

**'TODAY'S BOYS, TOMORROW'S MEN'
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE
OF BRITAIN, WITH FURTHER REFERENCE TO
THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN SOUTH AFRICA
(circa 1880s - 1980s)**

Dan F Adonis

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE OF BRITAIN, WITH FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN SOUTH AFRICA (circa 1880s-1980s)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the origins of the Boys' Brigade Christian Youth Movement and its historical development in British society, with further consideration of the work of the Boys' Brigade in South Africa, from the 1880s until the 1980s. This movement, which originated in an environment of Liberal Nonconformity, 'muscular' Christianity, and adolescent-centred educational and social outreach, was linked initially to the needs of the Sunday School movement in urban Scotland. From its evangelical and Volunteer base, the Brigade expanded into an international interdenominational youth organisation, establishing specific roots in South Africa. The present study pays attention to the composition, philosophy, and objectives of the B.B. movement, and considers its military-inspired disciplinary and recreational programme in terms of social need, Christian mission, and social control. It also considers the evolution of the B.B. identity through changing historical contexts. The historical link between the B.B. and other youth movements is also noted, and particular attention is paid to the contentious issue of the Brigade's relationship with militarism. While the history of the B.B. over this period is ultimately one of declining influence, its enduring presence illuminates the continuity of conservative forms of church-based youth organisation.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
Preface.....	i
Introduction: Origin and Early History of the B.B.....	1
1. The Founder - William Smith and the origins of the B.B.	18
2. Derivative Movements	60
3. The Boys' Brigade in South Africa: Introduction	78
4. The First Boys' Brigade Companies 1889 - 1902	84
5. Programme and Activities.....	113
6. Growth and Development: 1902 - 1980s	136
Conclusion	155
Appendix 1 B.B. Statistics Britain 1884 - 1992.....	161
Appendix 2 B.B. Statistics South Africa 1889 - 1994.....	162
Appendix 3 Application for Enrolment of Company 1923.....	163
Appendix 4 Form of Declaration by Proposed Officer 1921.....	164
Appendix 5 Cape Battalion : Statistical Return 1908.....	165
Appendix 6 Early B.B. Cos. 1889 - 1923	166
Bibliography	169

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
1. William Smith; 1st Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers; Mission Hall	20
2. North Woodside Mission Hall, 1992	21
3. W.A. Smith	22
4. B.B. Boy in Uniform	25
5. 100 Years of Uniform	26
6. 1st Glasgow Company 1885	28
7. Author with Dummy Rifle, 1992	29
8. B.B. officers 1885/6; Early Inspection	30
9. Boys' Brigade Funeral Programmes 1914	37
10. Jubilee Review, Glasgow, 1933	45
11. Jubilee Review Programme, 1933	46
12. Celebration Caskets 1933; 1983	47
13. Jubilee Messages 1933	48
14. Stedfast Magazine, 90 years - 1973	55
15. 1933 Message read at 1983 Celebrations	57
16. Centenary Stamps	58
17. W. Gee of C.L.B. and recruitment form illustration	63
18. The Boys' Life Brigade: Camp & Badges	65
19. Dr J.B. Paton, Boys' Life Brigade; B.B. & B.L.B.	66
20. Scouts & B.B.; Smith & Baden-Powell	71
21. Punch Cartoon 'Scouts'; B.B./Scouting Badge	73
22. Woodcraft Folk camp	75
23. B.B. Patron in Natal; 1st Maritzburg and 1st Dundee Cos.	87
24. Transvaal Battalion	89
25. Map - Cape Colony c. 1909	92
26. 'Black' Recruit Cape Town; Rev. J.C. Harris	99
27. 'The Black Watch' Company, Cape Town	100
28. Map - Cape Peninsula c. 1901	103
29. Presentation B.B. Colours 1904	115

30.	1st Cape Town Co.; 1st Strand Co.....	119
31.	Ambulance Detachment 1897	121
32.	Indian Club Exercises	124
33.	Recipients: Cross for Heroism: 1951, 1953.....	127
34.	Badges of The Boys' Brigade	128
35.	B.B. Boys at Camps: 1895, 1905.....	129
36.	B.B. Camp 1906	130
37.	B.B.s and C.L.B.s c. 1920s.....	133
38.	B.B. Boys and Camp: 1942, 1954.....	134
39.	Rev. Mason and 3rd Cape Town Co. 1914	138
40.	1st Somerset West Company c. 1935.....	139
41.	Wynberg Company: 1933, 1936.....	141
42.	The B.B. in Johannesburg - Capt. Mitchell	142
43.	Visit by Overseas Secretary Mc Vicker 1939.....	144
44.	Mc Vicker's visit and Durban Co. 1939	145
45.	1st Durban; Parade at Port Elizabeth 1939	146
46.	P.T. at Pietermaritzburg & Pietermaritzburg Co. 1939	147
47.	The B.B. in Transvaal 1941 - 42	148
48.	Overseas Secretary and Wynberg Co. 1958	150
49.	1st South African Consultation 1961.....	151
50.	3rd Ciskei Company 1964.....	152
51.	World Conference Secretary in Transvaal 1986.....	154

PREFACE

The Boys' Brigade as a youth movement has received far less publicity than the Boy Scouts movement, although the latter was formed about twenty five years after the former, and despite the fact that their respective founders were associates. When talking to people about the Boys' Brigade, one is often asked whether it resembles the Scouts movement. Yet, because the Scouts were founded after The Boys' Brigade, one might actually answer: **"The Scouts are more like the BB."**¹

The B.B., as the World's first viable voluntary uniformed youth organization has been given relatively little attention in general historical and sociological writing about youth and youth movements.² It is a further general neglect of the history of the B.B. in South Africa which this thesis sets out to remedy, by attempting to present the development of the B.B. in Britain with special comparative emphasis on the growth of its South African connection over roughly a century.

In what follows, it is my intention to help clarify the historical identity of The Boys' Brigade for those who know nothing of its origin and development. When The Boys' Brigade is mentioned in literature it is often narrowly portrayed. It is often described as a **"scout-like militaristic organization"**, **'an organization for working class youths, a highly disciplinarian movement, with much emphasis on drill and little concern for the individual character.'**³ This historical account sets out to try to qualify some of these blunt assumptions about the militarism attributed to the Boys' Brigade. For the B.B. was formed through many characteristics; military drill was just one.

The primary reason for compiling this scholarly historical account of the Boys' Brigade, is to record the significance of a body which continues to exist in Britain, and in many overseas countries, including South Africa. It hopes to create an even greater awareness amongst its present-day local members of their history in their own region - this may even bring to light more historical evidence which could be useful for any further in-depth local studies of the movement. It also attempts to examine and narrate

¹ J. Springhall, B. Fraser, M. Hoare, *Sure and Steadfast*, A History of The Boys' Brigade 1883 - 1983 (Collins, London, 1983), p. 13; John Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, 16, (2) 1971, pp. 125-158.

² Springhall, Fraser, Hoare: *Sure and Steadfast*, p. 13.

³ Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism.' p. 129; Paul Wilkinson, English youth movements, 1908-30', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4,(2), 1969,p.1.

the history of the B.B. as a voluntary Church youth movement, located within a broader social and historical context.

This study also seeks to examine the B.B. in the light of the evolving relationship between religion and society. The fact that a movement dedicated to a 'true Christian manliness' for boys arose in the late 19th century and has remained in existence for more than a hundred years, provides a study both in the historical continuity of a British-based voluntary movement and in the tenacious social influence of organised religion. To study the B.B. is also to study the disciplinary mode, for, to quote one authority, **"An analysis of those historical forces which act as a mechanism for social stability rather than for change, for the traditional values of discipline and obedience rather than for those of disorder and rejection of authority, can be a useful means to comprehend not only... political, moral and social conservatism... but also the respect of (society's members) for the institutional forms of authority by which they are governed".**⁴

In South Africa, the B.B. story is unambiguously one of conservatism and control. From the outset, a perception of the role of the B.B. in regulating masculine social behaviour was seen as relevant, especially in the urbanising late-Victorian Cape. Typically, The Cape Times, of December 1894, approved of the B.B. establishment in terms of learning authority, in which, **"whatever the 'Orders' are, stick to them. Show the colony that there is some stuff and metal in her sons, and that you can be men in discipline, while boys in enjoyment and fun".**⁵

It follows, then, that The Boys' Brigade, like other youth movements, has also played a part in illuminating public opinion and attitudes towards the popular role of the military ethos in society. Here, the Brigade's historical stance has been ambiguous, with differences between British and empire experience. For example, the Boys' Brigade in Britain succeeded in resisting government pressure to become Cadets and to act as feeders for the Army Territorials before the First World War. On the other hand, in colonial areas like South Africa (Transvaal), the B.B. succumbed to state pressure in 1903 to link its forms with those of the army. As reflected by a B.B. Officer in 1911, colonial society was not famous for pacifism, **"the object to be reached by the former (Cadets) is military efficiency, while**

⁴ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare; Sure and Stedfast, p. 14.

⁵ Cape Times, 29 December 1894, p.7

that of the latter is the building up of Christian character. The two aims must of necessity clash in the age in which we are living".⁶

SOURCES

Secondary scholarly literature on the BB is limited to two fairly inaccessible works: a 1983 commemorative institutional history (Sure and Stedfast, A History of The Boys' Brigade 1883-1983) and a Strathclyde University doctoral thesis on its early years (B.M. Fraser, The Origins and History of The Boys' Brigade from 1883-1914). For further work, whereas the historian of The Boys' Brigade in Britain has helpful primary and secondary sources at B.B. Headquarters and in libraries, the same cannot be said of South African material. However, useful world B.B. sources are available in Britain. These were consulted by the author on a research trip in September-October 1992.

The reason for the lack of fuller local primary sources such as early minute books, is that in South Africa the Boys' Brigade never had any full-time staff or central headquarters. Nevertheless, the overseas sources consulted provided a valuable if patchy picture of local developments.

Although the author is a B.B. member, and an 'insider', a special effort has been made to try to be as detached as possible, and to try to write a balanced and objective scholarly account.

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⁶ BB Gazette, June 1911, p.156.

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INTRODUCTION

THE ORIGINS AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE

On Thursday, 4 October 1883, the first company of The Boys' Brigade was formed in Glasgow. The boys who turned up were the first to respond to a call by a Sunday School teacher, William Alexander Smith, to join an organised youth company. This was sought as a means of instilling 'discipline' into adolescent boys and to try to develop their characters in an orderly, Christian manner. The movement originated in a late-Victorian environment of 'muscular Christianity' and educational and social outreach. It functioned specifically to absorb 'unruly' working class Sunday School boys. Its basis was religion and discipline; religion in the form of its church and Sunday School link, and discipline through military drill. Thus was laid the basis for the emergence of the first voluntary uniformed youth organization. But, before one considers the first company and its founder, it is necessary to look at the particular historical background against which the movement was formed.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - Britain

One general aim in writing this thesis has been to place the origins, development and achievement of The Boys' Brigade in Britain and South Africa, within the broad historical framework of the 19th and 20th century.

In seeking to understand why the B.B. should have appeared precisely when and where it did, we need to locate it within the social, economic and religious environment of late nineteenth century Britain and South Africa.

If the B.B. is to be regarded as a product of particular social forces, it is necessary to examine some of the general trends in late Victorian society which contributed towards its foundation. Of particular significance were, for example, the more favourable British public image of the military, and also the forceful impact of evangelical Christianity on late Victorian attitudes towards controlling the behaviour of male youths. One also needs to consider the relevant historical changes that helped to shape both the

interests and intentions behind the creation of the B.B., and also the reasons for middle-class perceptions that such an organization for 'loose' boys was needed.

Here, the shifts in the relationship between evangelising religion and society, especially in Scotland, and the appearance and new social definition of the 'problem' of adolescence, both played their part in creating the historical climate which provided for the birth of The Boys' Brigade in Glasgow in the 1880s. Other factors of importance include the ideal of Christian manliness and the association between religion and the military in Britain in this period.¹

The Boys' Brigade, an interdenominational youth movement for boys linked to a Christian body, was started in the early 1880s. This was obviously an era of important historical transition. For instance, there was the 'Scramble for Africa', by European imperialist states, rushing for colonial territories. Also at this time, British society was undergoing a period of social and economic change. Society was now overwhelmingly more urban than rural. Some of the large cities in which the B.B. was to establish itself, like Glasgow, London and Manchester, still had constantly expanding populations. During the late nineteenth century, the occupational structure of industrialised society was also expanding. There was a particularly rapid increase in the number of white-collar workers in city offices and shops. It was this new breed of clerks, shop assistants, teachers and public-service employees who came to form a major segment of the emerging new 'lower middle class':

"The lower middle class in Britain can be divided into two main groups. On the one hand was the classic petty bourgeoisie of shopkeepers and small businessmen, on the other the new white collar salaried occupations, most notably clerks but also managers, commercial travellers, schoolteachers and shop assistants".²

This status-conscious lower middle-class had direct contact with the established middle class by working beside them in offices, by handling their money in banks, by representing them as commercial travellers, or by serving them in 'quality' shops. Such social contact fostered aspirations to sustain the values and

¹ J. Springhall, Youth, Empire and Society, 1883-1940 (Croom Helm, London, 1977) pp.24-25; Springhall, Fraser and Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, p.19.

² G Crossick, The Lower Middle-Class in Britain: 1870-1914 (Croom Helm, London, 1977), p.12.

life style of the established late Victorian middle class.³ Means were sought to distinguish themselves from a skilled working class whose incomes were often close or equal to their own, through prominent church membership and symbols of status. It was from this better housed white-collar grouping that many of the B.B.'s early officers and recruits came, "emerging from homes made up of two or three rooms with inside toilets and in some cases bathrooms, forming part of a tenement block of flats in traditional style".⁴ Respectability and other components of status were all important to these classes. Status also had to be visible - so it is possible that for some, B.B. membership may have rendered one method of publicly affirming social respectability.

Squalid conditions in overcrowded cities such as Glasgow, sensitised some of the better off members of the lower middle class to Christian social conscience for the poor, mostly the unskilled working class who still constituted over forty percent of the working population. Many of these white-collar workers joined non-conformist voluntary organizations such as the Temperance Societies, Bands of Hope, and Salvation Army which had as one of their objectives the material improvement of the lives of the poor. Clean living was linked to godliness in which "they hoped to eliminate those hostile elements to be found in an urban environment, which prevented the urban poor from leading Christian lives".⁵

Thus, in the late Victorian period there were growing attempts by socio-religious institutions to provide what they considered to be wholesome welfare influences on the lives of the poor. Low levels of housing and medical facilities in such industrial cities as Glasgow led to "grave cause for concern in the bad parts of the city,...and the congested parts of Townhead,...These places, contained within fairly closely defined areas, were dense and festering, having the power of debilitation and death".⁶

In Glasgow, a movement like The Boys' Brigade, which promised to promote physical and moral fitness to the impoverished young, was bound to draw attention.⁷

³ Crossick, The Lower Middle-Class . . . pp.61-62.

⁴ B.M. Fraser, 'The Origins and History of The Boys' Brigade from 1883 to 1914', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1981,p.123.

⁵ H.E Meller, Leisure and the Changing City 1870-1914 (Routledge & Paul, London, 1976), p.122.

⁶ S.G. Checkland, The Upas Tree: Glasgow,1875-1975 (University of Glasgow, 1981),p.20.

⁷ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, pp.19-20.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century also showed signs of economic depression. The mid-Victorian capitalist self-confidence began to waver, due to prices and profits falling to unexpectedly low levels. Yet, the ordinary skilled artisan was not too adversely affected in comparative terms, and skilled incomes remained fairly stable. On the other hand, middle-class contemporaries appear to have been far more influenced by short term crises of confidence. It would thus seem as if one of the features of the depression was one of a depression in the morale of sections of the middle classes.⁸

Business and governing classes were now also beginning to feel nervous that their previously secure positions in Victorian society might be threatened by a newly assertive and enfranchised urban mass. With the last decades of the nineteenth century a period of increasing economic and social uncertainty, the class threats of 'New Unionism' by newly unionised urban masses at home and from economic competition abroad, become politically defining elements of this period. The expanding influence of socialism, the constantly growing strength of organized labour, and the gradual evolution of the Labour Party, did little to allay middle-class fears of an intensification of class conflict.⁹

Against this social background, empire and war ideologies, Darwinian notions of the clash of opposites and belief in eugenic improvement, began to influence the area of Christian mission. Thus the B.B. founder, William Smith, vigorously defended the training and discipline brought by war, and hinted at the necessity of extreme conflict for human progress reflecting that he was "not at all sure that there are not elements of just as much real evil...and bitterness of spirit in the industrial wars between class and class which many signs point to as the conflicts of the future but which, like other wars, may have their part to play in the progress of the race".¹⁰ For Smith, class conflicts and military conflicts were morally analogous.

Within this context, Scottish experience was crucial in the formation of the B.B. This comprised of several factors. For instance, the skilled working men of Glasgow remained an important educated 'labour aristocrat', element. Through individual mastery of their trade and their membership of voluntary organizations such as friendly societies, co-operatives and unions, they strove to establish a

⁸ G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976), p.221.

