides taking part in all the other company activities. The silver band has adopted the company, loaned instruments to players and is joining in the music-making for some events.

In the national Boys' Brigade centenary year the sound of brass is going to have to mean more than marching music to these Wordsley boys and girls, for they had been challenged to raise at least £1,000 to buy secondhand band instruments.

The captain is Mr J K Twells, warden of Wordsley Community Centre, Wordsley Green, near Stourbridge, who said: 'We have so far raised enough money to provide three side drums and the company colours. We are looking for help with instruments and feel sure there must be companies which have surplus equipment.'

'We are fortunate the silver band has adopted us, loaned us instruments and helped with teaching, because we do not intend to be a bugle band. We want to be a band playing marching music on the road as well as hymns and religious music for Bible class, services and festivals.'

Co-operation

Mr Twells sees Wordsley Methodist church working in very close co-operation with Holy Trinity parish church and the community association. The Boys' Brigade company follows the same pattern, devotional meetings being held in the Methodist church, activity evenings taking place at the community centre and the new chaplain being an Anglican curate.

With fifty boys and twenty staff the company is set to keep growing and the biggest musical occasion to date will take place on October 4, celebrations the young musicians will share with the silver band.

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THE BOYS' BRIGADE CENTENARY

1883

1983



THE Boys' Brigade in Wales has produced a souvenir philatelic cover as part of the celebrations during the Boys' Brigade centenary year. The cover, which will bear a Boys' Brigade postage stamp cancelled on October 4 (centenary day) with a special handstamp, carries a design in three colours depicting Boys' Brigade boys standing in front of a Methodist church.

The envelope and handstamp design are both the work of Mr Allen D Hamblly, a captain in the 22nd Cardiff Company, which is linked to Rumney Methodist church, Cardiff.

Mr Hamblly chose to feature the former Roath Road (Wesleyan) Methodist church, Cardiff, in the envelope design. He said that the Roath Road church has been described as one of the most important churches in the Methodist Connexion in the Provinces.

Many prominent laymen were associated with the church and when D L Moody was in Wales his friendship with some of the church members impelled him to preach at Roath Road. The Rev G Campbell Morgan, who later carried on Moody's work, was a former Roath Road Sunday school teacher.

It was in Roath Road church that the Wesleyan Methodist Conference held its annual meetings in 1893. Originally a part of the Cardiff Wesley circuit, it formed the principal church of the Cardiff (Roath) circuit from 1897 until it was burnt down as a result of a wartime incendiary bomb attack early in 1941.

The 14th Cardiff Company of the Boys' Brigade was originally founded as part of Roath Road church in March 1904 and played a very important part in the life of that church until 1941 when it joined with the 22nd Cardiff Company attached to the nearby Broadway church.

With the sale of the Broadway premises to the BBC for use as a television studio the members of Roath Road and Broadway joined those at Newport Road church under the new title of Trinity Methodist church where the 14th Cardiff Boys' Brigade Company continues to meet today.

Further information and serviced covers (price £1 plus 20 pence if sent under separate cover) are available from Mr A Hamblly, 645 Newport Road, Rumney, Cardiff, CF3 8DB.

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