⁹ Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p.14. F. Bedarida, *A Social History of England, 1851-1975* (Methuen, London, 1979), pp.100-103.

¹⁰ Cited in Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Stedfast*, p.20.

sense of labour independence and a culture of 'improvement'. In this, community religion formed part of the custom of male independence, "the mark or note of being fully human was that he should provide for his own family, have his own religion and politics and call no man master".¹¹

The 1870s-1880s economic uncertainty and political anxieties amongst Glasgow's business community was further aggravated by social tensions linked to the geographical location of overcrowded working-class tenements which were often adjacent to middle-class residential housing. On the margins of this, church-going middle-class men of militant righteousness would turn to the B.B. brand of Christian mission. These tendencies within Glasgow would also be decisively affected by the growth of evangelical Christianity, as we will see shortly.

Whereas the broadly determining social and economic environment of the late Victorian age was undoubtedly a formative influence on the establishment of a uniformed youth movement, the technical innovations of the period also contributed to its extension. Improved transport and communications helped to spread the B.B. idea outside of Scotland and the initial areas where it was founded. The expanded telegraph network which shortened distances, facilitated B.B. communications. An extensive railway network meant that the B.B. could also become more mobile, allowing closer contact between outlying B.B. units and the later established Headquarters. Cheap train tickets also meant that youth groups, Sunday Schools and other church groups could assemble poorer children for recreational outings.¹²

The improvement in the postal service benefited office correspondence. And the communication of the B.B. idea was also advanced by the growth of a more varied press - through this medium, appeals were made to an educated lower-class audience identified as a prime source for active B.B. leadership recruitment.¹³ Fiction in G.A. Henty's popular books about war heroes, such as With Kitchener in the Sudan (1903), also highlighted the splendour of military representation and imperial adventure. This in itself further created a frame of mind receptive to uniformed organizations.¹⁴

¹¹ R.J. Morris, Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth Century Towns (University Press, Leicester, 1986), pp. 188-189.

¹² Glasgow Herald, 8 August 1890.

¹³ A.J. Lee, The Origins of the Popular Press (Croom Helm, London, 1976), p.155.

¹⁴ Springhall, Youth, Empire and Society, p.17

As already suggested, virtually all voluntary movements directed at the adolescent in the late Victorian period have to be seen in relation to the contemporary religious environment. This especially applied to the B.B., which required individual affiliation to a church or other religious body as a condition of company enrollment. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, established churchgoing was mainly restricted to the upper and middle-classes and some small respectable sections of the urban labouring population. Nonconformist church attendance in particular formed part of the respectability status of a liberal middle-class and artisan constituency.¹⁵ Many churches cultivated an air of concern for the large, irreligious, and generally alienated urban working classes. Yet, equally, from the 1880s, church-going and church-membership began declining amongst middle-class people. This was due partly to the feeling that it was becoming less necessary as part of 'respectability'. Equally, alternative centres of idealism, forms of self-education, and commercial leisure consumption were beginning to challenge the social provision made by churches. Thus, the B.B., which concentrated on recruiting young men into church membership, received close attention from those Protestant Churches whose numbers were now declining, as it sought to provide a more popular basis for institutional religious attachment.

Also relevant here is the impact of revived evangelical Christianity on the different movements set up by Nonconformists for the training and guidance of the young in the late Victorian period. The 'Revival' which took place was significant in respect of Wesleyan Methodism and challenges to the Church of England. At bottom, the evangelical movement emphasized conversion and dedication to service. This, in turn, promoted the idea of vigorous domestic missionary work among the working classes. Their many urban areas provided the perceived spiritual and physical environment within which B.B. companies would become established. Special evangelical campaigns, such as those of the Americans, Moody and Sankey, who visited Britain in 1867, 1873-75, 1881-83, and 1891-92, urged a new personal faith as a means of addressing urban social problems of immorality, drink and destitution. Poverty was seen as a moral question of human character. Even Liberalism in the early 1880s was still dominated by ideas of the 'deserving' poor or the ideal of manly independence. Many Christian converts often turned to philanthropy in working-class areas of cities to channel their newly-found religious enthusiasm. After his 1874 campaign, Moody's evangelical influence on the founder of The Boys' Brigade, William Smith, is apparent¹⁶ and it can be assumed that youth work in Glasgow was favoured by the influence of a

¹⁵ K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Class in Victorian England* (Longman, London, 1963).

¹⁶ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Stedfast*, p.22.

revivalism which especially encouraged social work among the young. Evangelism sought fervent groups to carry its message by providing a strong Christian identity. Thus, "when Moody and Sankey launched urban mass evangelism in the 1870s, they did not find an audience at the working-class level. They drew their hearers from more direct descendants from the Evangelical Revival, the drapers' assistants of the world of the Y.M.C.A., the middle-class students...and from other social groups uncertain about their identity, caught between rich and poor, longing for upward social mobility, if they could but find the way to rise."¹⁷

It needs to be borne in mind that by the 1880s, there already existed a historical context of various religious organizations aimed at children or the youth. Some of them were of direct relevance to B.B. formation. The earliest of these and the most influential, was the Sunday School movement. This had been started by Robert Raikes in Gloucester in 1780 - its main intention to teach the poor to read the Bible and to write. The Sunday Schools reached about three children out of four by the 1880s, in contrast to the limited reach of the churches. Almost all of their adherents were drawn from the working classes. Recorded membership in 1881 was 5,762,038.¹⁸ In this later Victorian period, the emphasis was on religious instruction and practical education - with the Sunday School in fact being largely the creation of its local working-class community, and under its control. As Thomas Laquer has suggested, "it was the product of the infinite inventiveness and ingenuity of men and women who, under the most adverse conditions, created a culture of discipline, self-respect and improvement within which to wage the battle for social justice and political equality."¹⁹ The Sunday School, however, for all its 'useful learning' and 'fair share' ethos, was losing members at the age of twelve or thirteen. This was the time most poor children left elementary school. Most boys at this age felt that they were too old for Sunday School, as one later went on to recall, "When we reached thirteen most of us felt we were too big for Sunday School, and there was a gap of a few years until we were able to join the YMCA at seventeen".²⁰

This was also the age at which most boys would soon have to become independent wage earners, contributing to working class family incomes. And the expansion of schooling in the last two decades of

¹⁷ J. Kent, *Holding the Fort: studies in Victorian revivalism*, (Epworth, London, 1978), p.67.

¹⁸ T.W. Laquer, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and the Working Class Culture, 1780-1850*. (Yale University, Yale, 1976), p.246.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.246.

²⁰ Springhall, *Youth Empire and Society*, p.24.

the nineteenth century further weakened the work of the Sunday School - it thus became more and more difficult for teachers to control children through total Christian influence, and to maintain religious identity. Those too, who remained, were perceived to be becoming unruly - defiant of adult authority. As William Smith recalled:

"In (Sunday) School they too often came to amuse themselves, and the whole effort of the teacher was spent in keeping order, in quelling riots, subduing irrelevant remarks, minimizing attacks upon the person, and protecting his Sunday hat from destruction. The boys would not listen for two consecutive minutes. What was to be done?"²¹ Smith, who personally faced Sunday School disorder, then developed The Boys' Brigade as a possible solution.

In 1844, the Young Men's Christian Association was established by George Williams, a former apprentice draper and Sunday School Teacher. This organization was established to influence young men in religion and also to spread the Christian word. It was an evangelical, non-denominational, missionary auxiliary to various churches. It was in effect, a union of Christian Young men engaged in business, desiring to use the occasion of commercial intercourse and fellowship for the conversion to God of their business companions. Its principles were spiritual, catholic and missionary. The YMCA, which first functioned in Glasgow and other Victorian cities, drew further attention to the perceived need for a church-based organization catering for the mid-adolescent years.²² These were the boys of thirteen and upwards who left Sunday School, and had to wait until they were old enough to join the YMCA at the age of seventeen. It was to bridge this gap, that William Smith founded The Boys' Brigade. Significantly, in 1872, William Smith had himself joined the YMCA. By 1874 he had started a Young Men's Society, modelled on the YMCA lines, at the College Free Church.

Another organization which had an influence on youth work thinking and especially the founder of the B.B., was the Band of Hope Union. The impact of its evangelical Christianity on Victorian religious life was highly significant. The Band of Hope Union was founded out of the temperance movement, which arose in the nineteenth century, as one of many social reforming causes such as anti-slavery and evangelical religion. Whereas evangelical religion aimed at changing the lives of all social classes, the

²¹ R.S. Peacock, Pioneer of Boyhood, The Story of Sir William A. Smith, Founder of The Boys' Brigade (Collins, London, 1958), pp.22-24.

²² C. Binfield, George Williams and the YMCA: A study in Victorian Social Attitudes (Heinemann, London, 1973).

temperance movement, was concerned with working class 'habits' in an attempt to address the symptoms of social distress caused by industrialization. Although there had been a great deal of drinking in eighteenth-century England, no temperance movement had arisen to fight it. In this period, all classes freely drank, often to excess.

It was in the more industrially mature nineteenth century that a major change occurred, and intemperance began to be perceived as a problem of social control and labour stability. Since its inception, some in the temperance movement had shown a particular interest in training children to shun excessive drinking. From the early 1830s, juvenile divisions of established temperance organizations could be found in some parts of the country. But it was only after long, hard and discouraging battles against entrenched drinking habits that juvenile temperance work gained greater prominence in the movement. Increasing numbers of temperance reformers came to realise that it would be far better to raise abstainers from childhood than to try to change drinking habits already firmly established.

The first Band of Hope was inaugurated in Leeds in 1847. This came about due to the efforts of Jabez Tunnickliff, a Baptist minister in Leeds. She was assisted by Anne Jane Carlile, who had been an active prison visitor before she took up temperance work. The name Band of Hope was used to denote the children's section of the Leeds Temperance Society. This name was soon to be copied by many other temperance and church organizations and given to their juvenile temperance groups, often under strong female leadership.²³

The title, 'Band of Hope' eventually came to be used as a generic term for all such youth groups, regardless of their church or secular sponsorship. The Church of England had its own Bands of Hope as did the Wesleyan Methodists, the Society of Friends and other secular societies. Band of Hope applied to temperance work among children of both sexes between the ages of six and twelve. It was nondenominational, but largely confined to the Protestant churches. The Band of Hope and the Sunday Schools worked closely together. They served the same class of children and also shared the services of many of the same workers. Both movements shared the belief in the reformation of the manners of the

²³ B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (Faber, London, 1971), pp.192-94.

working classes. Many children heard their first temperance lecture in Sunday School, with some participating in a teetotal pledge ritual.

Most of the bands met once a week for one hour in the evening. The ideal meeting would be, 'first a prayer and a hymn, followed by a temperance lessons or a talk by an adult, next an opportunity for the children to sing and recite and finally a closing hymn and prayer'. Gatherings were kept short in the hope of keeping children attentive. With the Band of Hope spreading quickly to various areas,²⁴ in some places links with B.B. companies were formed. For his part, William Smith adopted a temperance rather than a total abstinence position, and the Boys' Brigade set about to promote habits of temperance among boys. It went on to prescribe social conduct in its *Manual for Officers*.²⁵

The Salvation Army's junior departments to some extent imitated the Band of Hope meetings. Founded in 1878 by mission workers, William and Catherine Booth, the Salvation Army emerged in the wake of jingoist feelings inspired by the Russian-Turkish 'war-scare' in Britain. The Booths decided to make their mission aggressive. Drawing on popular war feeling, they organised their mission on military lines. Booth called himself a general and gave his assistants 'commissions' as officers, while the volunteer rank and file members were classified as 'soldiers'. In these years the Salvation Army was one of many similar groups. These were the many aggressive and revivalist Christian armies formed to fight the enemies of Christendom, as the marching hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers', echoed through the streets of Britain. Uniforms and bands evoked the spirit of tramping army regiments. The Salvation Army, in particular, broke new ground in moving away from the more 'respectable' elements in Victorian religion. It used regular street meetings, loud bands, processions and its military ranks to try to capture the imagination of the outcast populations of the urban slums.

The 1880s was equally a difficult era for many Salvationists: they were imprisoned for playing music in public and disturbing the peace, and fined for causing a public nuisance. Anti-Salvation Army rioting also occurred. Moreover, attempts to hold meetings in front of public houses caused trouble with publicans and customers. However, despite such opposition, the Salvationists quickly made their influence felt. By 1882 they had 521 stations with 742 paid officers and 15,000 volunteer 'soldiers'.

²⁴ L.L. Shiman, *Crusade against Drink in Victorian England*, (MacMillan, London, 1988), p. 130.

²⁵ *BB Manual*, 1936.

With the army's work hostile towards established brewing interests, there were attacks by a 'Skeleton Army' to break up Salvation Army and temperance meetings.²⁶ The ability of the 'Army' to lodge itself in the most deprived sections of the working-class community, and the effectiveness of its combination of social work and Christian mission was noted by the orthodox Churches of Victorian Britain, especially in London, by the late 1880s. And by the end of that decade, the popular hostility towards the Army had changed due to the social provisions of its outreach work. Given these antecedents, by the time the B.B. appeared, it is apparent that religion in uniform was becoming an acceptable feature of late Victorian society.

One other religious development requires comment. Although serious 'scriptural' Protestant religion never had the potential to reach the common population, the emergence of evangelical and Tractarian movements in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, generated some new spiritual life into church discourse. The Oxford or Tractarian movement of the 1830s and 1840s emphasized tradition and ceremonial and was passionately High Church. It also identified with liberal and Tory paternalist social causes in the industrial cities and tried to broaden the appeal of the Established Church.

Under the leadership of the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, an evangelical movement had also begun within the Established (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland. This culminated in 1843 in a split in the Church of Scotland over issues of patronage and the appointment of ministers. Out of this, the Free Church of Scotland was formed. In 1874, during Moody and Sankey's evangelical campaign, William Smith left the Church of Scotland and joined the Free Church in Glasgow. Here was to be found a body of respectable philanthropists and businessmen who strongly supported the various temperance and abstinence societies in their city. Many also patronized inter-denominational evangelical movements such as the YMCA and the Band of Hope, "local officials, society figures, and even the Queen were willing to link their names with the juvenile teetotal organisation. Particularly in the northern industrialised centres, association with the juvenile groups could prove an asset; it showed... one was concerned with the future of the community."²⁷

²⁶ Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, p.135; also Shiman, *Crusade against Drink*, p.132.

²⁷ Shiman, *Crusade against Drink*, p. 150

A further development in Victorian religious thinking, the concept of 'Christian manliness', was also to influence organization directed at the adolescent. The primary exponent of the concept of athletic manliness among boys through school reforms, was Dr Thomas Arnold, an early Victorian headmaster of Rugby and notable Christian thinker. One of his admirers, Thomas Hughes, (author of Tom Brown's Schooldays [1857]) a Volunteer officer, had actually helped to invent a public-school ideal which upheld the moral and physical value of 'masculine' team games as opposed to 'effeminate' and intellectual scholarship.²⁸

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the idea of character and manliness promoted by the public school placed an increasing emphasis on group athleticism and robust Christian spirit rather than on academic work and spiritual piety. This was coupled to a basic belief in the superiority of the British race.

Drawing on this, William Smith's aim was to create a sentiment in the B.B. which would make members proud of their own company. This can be seen as an attempt to transmit the upper middle-class value of 'esprit de corps' to lower class youths. Smith characteristically stressed Christian strength in 1888, "it also seemed to us that by associating Christianity with all that was most noble and manly in a boy's sight, we would be going a long way to disabuse his mind of the idea that there is anything effeminate or weak about Christianity; an idea that is far too widespread among Boys, as no one who has anything to do with them can have failed to see."²⁹

The ideas of 'muscular Christianity' were also spread by the boys' fiction of G.A. Henty, an Honorary Vice-President of The Boys' Brigade. His various boy-heroes were the personification of the English public-school belief in the virtues of manliness and character. Organizations like The Boys' Brigade, books and magazines as well as Sunday School prizes, became the avenue down which the qualities associated with Christian manliness were transmitted along the class hierarchy. Lessons about the virtues of the British race in history text-books also became vehicles for this downward percolation of ideas.³⁰

²⁸ J.A. Mangan, Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public Schools (University Press, Cambridge, 1982).

²⁹ W. Smith, The Story of The Boys' Brigade (BB leaflet, BBHQ), p.9

³⁰ O. Anderson, 'The growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain', English Historical Review, (86)1, 1971, pp.46-72.

Another historical development which assisted in the spread of the B.B., and provided a level of social respectability during the late Victorian period was the growing link between religion and the military in Britain. This was already becoming clear in the guise of the Salvation Army. The concept of "Christian Militarism" first emerged during the Crimean War and the later Indian Mutiny in the mid-Victorian period. This was largely propagated by religious literature which used the stories of evangelical generals saving Christian civilisation from the heathen, to create the image of the Christian soldier as hero. There was now an increasing stress on the interconnection between aspects of militarism and certain organisational features of British religious life.

It was arguably the Crimean War which led to a dramatic change in the attitude of British society in general and the religious public, towards the army. Troops were sometimes hailed as 'the people's army', and idealized notions of the liberties for which they were fighting, together with unparalleled public identification with their hardships, combined to give them an immense emotional appeal. Where church-going strata were concerned, it was primarily the novel development of missionary work among troops, which most appealed. Prominent was the idea that soldiers, too, had souls to be saved. Religious forces espoused the notion of investing the nation with a band of 'Christian soldiers'.³¹ Crimea also gave rise to an abundance of Protestant hagiographical literature - with faith in the power of the printed word an outstanding characteristic of many mid-Victorian thinkers. Out of this impulse arose such mythologies as the memorials of Captain Hedley Vicars. Clearly, the emotions and experiences of the Crimean War and its literary aftermath fostered the notion that a soldier could be a good Christian, and that there could be a religious link, as 'the Church in the army'.

Even more important, however, in spreading Christian sympathy with and admiration of the army, was the diffusion of the quite distinct view that Christians made the best soldiers. This was one of the notable consequences of the later 1857 Indian Mutiny. With the Mutiny viewed in part as a challenge to Christianity, any commander who acted against the rebels was likely to become a popular hero.³² One such individual was Sir Henry Havelock, the evangelical Baptist general who died during the rebellion. The classic imperial hero at the end of the Mutiny was perceived as a staunchly puritan Christian man of blood. Illustrating the notion that to convert the man was not necessarily to spoil the soldier, Havelock's

³¹ Anderson, 'The growth of Christian Militarism', pp.46-47.

³² N. Edwards, Red Year (Weidenfeld, London, 1972), p.188.

career was cited as proof of the compatibility of Christianity and devoted soldiering. It was in this context that popular patriotism incorporated the idea that 'psalm-singing is not inconsistent with heroism'.³³ Another heroic 19th century Victorian figure was General Charles Gordon,³⁴ the acclaimed martyr-hero of Khartoum. The emergence of this Christian soldier idiom of heroism, coupled to softening attitudes towards the army as a form of Christian militarism, and increasing service imitations in religious work in the form of military discipline and uniforms, eased the acceptability of the B.B. to 'self-respecting' sections of late Victorian society. Increasingly, Nonconformist views on issues such as military culture and the army grew less hostile. A further socialising factor, stressed by Michael Blanch, were the numerous adventure stories appearing in cheap popular magazines for a gradually more literate young readership. These Hentyesque productions, often set in the outposts of the British Empire, joined school texts in accustoming the young to the importance of professional military values of duty, loyalty, and the nobility of sacrifice.³⁵

With the established public presence of the Salvation Army, military terminology and structure became grafted on to various forms of church and chapel organisation. And, pre-eminently, the drilling, parades and route marches of the Boys' Brigade came to portray the traditions and forms of the Army and Volunteer militia transferred to an adolescent environment. Soon, soldier-hero figures like Lord Roberts would provide encouragement and lend their names as Honorary Vice-Presidents to the B.B.

Naturally, militaristic practices were being adopted in evangelistic and philanthropic work because of their popular attraction, as well as the fact that they seemed to offer a means of assertive discipline and control. Equally, the B.B. itself was not an organization which explicitly set out to popularize the idea of military service in general. Yet, looking at the massive growth of nationalism and militarism in British society during the B.B.'s early years,³⁶ it may well have had its own contributory effect.

A further context for B.B. growth was provided by the expansion of formal working class leisure within British society. During the 1880s and 1890s, leisure spread as a major consumer industry. Among popular forms were penny theatres, seaside holidays, and early cinema. One of the main attractions was

³³ Anderson, 'The growth of Christian Militarism', p.51.

³⁴ D.H. Johnson, 'The Death of Gordon: a Victorian myth', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 10,(3), 1982, pp.285-310.

³⁵ M. Blanch, 'British Society and War', in P. Warwick (ed.), *The South African War, The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Longman, London, 1980), pp. 210-238.

³⁶ C. Leys, *Politics in Britain* (Verso, London, 1983), Ch. 2.

the music hall - it drew its most noisy customers from amongst young working men who, without family responsibilities, were becoming increasingly independent of parental controls and had sufficient disposable income to lead an active consumer life.³⁷ The main objections from 'respectable' classes to the music-hall were the opportunities it offered for rough and immoral behaviour, and the political and vulgar nature of songs. A general critical view was that music-halls were at best poor entertainment, at worst the gate to temptation, and that frequent attendance induced a careless and irreligious life.³⁸

By the turn of the century, there was a growing concern among Victorian social elites about the activities of the lower class young in industrial cities. Not only was this group increasingly visible, it was also expanding as an age group. Demographic factors, such as lower infantile mortality and improved birth rates, are also important in helping to explain why the urban condition and prospects of working class children and adolescents came to form a distinctive component of the social debate over how to make living conditions more orderly. In many industrial working class areas, an emergent adolescent age group which could spend monies on music-halls, cheap, popular magazines and football matches came to represent the public face of the youth problem.

A continuing Puritan belief among both nonconformist and Anglican middle-class reformers was that commercial forms of leisure were acting as a morally corrupting influence on a leaderless young. Mass education was insufficiently restrictive, leaving the post-young school institutionally unsupervised. For some voluntary agencies, the belief was that disorder could only be combatted by providing alternative, morally healthy, church-related recreational forms or outlets. Thus, it was claimed in William Smith's formative period, that the discipline and obedience instilled by the B.B. 'method' would not only prevent styles of adolescent behavior which were 'beyond the law', but would also offer a 'rational' counter-attraction to the music halls and street networks frequented by youths.

In general, growing concern was expressed by social reformers for a newly "free" adolescent group which they either disliked or failed to comprehend.³⁹

³⁷ J. Saville, *Labour in Britain* (Faber, London, 1988), pp. 112-13.

³⁸ R. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990), p.129.

³⁹ H. Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class and the Male Youth Problem: 1880-1920* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990), pp.126-139; J Walvin, *A child's world, A Social history of English Childhood 1880-1914* (Penguin, London, 1984), p.186.

The age group which would now be described as adolescents was distinguished as a distinct category towards the end of the nineteenth century. Adolescence as 'disturbance' was assumed to have its own peculiar problems of physical and social adjustment by observers between the years 1880 and 1914. Thus, Psychology singled out adolescents as an autonomous group for investigation by the 1890s. Its most pervasive contemporary definition as an independent age category was put forward by G. Stanley Hall, a leading figure in early American educational psychology, as a distinctive stage or age category between childhood and adulthood. Hall portrayed the adolescent stage as characterized by a number of unique features, among which two of the most important were a rapid acceleration of physical, mental and emotional growth, and a new investment of energy: "The floodgates of heredity seem opened and we hear from our remoter forebears, and receive our life dower of energy...Passions and desires spring into vigorous life. The functions of every sense undergo reconstruction, and their relations to other psychic functions change, and new sensations, some of them very intense, arise, and new associations in the sense sphere are formed".⁴⁰

Other characteristics attributed by Hall to young people were emotionalism of behaviour and wayward mental processes. The emotions were described as being liable to instability and fluctuation. Now, the idea of a staged transition between the child and adult world obviously had ambiguous class meanings. Middle and upper-class boys went to preparatory and public schools, often followed by university. Thus the transition to manhood was prolonged within educative institutions. Many of these youths were classified as schoolboys at an age and stage when most working class youths had already had extensive labour market experience. While many middle and upper-class youths, therefore, experienced an extended adolescence, the working classes, on the other hand, experienced the difference between childhood and adolescence differently - sons of the skilled had their transitory stage between elementary and secondary education at the age of thirteen or fourteen. For the male offspring of the unskilled, this came at an even earlier stage, for they often left school at eleven or twelve. Thus, the nature of adolescence and the timing of its emergence tended to be different between social classes and also within those classes themselves.⁴¹

⁴⁰ G.S. Hall, Adolescence, its psychology and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education, 2 vols. (Appleton, New York, 1904), pp. xiii-iv; see also J. Springhall, Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960 (Gill & Mac Millan, Dublin, 1986).

⁴¹ K. Brechony, 'Schooling between 1880 and 1902' in M.Langan and B.Schwartz (eds.), Crises in the British State (Hutchinson, London, 1983), pp. 240-1.

The identification of adolescence as a specific class problem in the late nineteenth century was also directly linked to economic changes. One of these was the expansion of 'boy labour', in all major industrial cities. Middle-class social reformers exhibited concern for these adolescents as others had done for 'street child' labour in the early nineteenth century. In this late Victorian period, the concern was both for children in casual labour on the streets and those performing manual factory tasks. Boy labour was defined as short-term unskilled jobs like errand boys, van boys, cleaning boys and the like. Charles Booth, the great social investigator of the 1880s and 1890s, found in London that the demand for boy labour was great and closely linked to the 'sweated' economy. These boys usually worked long hours for low wages - many were paid off before they reached adulthood and replaced in turn by younger, cheaper, boys. In sum, whether seen from a social, economic or religious point of view, the adolescent years came to be seen as a youth 'reform' issue, a stage to be controlled by the 'respectable' agencies of church-going adults which would both supervise and civilise.

Adolescent assertiveness was also evident at other social interfaces, where the traditions of youth clashed with the officially sanctioned norms of dependence and conformity. It was no accident that what the late-nineteenth century public came to regard as juvenile delinquency became the focus of attention precisely at the time that pressures to universalize adolescence were first becoming felt; for, despite their apparent dissimilarities, the two were related. The very traits that stigmatized certain youth as delinquent - namely, precocity and independence of adult authority - were precisely the opposite of those embodied by the model adolescent. As, John Gillis has noted, delinquency served to delineate the central features of conformity, and vice versa.⁴²

All youth groups formed during this period were essentially formed to deal with the 'problem' of youth. The male adolescent of the 1880s drew increasing attention from state initiatives, which sought to regulate behaviour, as well as various Christian communities - the latter being especially concerned for the spiritual and moral basis of that behaviour. It was the new awareness of the problem of adolescence which finally completed the particular historical canvas upon which the Boys' Brigade was to be created. We now move from the broad context of the B.B. and its background to consider the nature of its emergence and the adoption of its organisational form.

⁴² J. Gillis, *Youth and History: tradition and change in European age relations, 1770 to the present* (Academic Press, New York, 1981), p.137.

CHAPTER 1

The Founder - William Smith and the origins of The Boys' Brigade in Glasgow, Scotland

William Alexander Smith was born on 27 October 1854, near Thurso in Caithness, about 250 miles from Glasgow, where the Boys' Brigade was founded. Smith was born into a family with a long history of military service dating back to the Duke of Wellington. His father, David, had been a member of the 7th Dragoon Guards during the so-called Kaffir War of 1849-50. On his return, he joined the Volunteer Artillery Corps and was eventually promoted to the rank of Major. Smith's grandfather had been a member of the 78th Highland Regiment of Foot in 1810 and had fought in the Flanders Campaigns of 1814-15. One can thus reasonably assume that the family's military tradition would have had a major influence on Smith.¹

Following the death of his father, William, then thirteen years old, moved to Glasgow in 1868 to board with an uncle. This individual, Alexander Fraser, was a clothing merchant and an Evangelical Member of the strong Free Church of Scotland. William Smith started work at his uncle's business and lived on the edge of the prosperous residential West End area of Glasgow.

As a young adult, he joined the Free Church of Scotland and became a Sunday School teacher. In addition, he also became involved with the Young Mens' Society, a lay-preaching organization for young men of the church. It was here that he first became concerned with ways of keeping youths from drifting out of Sunday School, or of improving orderliness in Sunday School. These were seen as impediments to the achievement of true 'Christian manliness' and the adoption of desirable values propagated by voluntarist Christian networks.²

Mission activity which led directly to the establishment of The Boys' Brigade was principally that of the Sunday Schools. The maintenance of class order was, as already suggested, in many instances extremely difficult, and was proving ever more burdensome now that mass elementary education was taking over much of the raison d'etre of the Sunday School movement. Allied to the difficulty of fulfilling the mission objective of the Sunday School was the failure to retain older children until they were able to

¹ F.P. Gibbon, *William A. Smith of The Boys' Brigade* (Collins, London, 1953), pp.9-11

² Inglis, *Religion*, p.93.

join the Y.M.C.A. or some other church young men's society in early adulthood. At the end of the 1870s, Smith came face to face with the mission problem of continuity and control, through his own experience of grappling with the weekly difficulty of disciplining cocky Sunday School boys from whom there was little piety. In 1883 he vigorously launched his solution.³

Through his position at the Mission at North Woodside, Glasgow, Smith saw at first hand the problem not only of Sunday School discipline but also of "wild boys" who were identified as needing forms of rational recreation and 'useful' learning to substitute for wasted character. North Woodside was a densely populated housing area, including skilled workers, many of whom belonged to the local Mission and many of whose male children attended Sunday School.

Smith brought to the Mission a bearing in which several influences played a major role. Firstly, he had become a member of the local Volunteer Regiment, the 1st Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers.⁴ The Volunteer Force, founded in 1859 with the military objective of providing militia defence in the event of European invasion, was located within the spirit of Victorian self-help communities and local patriotism.⁵ Besides the role it had in home defence, the movement afforded class mixing opportunities for middle- and working class men. Middle-class volunteers had the opportunity to occupy their leisure time in a pleasant and gratifying mock-military manner. Working class riflemen now had novel social and recreational activities alongside middle-class recruits. Papers like The Times saw Volunteer class mixing as a method of instilling into working class men the values of discipline, obedience and esprit de corps, values which were later extended to the adolescent members of The Boys' Brigade.⁶

The Volunteer movement was strong in Scotland, especially in Glasgow, with most regiments consisting of companies formed by business and professional men. Leadership came from the upper middle-class capitalists of Glasgow. With the 1st Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers' leadership coming from West End business ranks, and given Smith's family military legacy, it was logical that Smith, now himself an independent businessman, should enlist.⁷

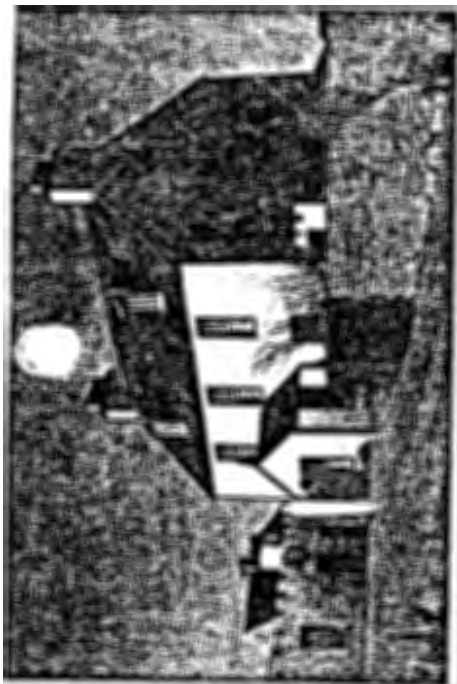
³ The Quiver, June 1909, 'The Boys' Brigade' by W.A. Smith.

⁴ Gibbon, William A. Smith, p.20.

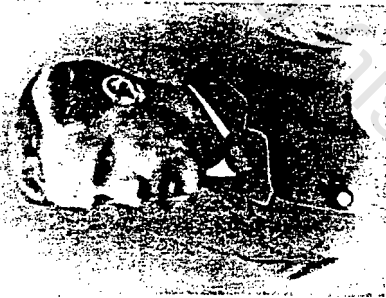
⁵ H. Cunningham, The Volunteer Force (Croom Helm, London, 1975).

⁶ The Times, 19 July 1878.

⁷ Gibbon, William A. Smith, p. 17-23.



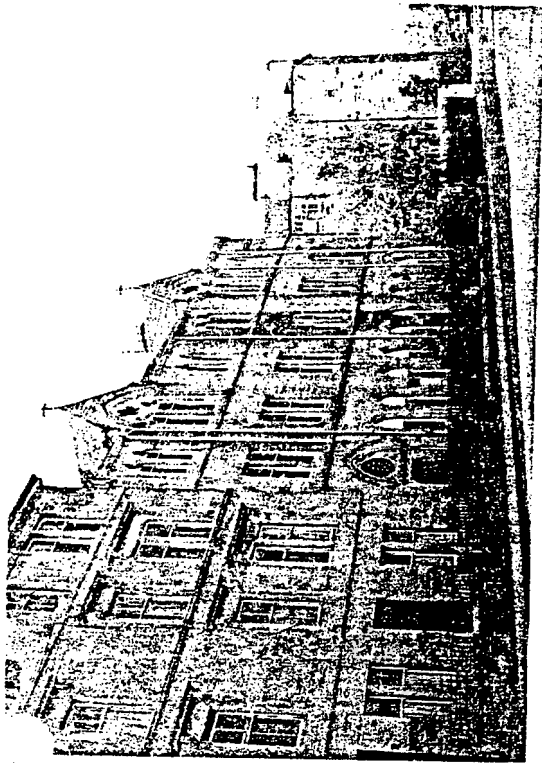
Pennyland House, near Thurso on the north coast of Scotland — the birthplace of William Smith.



Portrait of William Smith taken in April 1880, when he was 25. By this time he had left his uncle's firm and set up his own business.



The Mounted Detachment of the 1st Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers in the early 1900s. Major William Smith, commander of the Detachment, is second from the left in the front row.

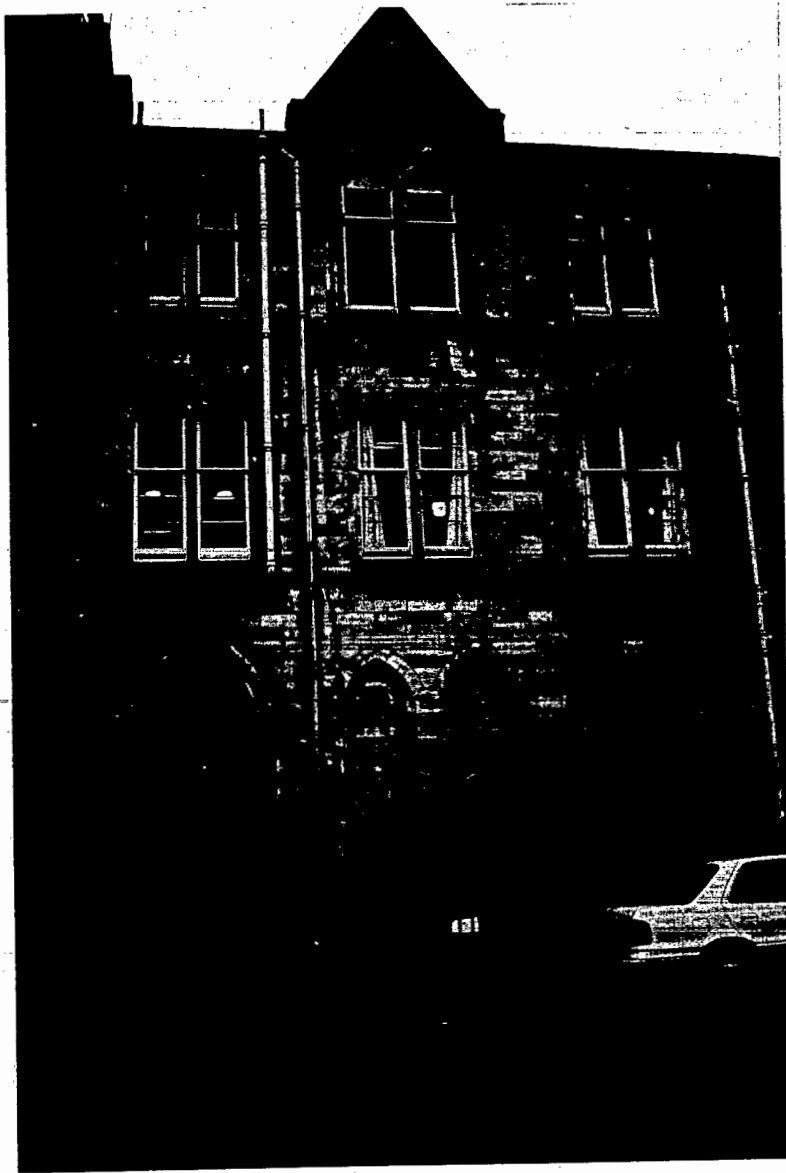


The North Woodside Mission Hall in the West End of Glasgow, where Smith founded the 1st Company of The Boys' Brigade on 4 October 1883.



The original officers and sergeants of the 1st Glasgow Company in 1885-86. Smith is standing on the right, and to his left are his lieutenants, James and John Hill. The rifle was introduced for drilling purposes, and could not be used as a firearm. The model shown here had a metal barrel and spring action, but had no connection between barrel and trigger.

Source: Sure & Stedfast (1983), pp. 34-35.
Springhall, Fraser & Hoare.



Northwoodside Mission 1992 (Photo: Author)



MR W. A. SMITH.
Secretary, The Boys' Brigade.

B.B. Archival Pack; BBHQ, London

In 1874, William Smith joined the 1st Lanark Rifle Volunteers, with promotion from the rank of Lance-Corporal to Sergeant following in 1876. He later became a Lieutenant Colonel before retiring in 1908. These decades of militia service provided the practical and ideological base for the influential drill and discipline used in the B.B.

Smith affirmed the value of military drill and discipline in achieving basic aims. Many of his first B.B. Officers were Volunteers who were able to use this experience in the extensive drill and instruction programmes which formed a major component of early Company activities, "every officer had to be capable of taking Drill and Bible Class."⁸ Secondly, William Smith and his early leaders were influenced by their belief in the need to fill the transition from Sunday School leaving age to the age for joining the Church, the YMCA, or associated societies, with a robust form of Christian organisation.

On the evening of Thursday, 4 October 1883, twenty-eight youths from Smith's Mission Sunday School attended a B.B. foundation meeting. After a few days of neighbourhood recruiting, the total grew to fifty nine, between the ages of twelve and seventeen years of age. A few left, but most remained, and The Boys' Brigade, the first ever voluntary uniformed youth organization, came into being. It started as the 1st Glasgow Company of the Boys' Brigade.⁹

B.B. STRUCTURE

Each B.B. Company was divided into groups or squads - each one led by a non-commissioned officer (N.C.O.). Regular examination for promotions to N.C.O. were held amongst all boys aged over fourteen, in which a practical drill test was held. This involved performing a series of drill movements. Marks for conduct and character were added and (NCO's, Sergeants, and Corporals) were appointed from the most proficient. The basic company unit was placed under the command of a Captain assisted by Lieutenants. These were the only military ranks used by the adult leaders. The minister of the local church normally acted as Company chaplain. The Company was basically a detachment of boys connected with a particular church or religious movement from which the B.B. could draw cohesion. Each company had a local designation number according to order of formation. A Battalion could be

⁸ BB Gazette, January 1954, p.2.

⁹ J.B. Shaw, The Glasgow Battalion of The Boys' Brigade 1883-1983 (St. Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1983), p.3.

formed wherever three or more companies existed in any town or district. From 1889 this was changed to six.¹⁰

UNIFORM

Although the B.B.'s early leaders were often drawn directly from the Volunteers, its elaborate uniform model was not carried over to the organization. Instead, the adopted uniform was kept simple and inexpensive. A private, the most junior rank, had a forage cap with two rows of white braid and the company number at the front, a white linen haversack and a leather waist belt with the B.B. crest on the buckle. The rank of Lance-Corporal and Corporal wore the same attire as a private. As distinguishing insignia, a Lance-Corporal wore a one-barred chevron, and a corporal a two-barred chevron on the right arm. A Sergeant wore a cap with a straight peak, two rows of white braid and waist belt and haversack; Sergeants also wore a shoulder belt with a pouch at the back and three-barred chevron. In 1898, the Staff-Sergeant's cap changed to one with a row of narrow braid and symbolic Anchor badge to denote Christian steadfastness. Staff Sergeants did not wear a haversack or belt but had a four-barred chevron and carried a short brown military cane. The basic rank-and-file 'Boy' uniform remained largely unchanged since inception - only the cap changed in 1970. The white haversack eventually became purely decorative, while in former years it was used more functionally to carry small rations on outings and excursions. Enforced uniform codes helped to establish the B.B. identity from its foundation.

In the early period, officers had no distinctive uniform other than a red rosette in their jacket buttonhole and a bowler hat, retaining their middle-class civilian air. This changed with the introduction of a regulation uniform in 1893, consisting of a uniform glengarry cap with crest, a navy blue or dark-coloured suit with tan gloves, and a short brown military cane. On the other hand, Boys' uniforms were designed as inexpensive, to be worn over ordinary clothes.¹¹ In the late nineteenth century a full uniform cost 23 pence, placing it within reach of ordinary working class youths. Financial hardship, according to Smith, should not be a hindrance for a boy to join up, 'there should be no consideration to induce a Boy to stay away'.¹² Accent was to be placed on cleanliness and neatness of uniform.

¹⁰ Pamphlet 'How to start a Company'. BBHQ; D.M. McFarlan, First for Bobs: The Story of The Bobs' Brigade 1883-1983 (Collins, London, 1983), pp. 19-20.

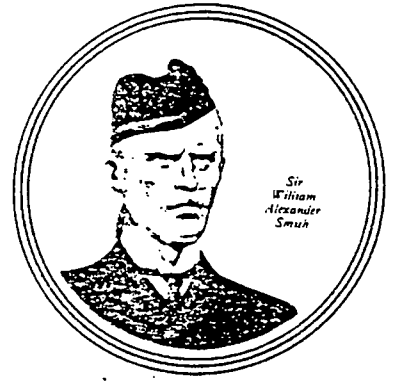
¹¹ 'What is the BB?', BBHQ, 1894; The BB Uniform Then & Now (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983), pp. 1-19; Peacock, Pioneer of Boyhood, pp. 47-49.

¹² Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, p. 44.



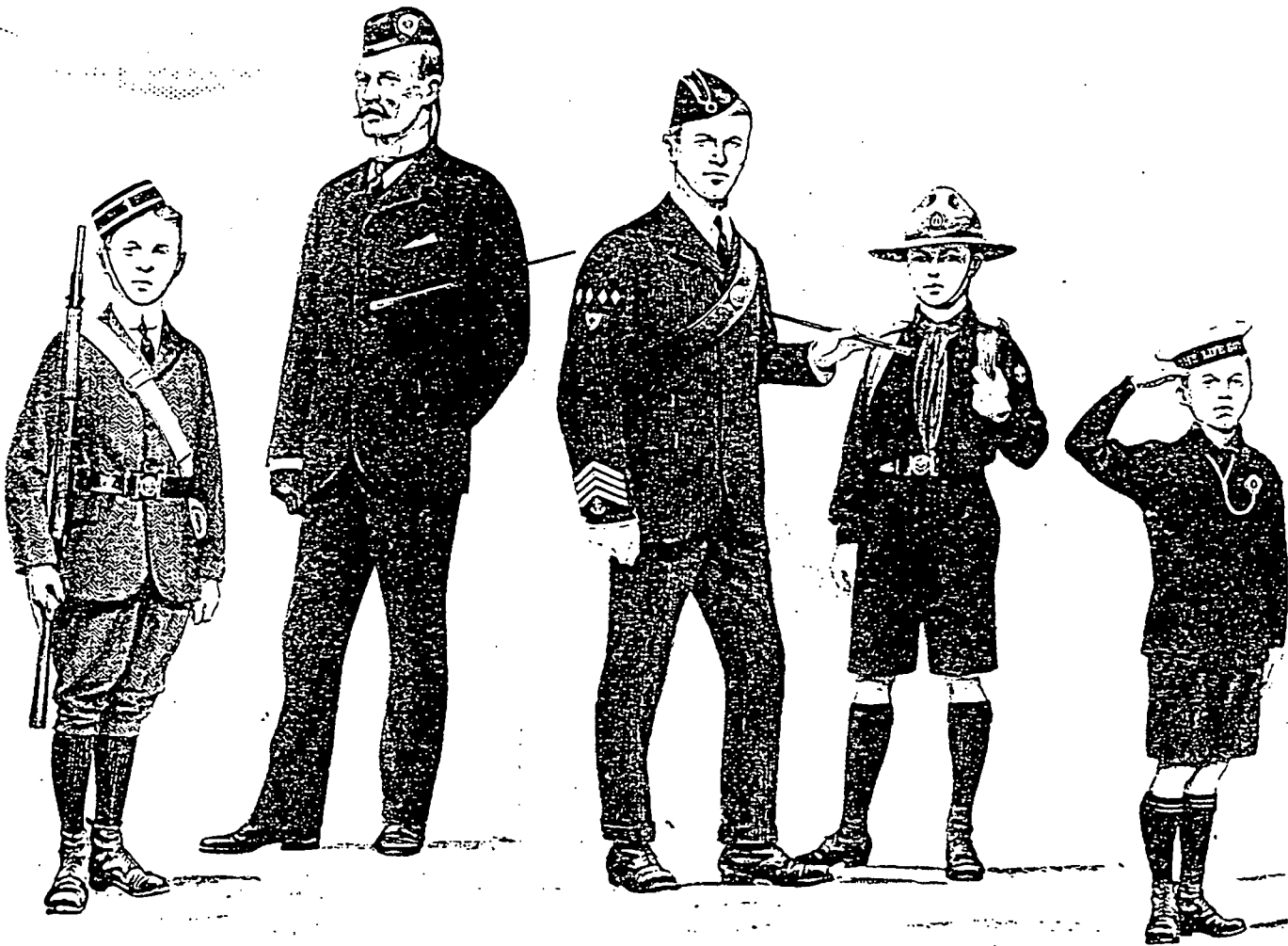
The Boy himself — wearing the famous Pillbox cap.
B.B. Archival Pack, BBHQ.

1883



198

100 YEARS OF UNIF



Boy 1886

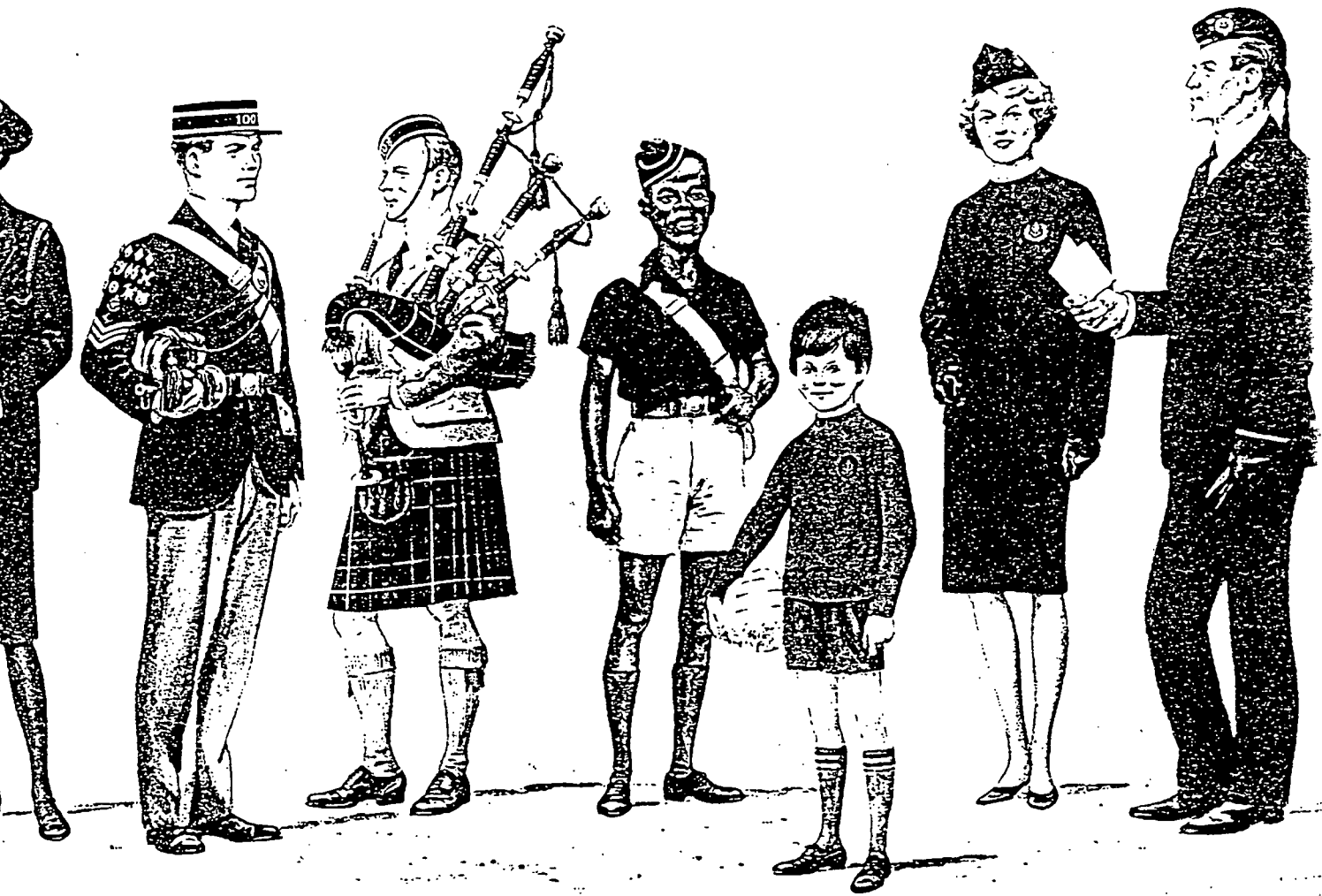
Officer 1893

Staff Sergeant 1912

BB Scout 1909

Life Boy 1927

OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE



ader 1927

Sergeant 1945

Boy Piper 1965

Boy (Nigeria) 1975

Anchor Boy 1983

Lady Lieutenant 1975

Officer 1983

ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES

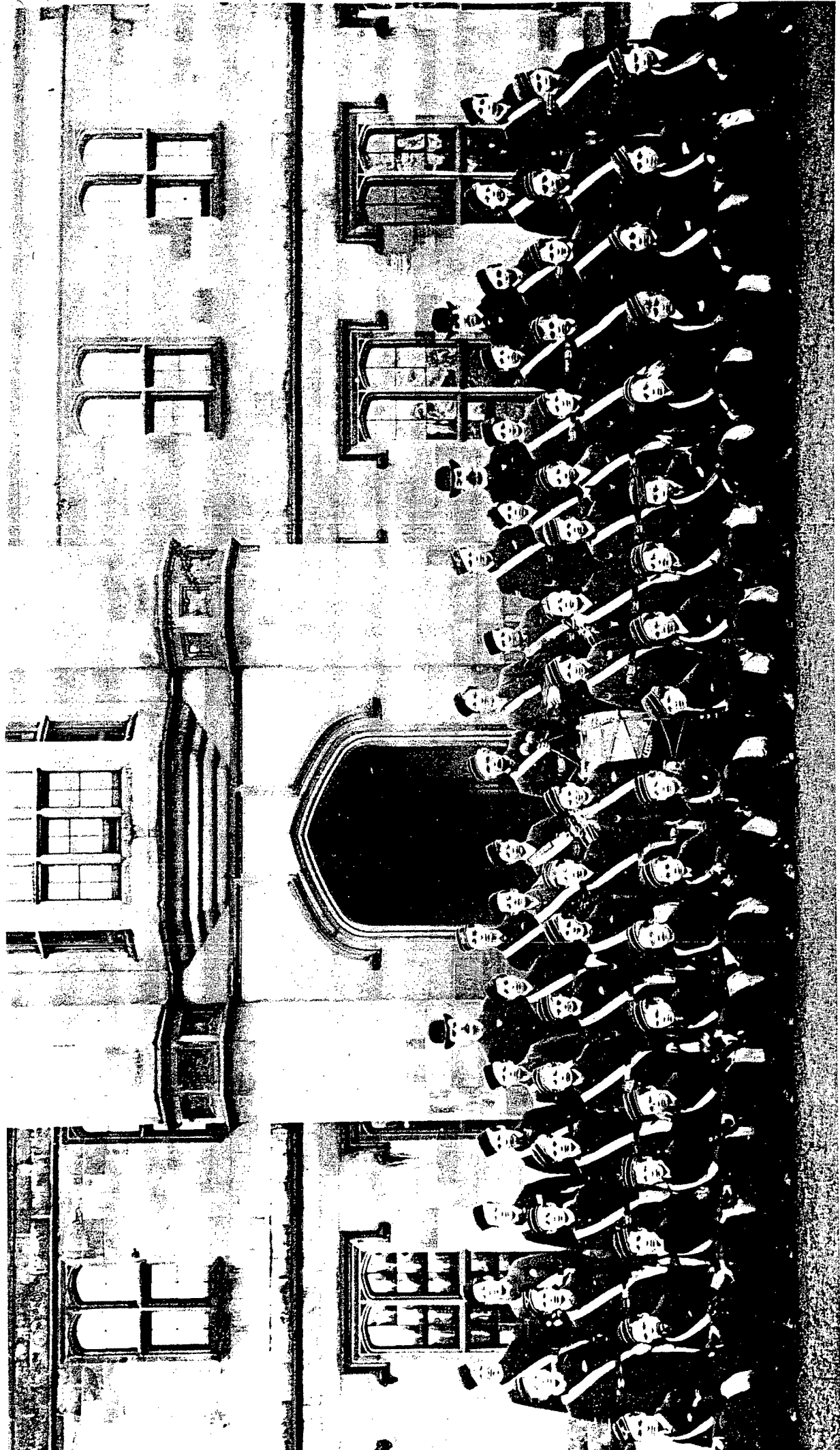
Physical and social activities quickly developed a distinctive formula. Of these, Drill, Physical Training, games and Sunday Bible Class were central. Foot drill, as well as drill with a dummy rifle were introduced by 1885. A company band, with flutes and bugles, was also established in the same year. One of the more popular recreational innovations pioneered by The Boys' Brigade is camping. In the late 1880s, such outdoor pursuits were seen as a means of providing urban children with invigorating exercise, with healthy 'outdoor' experience as an antidote for urban 'degeneration'. The 1st Glasgow Company had its first Camp in 1886 at Tighnabruich, Western Scotland.¹³

Chaplaincy Bible Class became an integral part of Brigade activities. Where a company did not always operate one itself, Boys attended Sunday School. Other class work covered a variety of activities: first aid, communications, metal work, wood carving and other skilled tasks.

The educational or extramural type of classes introduced by The Boys' Brigade followed the philosophy of 'upliftment' of the later nineteenth-century voluntary agencies such as The Band of Hope and Salvation Army, in imparting 'improving' knowledge and values to the young. These classes were directed at self-improvement and the developing of skills which could be used to make a living in manual labour markets. Two factors were of particular significance. One was the classic view that future wage earners needed not charitable relief but organised knowledge to achieve 'independence'. Another was a belief in the special desirability of Christian workers. Since the inception of the movement, Smith used capital letters whenever spelling Boys, as a means of identifying and affirming their separate social identity as members of a male Christian community.¹⁴

¹³ Smith's notes: camp programme; (BB Archival Pack, BBHQ).

¹⁴ BB Annual Report 1893/94; A Short History of the BB (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983), pp. 5-6.

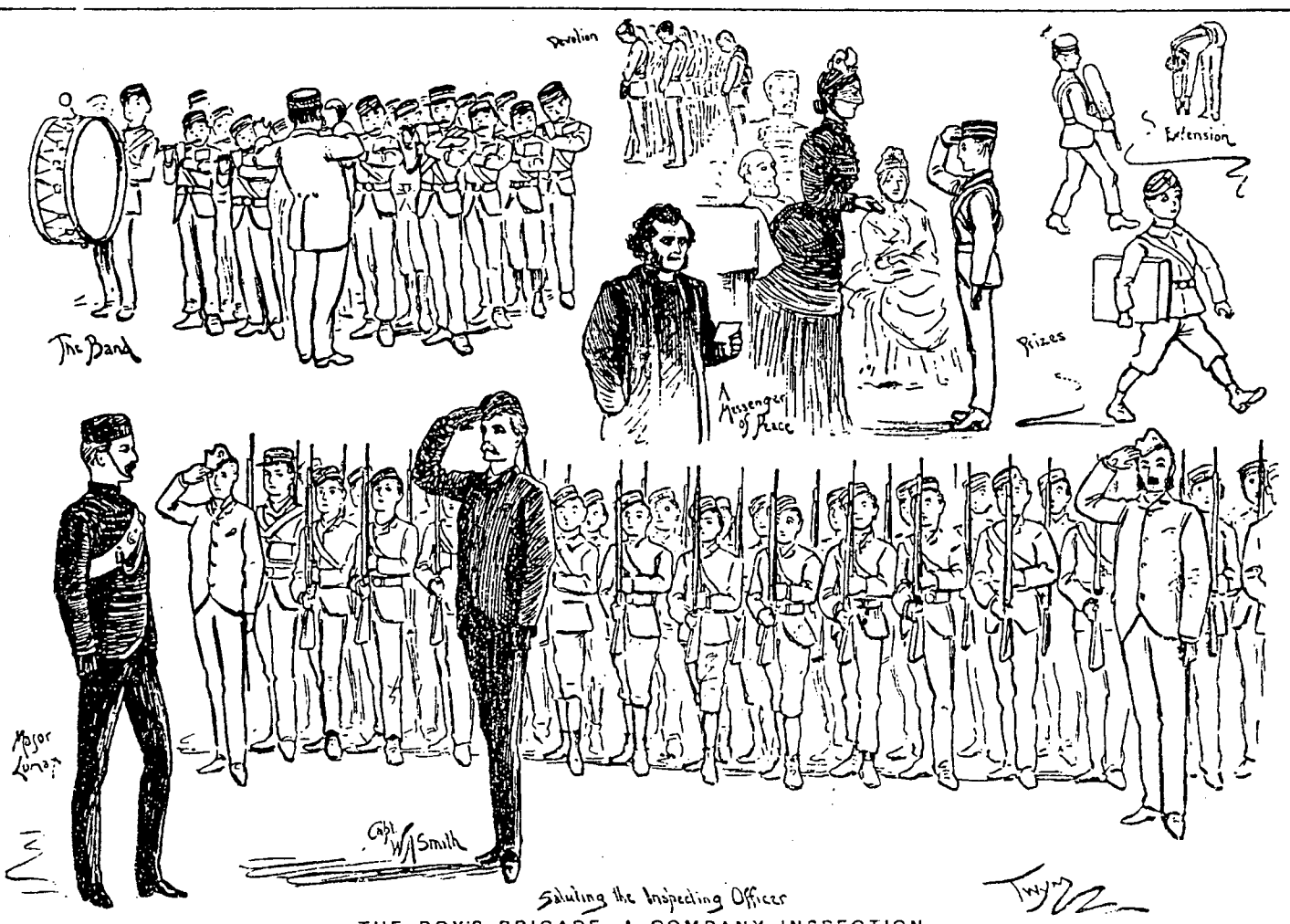


First photograph of The Boys' Brigade — 1st Glasgow Company, April 1885.

B.B. Archival Pack, B.B.H.Q., London



The original Officers and Sergeants of The Boys' Brigade, 1885/86.



QUIZ, Friday, April 8, 1887.

Saluting the Inspecting Officer
THE BOYS' BRIGADE.—A COMPANY INSPECTION.

ORGANIZATION

As the idea of the B.B. spread gradually, the structure of the movement had to be consolidated. From the beginning, the Brigade was organised along military lines, with divisions such as Battalion, Company, Rank and File. Titles such as Captain, Lieutenant, Warrant-Officer and N.C.O. were used, recycling militaristic culture for boys of large working class families which sometimes had established or casual links with army service.

In the Brigade session of 1885-86, a Battalion in Glasgow was formed. In the same year, a Brigade executive was formed to carry out the work of the "Council of The Boys' Brigade."¹⁵ In 1885 the emblem of the B.B. was adopted - the anchor as a Christian metaphor, with the words Sure and Stedfast; (Stedfast as spelled in the King James version of the Bible), and the object: "The advancement of Christ's Kingdom amongst Boys and the promotion of habits of reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness". The word "obedience"¹⁶ was added later, in 1893. In 1926, the cross from the emblem of The Boys' Life Brigade¹⁷ was added when the two organizations amalgamated. This development will be discussed separately.

EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: 1883-1900

With the 1st Glasgow Company established, other Churches in the Glasgow area quickly followed suit and formed B.B. Companies. Thereafter the organisation spread among all denominations, throughout inland and coastal Scotland.

In 1885 the first Companies were started in England, beginning with London and Manchester.¹⁸ Within five years, 206 Companies had been formed. The B.B. rapidly penetrated into most of England, and London had to be sub-divided into different Battalions to coordinate the increase in numbers.

By 1887, the first B.B. Company was in existence in Newport, Wales, with the first Irish Company coming into being in Belfast. The working force behind the movement here was William McVicker,¹⁹

¹⁵ Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood*, p. 51.

¹⁶ W. Smith typed notes on the BB c. 1914, p. 3.

¹⁷ *The BB with which is united the Boys' Life Brigade* (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983), pp. 1-19.

¹⁸ *BB Report*, 1885.

the Secretary of the Mission Sunday School, attached to St Mary Magdalene Parish Church, in Belfast. Dublin followed Belfast. By 1889, the Brigade had established a presence across the British Isles. When it celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 1893, membership stood at over 26 000 Boys.²⁰

In addition to drawing support from various congregations, substantial patronage was sought and gained from influential social elites. In the session of 1888-89, the Earl of Aberdeen accepted office as Honorary President, and personally promoted the movement in the United Kingdom and Canada. The Duke of York, later King George V, became Patron in 1897.²¹ By 1900, leading educational figures from public schools, such as Sir John Neilson Cuthbertson, and from universities - the Principals of Aberdeen and Glasgow, and several Masters of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, were lending prestige and educational recognition to the organization. While military, political and religious figures featured as Honorary Vice Presidents, civic notables sometimes provided active service. For instance, the Lord Mayor of London in the late 1890s, J.D. Davies, was captain of a company.²²

In April 1888, a trust was formed to raise and secure funds for the B.B.'s first full-time appointment. Leading Scottish figures, including businessmen and philanthropists such as Sir William Collins (publisher), John Templeton, Carfrae Alston and the Coats family, well-known for its cotton empire, provided charitable endowments. Thus funded, William Smith became the first full-time B.B. secretary, giving up his personal business engagement to devote all his time to the movement.

Papers associated with Temperance and Nonconformity, such as the Leeds Mercury and Glasgow Herald, provided the movement with early publicity.²³ The Boys' Brigade also started its own publication, The Boys' Brigade Gazette, in 1889,²⁴ published bimonthly for officers, with William Smith as its first editor. Early issues carried no illustrations and cost one shilling (five pence) per dozen. Brigade Headquarters sent six free copies to each company. Professor Henry Drummond, of the Free Church College, who actively promoted the B.B., was also one of the Gazette's most published writers. His advice and story telling from issue to issue were classic examples of later Victorian homilies on Christian masculinity,

¹⁹ W.R. Kelly, Firm and Deep, A History of the Belfast Battalion of The Boys' Brigade (Boys' Brigade, Belfast, 1978), p. 3.

²⁰ BB Statistics, BBHQ.

²¹ Peacock, Pioneer of Boyhood, p.156.

²² Fraser, 'Origins of the BB', Ph.D., p. 237.

²³ Lee, Popular Press, p. 171.

²⁴ BB Gazette, February 1902, p. 88.

"Boys, if you are going to be Christians, be Christians as boys and not as your grandmothers... if you cannot read your Bible... as your grandmother can..., don't think you are necessarily a bad Boy. ...Meanwhile be a Christian as a Boy."²⁵

CONSOLIDATION 1900-1919

By the turn of the century, the Boys' Brigade was established and expanding. Its organizational basis made it seem a potential solution to the 'uncontrolled' adolescent problem, and for this it received further support from reformers active in social policy relating to children. Royal patronage also followed. At the Coronation Review in 1902, 11 000 boys were inspected by the Prince of Wales. When the Brigade celebrated its Semi-Jubilee in 1908, the movement gained further publicity through Royal attendance. This was also the largest gathering of boys in Scotland. The growing stature of the B.B. was further sealed in 1909 when William Smith was Knighted by King Edward VII for his role in the service of youth.²⁶

One of the B.B.'s initiatives was to set up education and training practices to facilitate labour market entry. Leadership concern for the position of unemployed adolescents led to the establishment of youth employment registers in Battalions in the Edwardian years. B.B. Companies in northern cities played a role in placing boys with factories, attempting to provide disciplined boys with an aptitude for supervised labour. This system was typified by the Glasgow Battalion. A boy who sought employment completed an application form, stating his age, type of employment desired, earnings expectation, and school-leaving level. This form was passed on to the Company captain who completed a confidential report on character, trustworthiness, mental potential, and task aptitude. Emphasis was placed on B.B. service in terms of regularity or instances of misconduct.²⁷

The application, together with the captain's report, was sent to Battalion Headquarters and placed on file. An employer wishing to recruit young labour would contact the Battalion, stipulating job details and wage level. When possible, the officer or conveners in charge would provide three boys for selection. By the later 1900s, employers were being charged a capitation fee, eventually a shilling for

²⁵ Henry Drummond, cited Fraser, *The Origins of the BB*, Ph.D., p. 244.

²⁶ *BB Gazette*, December 1954, p.2; Gibbon, *W.A. Smith of the BB*, pp. 155-6.

²⁷ *Annual Report* 1885/86, p.3.

each application to the Battalion. In this way, labour supply helped Brigade funds. The system of employment registers, first established in Glasgow and Carlisle, quickly spread to other areas before World War I, with much publicity provided in the press and B.B. literature.²⁸ Whilst the employment scheme did not solve the problem of unemployed youth in the B.B., it did bring some limited relief to individuals.

Naturally, relations between labour recruiting B.B. Officers and working class households were not always smooth. Officers often had to parley with suspicious families to argue the desirability of youths sometimes taking lower paid 'respectable, Christian' jobs through paternalist B.B. connections, rather than gamble on better paid work on the open labour market.²⁹

By the beginning of the twentieth century, increasing attention was being given by both central government and local authorities to the promotion of child welfare services, not least for the working class adolescent who was now defined as a national asset or social investment, in the language of national efficiency.³⁰ Bodies such as the London County Council liaised with the B.B., drawing on its experience in administering schemes for the young. Later, Liberal government state officials co-operated with the B.B. in the field of job provision.³¹

Government also perceived other potential in the B.B. It was not long before it tried to incorporate the Brigade into its Cadet Scheme. The attempt from 1909 to 1911 to incorporate the B.B. into a national cadet force, provided the movement with a considerable political challenge, bringing the question of the B.B. and militarism to the centre of the picture. In 1909, the Secretary of State for War, R.B. Haldane, announced plans to absorb all uniformed youth movements into a reserve force affiliated to local Territorial Associations. In response, William Smith had to use all his influence to safeguard the movement's independent reputation.

The Boys' Brigade had many supporters but also detractors. Many Free Church clergy of radical persuasion, Quakers and pacifists criticised it for its militaristic approach. What qualified criticism was the B.B. link with the Sunday School and other religious movements. Moreover, Smith and his officers

²⁸ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Stedfast*, pp. 96-7.

²⁹ Annual Report, Employment Registers, cited, Fraser, 'Origins of BB', *Ph.D.*, pp. 363-4.

³⁰ G.R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency*, (Unwin, London, 1969), p. 63.

³¹ BB *London District Minutes*, 1910-12.

consistently tried to stress the distinction between the basic religious objective of the movement and the methods used to obtain the objective by declaring, "**Drill is not an end in the Brigade, as it is in the Volunteers, but only a means to an end.**"³²

In the early 1900s, its over zealous patronage of military leaders regularly obliged its leadership to explain that the B.B. was only using uniforms, drill and discipline to mould the character of the adolescent and 'juvenile delinquent'. Its methods were only rooted in militarism practically, because militarism was embedded in common culture.³³ In this, the B.B. canvassed support from conservative clergymen who agreed that the flavour of military drill and discipline was an effective instrument in attaining B.B. objectives of inculcating behavioural conformity. Brigade patrons also strove nationally and locally to make its view clear on the link which existed between discipline and religion, "**nor do we seek, with this drill and discipline, to take the brightness out of their lives.**"³⁴ Individual Battalions also made their stand on militarism known. For example, the Plymouth Battalion added to its rules a commitment to promote the cause of peace.³⁵

Around this were growing military imperatives, especially after the 1899-1902 South African War which so clearly exposed Britain's weaknesses. With the formation of the Boy Scouts in 1908 by R.S.S. Baden Powell, spreading uniformed youth movements were increasingly seen as sources of augmenting national reserves. Militarists like Lord Meath³⁶ propagated this idea further through the Empire Day Movement and the Boys' Empire League.

In 1907, a bill was passed which sought to absorb uniformed youth movements into the auxiliary military system. And by 1910, youth organizations could apply for recognition to the Country Territorial Force Association - failing which, they would forfeit military and financial assistance previously donated by the War Office. This included camping equipment supplied at special rates, inspection by senior service officers, and renting of drill halls at favourable rates.

³² Cited, Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 24.

³³ *BB Gazette*, December 1942, p.20; article 'The March of Sixty Years'.

³⁴ 1889 speech cited, G. Walker, *W.A. Smith. A man who had something to say*, (BBHQ, London, 1971), p.13.

³⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, 16 April 1906.

³⁶ J. Springhall, 'Lord Meath, Youth and Empire', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5(4)1970, pp. 97-112.

All B.B. units now had to weigh up the implications and reach a common position. The agreed view was that as a religious body, a B.B. military affiliation would damage its reputation.³⁷ In 1910, more than eighty percent of its church constituencies voted against official recognition. For Smith, this confirmed B.B. philosophy that the use of military methods (drill and discipline) was exclusively a means towards religious and social ends. Fellow movements like the Church Lad's Brigade (CLB) tried to persuade Smith to accept recognition, but to no avail.³⁸

The Boys' Brigade faced a different kind of challenge when the Boys' Scouts were formed in 1908.³⁹ A competing Boys Scout movement rapidly overtook the Brigade in numbers by 1910, when it had 107 986 members compared to the B.B.'s 68 089.⁴⁰

On 10 May 1914, the Brigade was dealt a blow with the sudden death of Smith. A ceremony was held at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and the funeral service in the B.B. stronghold of Glasgow, attended by an estimated 164 000 B.B. followers. Overleaf are examples of a special B.B. Gazette on the funeral.⁴¹

Three months later, the outbreak of the First World War ended dithering over militarism. Many Officers and ex-members of The Boys' Brigade immediately joined military ranks. Some joined units comprised almost entirely of B.B. recruits, "the 16th Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry, was almost entirely ex-B.B. members."⁴² Why should these young men have been so eager to enlist? Given the religious culture of disciplined Christian duty which the Brigade fostered, probably little was needed to encourage enlistment in the war's early stage. This was particularly the case before the inception of trench-warfare and conscription, and when the destructive scale of the war was not yet known. Smith himself had personally stressed the spiritual nobility of war experience in popular Bible Class Notes, declaring that it seemed:

"Curious that while we admit the principle that in the moral sphere of the individual life there can be no progress without stress and conflict, we are apt to shut our eyes to the fact that in the life of a nation the same principle holds good, and that no nation ever yet attained to true greatness or influence in the world without going through the training and discipline of war... No one could

³⁷ BB Gazette, January 1911, p.5.

³⁸ Fraser, 'Origins of BB', Ph.D., p.385.

³⁹ BB Gazette, December 1942, p.20.

⁴⁰ BB Statistics, BBHQ.

⁴¹ see Funeral Programme; BB Gazette Memorial Number 1914.

⁴² Cited Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, p. 114.

desire war for its own sake, but may there not be a danger that our natural horror of war may lead us into an undue emphasizing of the merely physical side of the sufferings entailed by war. There is a mawkish sentimentality abroad which tends to magnify the physical at the expense of the spiritual..."⁴³

It is clear from this that the founder of The Boys' Brigade had unsentimental ideas about national progress in the years before the actual outbreak of war. One could almost say that Boys' Brigade leadership invested conflict with visions of it advancing civilisation. In this sense, the B.B. undoubtedly helped to smooth acceptance of military service in the 1914 crisis.

Many regular army recruits were promoted due to their leadership training in the B.B.⁴⁴ and, as a patriotic organization, the B.B. itself was naturally eager to assist in the war-effort in an auxiliary capacity. Its ultimate identification with the British war effort is clear from a memorandum of 27 August 1914:

"The executive was anxious, as far as possible, to safeguard the non-military character of the Brigade, as Church authorities might deprecate the use of an Organisation in performing what might be deemed semi-military duties, but they feel that, under the very exceptional circumstances, the danger of any misconception is remote. We are out to fight against military despotism. It is a war against war."⁴⁵

Company boys were to serve as orderlies in hospitals at home and as messengers. Boys were also organised to raise money for rest huts for soldiers - one in Rouen, France, and one in Edinburgh.⁴⁶

Predictably, by 1916 - 1917, The Boys' Brigade found itself again facing the thorny issue of seeking recognition from County Territorial Associations as part of Britain's Cadet Battalions. With the unexpectedly long duration of the War seen as a test of national will, the B.B. executive was obliged to seek the opinion of company captains.⁴⁷ Here, it was soon evident that there was now widespread opinion in favour of recognition. But there was also dissent. Several Manchester companies felt that a

⁴³ W Smith holograph notes, no date.

⁴⁴ BB Gazette, February 1917, p.72

⁴⁵ Memo to Officers, 27 August 1914, BBHQ

⁴⁶ 'A Short History of the BB' (Archive Press, BBHQ), p.8.

⁴⁷ Executive Minutes 10 March 1917.

link would damage B.B. philosophy, in which military drill had ideally merely been a means to a primarily religious and social end. The Manchester group, influenced by radical Lancashire liberalism and co-operative labour association, asked the B.B. Executive to postpone any link with the County Territorial Associations, and so indirectly with the War Office, until after the War.⁴⁸

Another local suggestion was that the Brigade would be in a stronger position to negotiate on status if it did so as an independent voluntary organization, rather than if already linked to the Army Council in one way or another.⁴⁹ But, because circumstances were now shaped so much by war feeling, about 660 individual companies indicated in favour of application for Cadet recognition, with the proviso that their position within the B.B. be respected. The Brigade Executive had no alternative but to consent. With the Church Lads' Brigade already part of the Army Scheme, the Brigade opted for affiliation. Matters had shifted sufficiently by the end of the war for an Executive Meeting to ponder "whether they were likely to do more good by maintaining a protest against the Cadet movement from outside, or by associating themselves with it, and trying to influence it from within."⁵⁰

Special Cadet Battalions were, however, not automatically formed in those areas of the consenting companies. By 1919, only 311 companies had formally accepted official Cadet recognition. Of these, only about 63 adopted a khaki uniform. Looking at Brigade enrolment of about 60 000 in 1914 and 43 000 in 1919,⁵¹ it is doubtful whether the B.B. Executive's decision to allow companies to enrol as Cadets, particularly assisted the Brigade in attracting those who might otherwise have joined 'secular' Cadet units. Furthermore, the 1917 decision served to underline ideological differences between The Boys' Brigade and the Boys' Life Brigade, a fraternal movement unambiguously pacifist in orientation.⁵²

Meanwhile, B.B. structures were evolving. In January 1917, a resolution was put to the B.B. Executive to consider putting up a "Junior Corps" for under 12s. If this came about, it would act as a supply for B.B. companies. Two reasons existed for creating a separate official organization. Firstly, there were already a number of Companies which admitted under twelves, and called them "B.B. Cadets". These recruits were trained in drill and sometimes used dummy rifles. Secondly, the decline in Sunday School

⁴⁸ Manchester Proposals on Cadets, 16 March 1917.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *BB Executive Minutes*, 14 September 1918 (BBHQ).

⁵¹ *BB Statistics*, BBHQ.

⁵² *The BB with which is united the Boys' Life Brigade'.*

attendance was being accelerated by mass schooling provision of an increased range of functional skills. Within B.B. leadership, enthusiasm grew for the creation of a distinctive child body, with compulsory Sunday School attendance. In September 1917, the Junior Reserves of The Boys' Brigade was formed.⁵³

Although many companies closed during the war years, with membership eventually dropping by about 20 000, the B.B. recovered quite rapidly and started rebuilding membership levels after 1918.⁵⁴

INTERWAR DEVELOPMENTS: 1919-1939

The First World War left a long legacy. A return to civilian life and adaptation to daily routine proved difficult, and many homecoming soldiers ended up frustrated. While some found unsatisfactory employment, others found none at all. The following lines reflected the disenchantment of many ex-soldiers:

"We gave what you will give - our brains and our blood

We think we gave it in vain - The world was not renewed

There was hope in the homestead and anger in the streets

But the old world was restored and we returned

To the dreary field and workshop, and the immemorial feud

Of rich and poor. Our victory was our defeat..."⁵⁵

The sacrifice of so many lives appeared to have been in vain - prosperity and security seemed distant. At the same time, the end of the pre-war era, and the break in consciousness produced by the war, had induced new collective moods within British society. Late Victorian and Edwardian moral codes were changing, with life loosening under greater secular pleasures. Inevitably, churchgoing levels began to decline in the 1920s.⁵⁶ This was also an era of increased pacifism and anti-militarism, for memories of the catastrophe of war lingered in the popular mind. Here, Nonconformists were especially active in opposing anything that resembled militarism.

⁵³ Junior Reserves (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983).

⁵⁴ BB Statistics, BBHQ.

⁵⁵ Cited in Bedarida, A Social History of England, p. 100.

⁵⁶ Peacock, Pioneer of Bovhood, p.140.

Typically, continued B.B. expansion in the Northeast of England and in South Wales was not easy. In the Nonconformist mining valleys, for instance, anti-militarism proved an effective barrier due to the memories of the destruction of the First World War. Wales, too, was in the forefront of radical liberal and anti-war sentiment. In parts of the North-East, Church youth movements in uniform were singled out as recruiting agencies for the Army.⁵⁷ Membership of the Church Lads' Brigade declined, for it was still linked to the Army Cadet Force and wore a khaki uniform until 1936. In 1930, a historian of a Church Lads' Brigade Company reported:

"Almost immediately after the war, there was an anti-everything feeling going abroad and particularly was this feeling directed against any organisation which was considered militaristic."⁵⁸ One result was that though boys may have wanted to join, they were prevented from doing so by parents who identified the C.L.B. with militarism. And with numerous clergy adopting an independent anti-militarist stance, C.L.B. strength weakened markedly.⁵⁹

The Boys' Brigade sought ways of trying to overcome hostility which uniformed British youth organizations provoked in the post-war period of anti-militarism and pacifism.⁶⁰ It attempted this by taking policy positions to try to appease continuing radical Nonconformist fears that military means might overtake the religious ends of the movement. In 1924, the Brigade cut all ties with the War Office Cadet Scheme and discarded the contentious use of the dummy rifle in drill. This action lessened criticism, and provided scope to build associations with The Boys' Life Brigade, which concentrated on life saving rather than military drill. Negotiations towards Union had started as early as 1914. The two organizations were finally united in October 1926. The Boys' Life Brigade red-cross symbol was incorporated into the B.B. anchor to form a new crest. The Boy Reserves of the B.B. and the Lifeboys of the Boys' Life Brigade became known as The Life Boys. Through this strengthening merger, the B.B. gained more than 18 000 members.⁶¹

After union, the need for improved administrative accommodation arose. B.B. Headquarters eventually moved from offices in Glasgow to Abbey Home, Westminster, London, in 1930, which became a

⁵⁷ Springhall, *Youth and Empire*, pp. 18-9.

⁵⁸ Cited in Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Stedfast*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 121.

⁶⁰ M. Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945* (Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1980); D.S. Birn, *The League of Nations Union 1918-1945* (Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1980).

⁶¹ *The Life Boys* (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983).

consolidated National and International Headquarters. The son of the Founder, G Stanley Smith, Brigade Secretary, now moved to London.

As some social historians have emphasised, the 1930s saw a very substantial growth in organised youth movements encouraged not just by churches and religious philanthropy, but by government and humanitarian agencies.⁶² A network of clubs and associations, linked to the 'delinquent youth' conversion to 'disciplined youth', emerged to rival the older uniformed youth movements like the Brigades or Scouts. They required no uniform, no church affiliation, and did not expect members to attend religious services nor to perform military drill. The 1930s were also marked in leisure terms by the increasing popularity among the young of hiking and rambling offered by other youth groups.⁶³ The Great Depression era was also a time of 'keep fit' obsessions, and ordinary people in very large numbers took up walking, cycling, sunbathing and sports of all kinds. Moreover, the small English 'woodcraft' groups (discussed separately) pursued outdoor activities based specifically on non-religious and non-military programmes as alternatives to the conformist established Church youth movements of the late Victorian period.

Within this atmosphere, the B.B. sustained its traditionalism as best it could. It maintained its moral Church Brigade programme against juvenile gambling, drinking, and smoking. It encouraged total abstinence with specific rules laid down in the Officers' Manual - smoking was forbidden in uniform, in camp and at all B.B. meetings. Emphasis continued to be placed on traditional smartness, cleanliness and punctuality as a means of inculcating conformist and conservative attitudes.⁶⁴ And the B.B. clung to its culture of badges and certificates of attainment as the mark of respectability for sober working class youths.

Yet, throughout most of this period, the B.B. undoubtedly found its militarist image a handicap, and it tried, on occasion, to align itself with public anti-war or peace issues.⁶⁵ Examples were Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931⁶⁶ and Italy's annexation of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935. The Boys' Brigade reacted by issuing an explanatory pamphlet to restate its ethos:

⁶² J. Stevenson, *British Society 1914-45* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 245.

⁶³ Stevenson, *British Society*, p. 393.

⁶⁴ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Steadfast*, pp. 128-9.

⁶⁵ BB Leaflet, 'Torch of Peace', 1935.

⁶⁶ C. Thorne, 'Viscount Cecil, the Government and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931', *The Historical Journal*, XIV(4) 1971, pp. 805-26.

"The Boys' Brigade stood for peace. It fosters the international spirit, it encourages the study of the League of Nations, and so helps youth to visualize the world of their day leagued against the horror and wickedness of war. Yet there are still some people who think that The Boys' Brigade is military, if not even militarist, and they point to our drill and marching, our ranks, our saluting, our discipline, even to our uniforms, bands and colours. Here, they say, you copy the army and therefore, you must have a similar purpose and objective. This is the old fallacy of confusing the ends and the means."⁶⁷

Military forms of organization and a strict system of discipline were again justified on the grounds of producing 'esprit de corps', and of enabling large numbers of boys to be controlled and trained. Equally, the strong stress on peaceable Christian drill, born out of a post-1918 culture, could be seen as a tangible partial evolution away from the evangelical 'Christian militarism' of the 1880s, when The Boys' Brigade emerged from more militant and strident Protestant sources.

Whatever its constraints, during the 1930s, the B.B. grew at a faster rate than any other uniformed religious British youth movement. By 1938, it had a total membership of 161 000 in 2 756 companies, well up on its 65 000 in 1913.⁶⁸ By contrast, the Church Lads' Brigade of the Church of England, saw membership fall to less than 20 000. Government grants were now also available to advance youth work through local authority committees.

The highlight of The Boys' Brigade during this period was its 50th anniversary-Jubilee year 1933, which was celebrated in Glasgow from 8-11 September 1933. Among other events, a massed review and display was executed. About 2 500 boys from all over the world camped under canvas at Dechmont. At the Jubilee Review, Prince George was the Reviewing Officer, with 32 520 Boys and Officers on Parade and more than 50 000 spectators. A Jubilee casket, containing messages from the boys of 1933 for those of 1983 was sealed and handed over for safekeeping until the centenary. On the Sunday afternoon, a Thanksgiving Service was held at Hampden Park, where about 130 000 boys and others gathered. About another 100 000 could not gain entrance. This was the biggest event in B.B. history, and served as a public display of the continuing influence of agencies of conservatism and conformity.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ BB Leaflet, 'Torch of Peace', 1935.

⁶⁸ BB Statistics, 1938.

⁶⁹ BB Special Events Files, 1933.

The B.B. Jubilee obviously took place in the economic and social context of the 'hungry thirties'.⁷⁰ One government response was the Depressed Areas Bill, which appointed Commissioners - one each for England, Wales and Scotland, to initiate assistance for the economic development of depressed areas. Through the National Council of Social Service, money was made available to the B.B. and other national youth organizations to finance youth projects in these areas. For the first time in its history, the B.B. received Government aid in its programme to channel youth from working class areas into approved forms of recreation and training.

Apart from Government aid, the B.B. obtained further money from the King George's Jubilee Trust in 1935,⁷¹ which had been set up to advance youth movements. Only long established youth groups like the B.B. and Scouts benefited, and in turn went to great lengths to pay royal homage. Thus, the B.B. organised a Jubilee run in 1935, in honour of King George's Silver Jubilee. Runners started all over the country and carried a message to the King, congratulating him on his Jubilee reign. King George V served as Brigade Patron until his death in 1936. The mid-1930s celebration commemorating the King's reign was criticised by some pacifists who were critical of the B.B., as a demeaning measure to curry establishment patronage.⁷² Later royal runs in 1951 and 1961 did not receive the same adoring press coverage due to the contraction of the B.B.'s size.

In 1937, The Boys' Brigade participated in an official London Festival of Youth, providing a massed display. King George VI singled out the B.B. as a commendable youth movement, striving to produce 'better' citizens in trying times for British well-being at a time of concern over national vigour and imperial weakness.⁷³ In the same year, the Government's Physical Training and Recreation Act provided additional finance to aid B.B. programmes.

⁷⁰ C.L. Mowat, Britain between the Wars 1919-1939, (Methuen, London, 1955), see pp. 463-468 for 'depressed areas' and 'hungry thirties'.

⁷¹ A.E. Morgan, The Needs of Youth: A report made to King George's Jubilee Trust Fund (Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1939).

⁷² Leeds Mercury, 30 November 1935.

⁷³ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, pp. 144-3.



The largest Parade of Boys ever (32,520 present). The Jubilee Review, Glasgow, 1933. B.B. Archival Pack, B.B.H.Q.

(Photo: Associated Scottish Newspapers Ltd.)



'Jubilee Programme', 1933



1933 Casket
1983 Capsule
(B.B.H.Q. Scotland 1992)
Photo: Author

THE BOYS' BRIGADE

Founded by
SIR WILLIAM A. SMITH
1883

With which is united The Boys' Life Brigade



OBJECT: The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys, and the formation of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, Self-respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness

Vol. XLII. No. 2

ABBEEY HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1
16B, BATH STREET, GLASGOW, C2

OCTOBER, 1933

GAZETTE



Photo by Alice, Scot. Newspaper

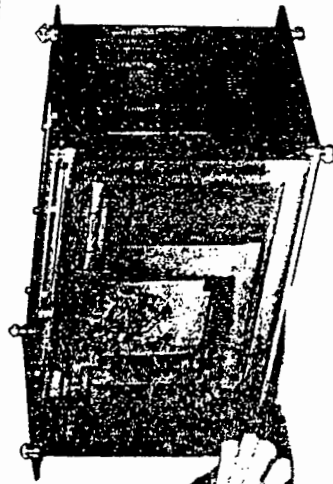
Brigade Notes

The Climes Everyone who was in Glasgow during the wonderful days of Jubilee will carry with him before his the memory of an amazing experience. Never before has the bigness of the B.B. been manifest in so remarkable a fashion. To describe the scenes adequately would exhaust all our superlatives. Over 2,000 Visiting Officers, 30,000 Boys at the Review, a congregation at the Convivial, estimated from 120,000 to 130,000 are figures which beggar all previous records. During that week Glasgow became indeed the City of the B.B., for no soul could have lived there in those days

William Alexander Smith.

Soldier of God, farewell! Thy death doth cloud
Each sky, where'er our flag blends with the blue
Above; and where alien banners proud
Flutter aloft—in other lands they knew
Thy worth. To thee what honour can we pay
Upon whose vision burst the blaze of noon,
Bereftened by that feeble streak of day
Which saw thy small advance guard march, so soon
To be a host? Afresh to consecrate
Our lives in service to the Church and State.

(From *The Boys' Brigade Gazette*, June, 1914.)
Armstrong Barry.



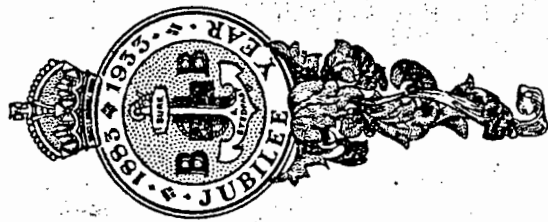
SEALED FOR FIFTY YEARS'

The Chest containing the secret message from the Boys of the Jubilee Year to the Boys of the Centenary Year, 1983

without a consciousness of the strength and purpose of the great movement which has sprung from that historic small beginning fifty years ago.

The Glasgow Officers

The local arrangements of a vast organisation undertaken by a host of willing Officers. The Glasgow Officers were splendid. What it all meant in hours of unremitting toil for months beforehand can only be guessed. The courtesy of the local man on every occasion, his forethought, his unselfishness as a toiler behind the scenes and his care for the comfort of the visiting multitude combined with his obvious pride in the B.B. and in the City of



The Boys' Brigade

Jubilee Message

from R.R.H.

Prince Arthur of Connaught

Honorary President

To the Boys of The Boys' Brigade

DURING the coming year The Boys' Brigade is celebrating its Jubilee, and as your Honorary President I wish to convey to all ranks my congratulations and good wishes on this great occasion.

FFIFTY years ago our Founder, Sir William A. Smith, started the Movement with a small body of thirty Boys. Not only has the movement grown to a great organisation of over 100,000 members in this Country, but Companies have been formed in every part of the World, and the Brigade should be proud of the fact that it is the pioneer among all the Boys' Organisations.

THE great milestone represented by the Jubilee should turn our minds to the past in thankfulness to God for the blessings which have followed our course, and in gratitude to the men who have made the Brigade what it is to-day. Although our Founder is not with us now, his spirit should remain and hearten us in all our endeavours. Many of those who served in the earlier days afterwards laid down their lives for their Country in the Great War. Their courage should make us brave; their spirit of self-sacrifice should be our spirit to-day.

WHILE thanking God for the blessings of the past, we should look steadfastly to the future, and in our turn build surely and well for those who will follow after us.

THIS, our Jubilee Year, should be the greatest in our history. I feel sure that it will be, because I know that the spirit of the Boys in the ranks is sound and true. The year should be one of strenuous and high-spirited endeavour. Determine that your own Company shall be more efficient and better than ever before. Work hard to increase your numbers. Be generous and ungrudging in your service; think always of others. Above all determine yourself to be true as steel to the high ideals and noble traditions of our Organisation.

I FEEL certain that the Jubilee Year will be the dawn of even greater days to come, and that The Boys' Brigade will go from strength to strength in its great work of making men such as the World needs to-day.

October, 1932.

Honorary President.

Message to B.B. - 1932

WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION: 1939 - 1960

September 1939 saw the outbreak of the Second World War. As with other social institutions, The Boys' Brigade was also affected. A directive from headquarters asked officers to keep going to the best of their abilities.⁷⁴ Many other officers were called up for regular service. In London, which came under heavy bombardment, evacuation orders disrupted B.B. operations in working class areas. Equally, there was new recruitment in areas where evacuees stayed.⁷⁵ Yet, overall membership dropped, and only showed some signs of recovery after 1941. The B.B. Gazette records how, under trying circumstances, the Brigade carried on its programmes, despite members coming under air raid bombardment on their way to meetings. Despite these and other disruptions, many companies carried on with the help of casual volunteers and clergy⁷⁶ who saw benefits in B.B. organisational culture in war conditions.

In 1942, the B.B. Executive decided that Battalions and Companies should not affiliate to the Cadet Force as some had done during the First World War, as this might lead to a compromise of B.B. religious aims. Boys and officers were, however, free to become members of the Cadet Force in their individual capacity, whilst still maintaining their B.B. membership. The Boys' Brigade celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1943,⁷⁷ despite the war. King George VI was the inspecting officer at a large gathering, accompanied by the Queen and Princess Elizabeth. The King's address turned on the customary ideals of Christianity and discipline, and their utility in crisis:

"When The Boys' Brigade was founded sixty years ago, your founder, Sir William A Smith, built better than he knew, for he started not only a great movement, but one from which all present widespread youth training was to spring...the B.B. will go from strength to strength because it is built upon the twin pillars of religion and discipline, and is so meeting two of the greatest needs of the present time."⁷⁸

The war proved significant for the B.B. in more than just the obvious ways of a loss of officers and disruption of personnel. One outcome was government emergency planning which recognized the importance of sustaining social, cultural and physical welfare amongst youth as part of an interventionist

⁷⁴ Circular, 8 September 1939.

⁷⁵ Glasgow Herald, 3 March 1941.

⁷⁶ BB Gazette 1940-42.

⁷⁷ Special Events file, 1943, BBHQ.

⁷⁸ BB Gazette, Dec. 1943, pp. 20-22.

educational provision. Hitherto, voluntary youth organizations had received little government recognition apart from some funding gestures in the inter-war period. Early in the war, however, the Board of Education issued a circular 'In the service of Youth', to local Education Authorities. This proposal was not so much concerned with 'delinquency' as in 1916, nor with physical fitness as in 1937, but with the notion of overall welfare for Britain's approximately 3 million fourteen to twenty-one year old school-leavers. In 1940, a new proposal, 'The Challenge of Youth', called for the official promotion of Boys' Clubs, Youth centres and other clubs.

Modernised youth provision took root after 1945 in an ambiguous climate. On the one hand, there was the experience of post-war social democratic reconstruction amidst austerity. Professional, interventionist youth initiatives were poorly funded. Alongside, voluntarist impulses such as the B.B. clung to a role. For its part, the B.B. had to engineer a viable transition in an environment of financial uncertainty and increased collectivist planning. Although it had a supply of trained officers emerging from war-time, it was not always easy to recruit in new post-war housing estates, where churches were non-existent. The fact that new towns and housing estates were formed away from inner cities in itself shifted working class populations away from areas where the B.B. had traditionally operated. Because of the absence of Churches, crucial facilities such as halls for new companies were hard to come by.⁷⁹ Also, militaristic modes were once again under popular suspicion. Such factors weighed against B.B. post-1945 B.B. expansion. Nevertheless, new training centres were acquired - Carronvale, Scotland in 1945 and Felden Lodge, England in 1949, as a means of boosting the B.B.'s own training capacity.⁸⁰ Here was a voluntary body now seeking to 'professionalise' part of its activity. But, inevitably, the 1950s saw the B.B. being weakened by Officers being drawn away by youth clubs which provided pay for service, a shift away from older voluntarist attitudes of the pre-war era.

In the early 1950s, Britain was governed by a political philosophy which was part welfare collectivist, part moral enforcement. By the late 1950s, as Marwick has suggested, 'moral policing' had weakened.⁸¹ Britain experienced material prosperity, and liberal social 'reforms' moved the public sphere ever further away from the older moral forces set by evangelism and Nonconformity. Sexual morals relaxed and drinking became more common - especially among under-21s. In fact, insobriety in all age groups in

⁷⁹ Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood*, pp. 158-9.

⁸⁰ *BB Gazette*, December 1949, pp. 23-4.

⁸¹ A. Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1982), pp. 114-116, 145, 151.

the late 1950s was above the average for the 1930s.⁸² For the B.B., a more affluent skilled working class society, influenced by television, being more 'free' and materialistic, and less deferential towards authority and older religion, posed a challenge to the Brigade model of hierarchical organisation and firm religious influence.

The B.B. thus found itself as a conservative Christian, militarily structured organization, in a difficult situation - its social environment was becoming increasingly secular and affluent, and hierarchies of authority, social discipline and Christian religion were now more readily shaken. From the Brigade point of view, conditions worsened with the emergence of delinquent and rebellious youth represented by the 'teddy boy' phenomenon.⁸³ Indeed, the 'teddy boys' (1953-7) movement produced something of a moral panic. It was an adolescent gang phenomenon which marked the modern appearance of the rebellious 'teenager'.⁸⁴ Emerging first in London among working class children, 'Teddy Boys' were socially alienated, and associated with bouts of violence. By 1959, crime rates among juveniles had reached the highest levels ever recorded in Britain, as reported by the Committee on Children and Young Persons. Significantly, it attributed rising crime rates to a number of causes, including a decline in Church attendance.⁸⁵

The conservative thinker, T.R. Fyvel, in his 1961 book, The Insecure Offenders, suggested that mass advertising, mass consumption and mass culture were to blame for creating a new commercialized youth culture which weakened family ties and undermined moral sanctions. It also led to delinquent gangs, increased moral confusion and a 'materialistic' outlook. Fyvel argued that youth services and the state had little hope of countering these tendencies, which he saw as lowering the standards of British postwar society. While an orthodox self-help ideologue, he ruefully concluded that a Church-based organization like The Boys' Brigade could not appeal adequately to postwar British youth, for it lacked the allure of more exciting cultural activities, unconnected with sober religion.⁸⁶

⁸² Ibid., pp. 149, 240, 243.

⁸³ T.R. Fyvel, The Insecure Offenders: rebellious youth in the Welfare State (Penguin, London, 1961); Marwick, British Society since 1945, p. 72.

⁸⁴ M. Brake, Youth and Youth Culture (Routledge, London, 1982), p. 49.

⁸⁵ Report cited in Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, pp. 184-6.

⁸⁶ Fyvel, Insecure Offenders.

Whatever the views of gloomy social commentators, the B.B., for its part, soldiered on. 1954 was another year of ritual celebration with the Centenary of the birth of the Founder marked world-wide.⁸⁷ In Britain, thousands of boys and spectators turned out at Wembley. Elsewhere, continuing in the tradition of aristocratic or upper middle class sponsorship, a Founder's camp for 2 500 boys was held on Eton College playing fields - this represented the first B.B. International Camp, which South African sections also attended. But in the 1950s it was evident that the B.B. was having to come to terms with a progressively shrinking area of influence. Constant small fluctuations in membership levels were a symptom of overall decline, with numbers falling to 80 320 boys by 1954.⁸⁸

The Seventy-fifth Anniversary celebration in 1958⁸⁹ was obviously modest in scale. Paradoxically, however, large international camps were now being held in New Zealand and in the West Indies. The B.B. was finding better pastures in the Commonwealth.⁹⁰ Sir John Hunt, Secretary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (the highest Awards in the B.B. badge scheme), urged after the 1958 celebrations that the emphasis should not just be on past achievements, but should focus on setting a course for the future. In his optimistic view, it was heartening to see a movement of 75 years of age in a period of decisive social, economic and political change, with its core of the Christian Faith still intact.⁹¹ But on this traditionalist basis, the B.B. could not be effectively remade as a 'modern' social and religious movement.

MODERN BRITISH SOCIETY AND THE BRIGADE: 1960 - 1983

The 1960s saw the drawn out emergence of 'teenagers', perceived as an age group opposed to adult authority and conventional social values. Linked to this was the proclaimed spread of 'permissiveness', invoked by conservative commentators, including churches, to denounce in particular sexual liberties and freedoms.⁹²

As a uniformed, Church-based, militarily structured, adult-led and single-sex organisation, the B.B. experienced quite exceptional difficulties; its nineteenth century objective of advancing 'Christ's

⁸⁷ 1954 BB Special Event File.

⁸⁸ BB Statistics, BBHQ.

⁸⁹ 1958 BB Special Event File.

⁹⁰ Reports on BB camp in New Zealand, February 1959.

⁹¹ BB Gazette October/November 1958, p. 12.

⁹² B. Levin, The Pendulum Years (Pan, 1967), pp. 120-8.

Kingdom' among boys, was more than ever marginal to a working class youth culture based on rising consumption and 'free' forms of recreation.

To address this climate, The Boys' Brigade began a reassessment of its work. The Haynes Committee, chaired by Sir George Haynes, was set up in 1963, with its main purpose an investigation of the strategies required by the B.B. to attract and secure a greater number of boys at a time of youth population increase.⁹³ The Haynes Committee concluded that the B.B. should make a more effective contribution towards preserving moral order in a society threatened by immorality because of the activities of the 'folk devils' of the 1960s - the so-called "mods and rockers", seen as responsible for deviant behaviour.⁹⁴

The Haynes Report was published in 1964, proposing several changes to B.B. administration. These related to more flexible age limits, changes in uniform, reduced emphasis on parade drill and increased time on outdoor activities.⁹⁵ A three-tier administrative structure was also recommended. These recommendations did not go unchallenged at various B.B. council meetings in the mid-1960s. Predictably, there were 'modernisers' for change and traditionalists against change. In 1966, compromise saw the B.B. reshaped into a three-tiered structure - a Junior section⁹⁶ (former Life Boys), Company and Senior Sections. Less emphasis was placed on drill and more on outdoor 'scouting type' activities like 'adventurist' expedition work. Changes in uniform followed. These included new uniforms, including a new field service style hat for boys and new badge structures and designs. In addition, the B.B. raised levels of senior female participation. In the 1920s, it had appointed the first of a handful of Lady Officers with restricted duties. Now, the ground was laid for a shift away from maternal assistance towards more recognised female leadership. By the 1970s, Lady Officers could become serving officers in any B.B. section, and achieve the rank of Captain. In 1976, the B.B. passed a motion allowing Lady Officers to serve as Captains in an attempt to counter the officer shortage. Indirectly, state youth work intervention obliged the B.B. to modify its ethos of masculine Christian authority.

⁹³ BB Gazette, June/July 1964 'The Haynes Recommendations'.

⁹⁴ S. Cohen, Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers (Penguin, London, 1972).

⁹⁵ The Haynes Report on the BB, 1964.

⁹⁶ The Junior Section (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983).

In general terms, it still proved difficult to recruit B.B. officers, not least due to welfare state youth work on the basis of growing paid professionalism. Naturally, "professional" social work leaders swamped a dwindling corps of "voluntary" amateur B.B. leaders.

By the late 1960s, the B.B. existed in an increasingly secular, pluralist, society in which church-going had declined dramatically and parents no longer saw the necessity to provide religious instruction to their children. By the end of the following decade, Sunday School attendance had dropped to minimal levels and a precipitous decline in church membership was unmistakable.⁹⁷ British society was fundamentally shaped by an attitude and atmosphere of secularization, "that process by which religious institutions, actions, and consciousness, lose their social significance."⁹⁸

Predictably, then, by the late 1970s, the B.B. was struggling in maintaining its numbers which were down to some 61 000 boys.⁹⁹ The Brigade, however, clung to a purist identity: remaining a Church-linked organisation, with the traditional purpose of helping boys to achieve a true Christian faith and to become full members of the Church. Within this, it attempted some innovations. The implementation of a new pre-Junior group, known as the Anchor Boy Section, in 1977, brought some gains, for it attracted some younger children who enjoyed recreational programmes laid on mainly by Lady Officers who focused upon primary school circuits.¹⁰⁰ This was seen as a key means to boost numbers as it became a recruiting source for the following Junior section. By 1980, the B.B. had 29 000 Anchor Boys.¹⁰¹

1979 saw the biggest campaign for new membership undertaken by The Boys' Brigade, under the slogan "The Boys' Brigade, First for Boys"¹⁰² As part of the campaign, different areas of B.B. work were promoted and examined. A study group was also set up to examine the overall B.B. programme to assess the movement's continuing capacity to meet the needs of boys and churches in the 1980s. The report, The Boys' Brigade in the 1980s: a Strategy for Programme Development, was presented in 1981¹⁰³ Several areas of concern were addressed. Emphasis was placed on the Churches' need for youth work which would lead to a good flow of boys into Church membership, and the growing moral

⁹⁷ Bedarida, Social History of England, pp. 265-66.

⁹⁸ B. Wilson, Religion in Sociological Perspective (Weidenfeld & Nicolsen, London, 1970), p. 149; see also D. Martin, Sociology of English Religion (Heineman, London, 1967) on this topic.

⁹⁹ BB Statistics, BBHQ.

¹⁰⁰ The Anchor Section notes, 1977, BBHQ.

¹⁰¹ BB Statistics, 1980.

¹⁰² BB Gazette, Dec. '79-Jan '81.

¹⁰³ BB Gazette, June/July, 1981.

Stedfast

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'Stedfast' Magazine, Nov. 1973

challenges, such as promiscuity, alcoholism and drug abuse, which were facing young people. Another recommendation was the formulation of a strategy for the formation of new companies in existing and new areas.

In 1983, the Brigade celebrated its Centenary.¹⁰⁴ Celebrations were held all over the world, with the main celebrations in Scotland. A Royal Review was held on 2 July 1983, before the Queen, when a small contingent of 3 200 boys paraded, watched by about 20 000 people. During August, international B.B. visitors were hosted in Britain. At Durham University, a celebratory gathering, Campus '83, for seniors and young officers, was held. This was followed by an International Camp at Perth, attended by 1 800 people from five continents.¹⁰⁵ During this camp period, main events were held in Glasgow, including a 'Centenary Salute' at Ibrox Football Stadium. During this open air display, the Jubilee Casket of 1933 was ceremonially handed over and opened. A message from the boys of 1933 was read and a new capsule for the year 2033, the B.B.'s 150th Anniversary, was handed over.

INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

In the post-war-period, the B.B. spread rapidly overseas, although it had already expanded abroad soon after the first company was started in 1883. The first companies had been formed in : USA (1887), Canada (1889), Australia (1891), New Zealand (1889) and South Africa (1889). Missionaries first established the Brigade in a number of British colonies or former territories. One of the earliest was the Gordon Memorial Mission Company among Zulu youths in Natal.¹⁰⁶ The Brigade idea also spread to other European countries at the end of the nineteenth century. In Scandinavia, for example, the B.B. developed close links with the evangelical Danish FDF (Frivillight Dreng Forbund) after 1902. The B.B.s widest overseas expansion occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, paradoxically within the framework of British imperial decline. An Imperial mother country which seemed to have lost its grip on the Christianity it had so enthusiastically exported, now fell further behind more vigorous centres of Christian organisational growth. New companies were formed in the Pacific, East Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. During the 1970s, the B.B.s international membership of 145 695 surpassed that of its British base, numbering 78 490. Nigeria alone had more than 67 000 boys and officers.¹⁰⁷ Due to the

¹⁰⁴ Centenary File, 1983; *BB Gazette*, Jan.-Dec. 1983.

¹⁰⁵ The author formed part of the South African contingent.

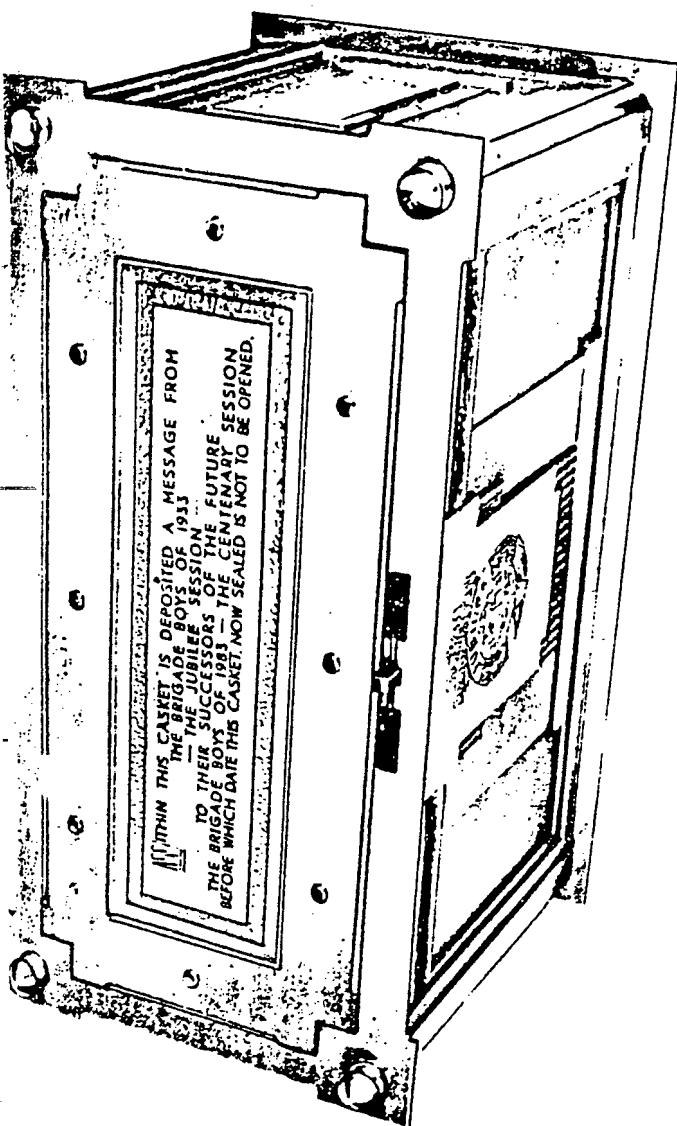
¹⁰⁶ *BB Gazette*, Feb. 1891, p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ *BB Statistics*, 1974.

FROM THE BOYS OF 1933



Sgt Bruce Hannah, 22nd Paisley Company, reads the Jubilee Message to the 25,000 BB members and friends gathered at Ibrox Stadium for 'Centenary Salute' on 27th August 1983. The message — reproduced below — was relayed direct to New Zealand by satellite and the reply, read by Sgt Martin Burrows of 3rd Upper Hutt (Wellington) Company, was sealed in a capsule — illustrated at foot of page — to be read on the Brigade's 150th Anniversary in 2033.



The Sealed Casket 1933

WITHIN THIS CASKET IS DEPOSITED A MESSAGE FROM THE BOYS OF 1933 TO THEIR SUCCESSORS OF THE FUTURE CENTENARY SESSION BEFORE WHICH DATE THIS CASKET NOW SEALED IS NOT TO BE OPENED.

TO THE BOYS OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN THE CENTENARY SESSION-1983



The Boys of the Jubilee Session, send this Greeting across the years to you Boys who will be our successors. When we write this you are, as yet, unborn, and we are celebrating the 50th Birthday of The Boys' Brigade in the year 1933. Thirty-four thousand Officers and Boys from all over the United Kingdom and from Overseas have assembled in Glasgow, the birthplace of the Movement to which we are all so proud to belong.

We have recalled with pride the history of the past 50 years, and have determined to do our best to ensure that the years ahead may also hold much of which you Boys of the Centenary Session can be as justly proud.

This has been a wonderful Session for The Boys' Brigade, which is now stronger and more efficient than ever before. A record number of new Companies have been added 202 and the strength of the Brigade to-day is 2,510 active Companies with a total membership of 111,871, an increase of 9,107 over last year. In addition, our Junior Movement, The Life Boys, has reached a total membership of 56,464.

During these days of the Jubilee Celebrations, the name of our Founder, Sir William A. Smith, has been greatly honoured as the pioneer of organised work among Boys. The guiding principles and the object which he laid down have not been departed from in the last half century, and we face the future confident that our Movement is built on a sure foundation.

We, the Boys of 1933, are enclosing this Message, together with copies of our Jubilee Publications in this casket, which will thereafter be sealed and not opened until you Boys open it in 1983.

We greet you all and rejoice to think that the B.B. spirit which is passed down from generation to generation will reach you too through 50 years, and link us all in the great Comradeship of The Boys' Brigade.

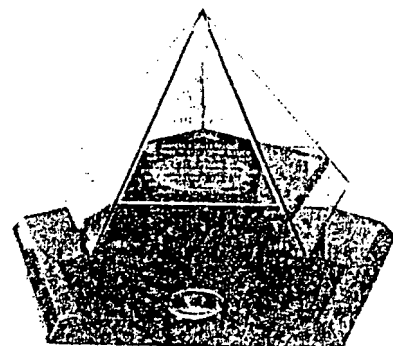
Signed this Eighth day of September, in the year Nineteen Hundred and Thirty three, at the Jubilee Camp, Dumbarton, Glasgow

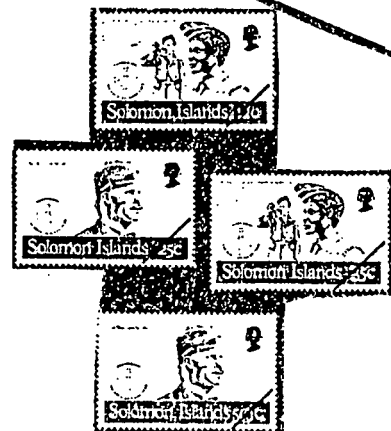
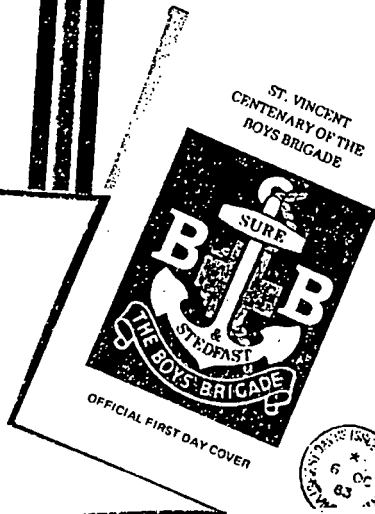
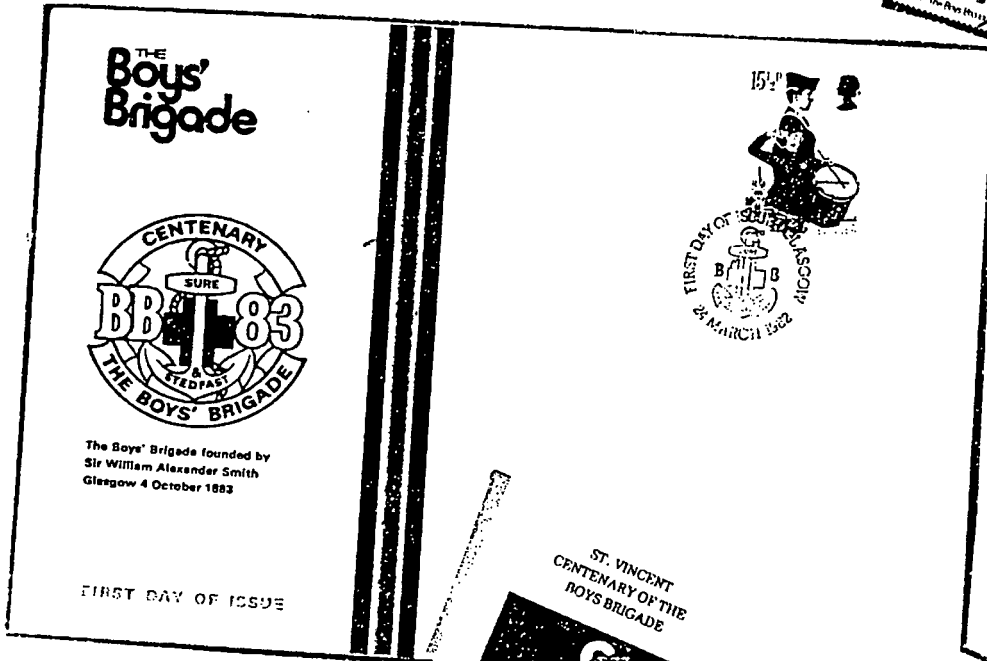


W. S. Brown
 John G. ...
 W. S. ...
 J. ...
 Alex. ...
 1st Glasgow
 27th Belfast
 2nd Glasgow
 11th Cardiff
 12th Brighton
 1st ...

Representing the Boys of The Boys' Brigade in the Jubilee Session

The capsule containing the Message for the 150th Anniversary in 2033.





STAMPS issued in Centenary Year

great increase in B.B. work overseas, its British international headquarters handed over co-ordinating responsibility to a World Conference in 1976,¹⁰⁸ established at a 1976 Dundee meeting. This body was to become the structure linking the B.B. as a whole, bringing the British Brigade and its overseas equivalent into a closer working relationship. Through its World Conference framework, the Brigade movement divided into Regional Fellowships, such as the European Fellowship, West African Fellowship, Pacific Fellowship, and Southern African Fellowship. These international strands were symbolically strengthened in 1983 through the international centenary camp. The B.B. was now no longer European Christian outreach. It had become a world fraternal fellowship.

¹⁰⁸ World Conference Papers 1976.

CHAPTER 2

DERIVATIVE MOVEMENTS

The Boys' Brigade, as a pioneer of uniformed Christian youth organisations, was instrumental in the formation of others. Other Churches started imitating William Smith's creation, irrespective of its explicit inter-denominational character. Some initiatives endeavoured to fuse recreation and military training with the aim of binding the adolescent closer to his particularist religious or ethnic community. Such adapted Brigades first appeared in London in the late nineteenth century. They comprised principally: the Church Lads' Brigade (CLB) in 1891, the Jewish Lads' Brigade (JLB) in 1895 and the Catholics Boys' Brigade (CBB) in 1896. The non-militarist Boys' Life Brigade (BLB) was founded outside of London, in Nottingham, in 1899.¹

All were established according to specific social need which arose in their own area - one being to try to ease relations of social or cultural adjustment or of religious acceptance, for instance those of Jews in late Victorian England.² They were also organised by evangelising middle-class adults to supervise and control the leisure of working-class adolescents.

THE CHURCH LADS' BRIGADE (CLB)

The first such movement was the Church Lads' Brigade, linked to the Church of England and established in London in 1891, eight years after The Boys' Brigade. It also proved to be numerically strong and long-serving. Its main strength lay in Anglican England rather than Nonconformist Scotland. The founder of the C.L.B. was Walter Gee, an ex-Volunteer officer, secretary of the Junior Branch of the Church of England Temperance Society (CETS), and active promoter of juvenile temperance work among the youth. As secretary of the CETS Junior Division, he strongly urged Sunday School teachers to take up the Band of Hope. Gee actively sought to retain a hold over those boys who had grown too old for Sunday School or Band of Hope, but were still too young to be able to join the adult temperance society. His Volunteer membership clearly provided the basis for the military method implemented in the Church Lads' Brigade.

¹ See Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* for the various brigades.

² Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Stedfast*, p. 69.

While military ranks in The Boys' Brigade only went as high as Captain, the Church Lads' Brigade adopted a more ambitious model of military organization, terminology and instructional methods. Gee himself was listed in the CLB's complex Brigade list and gazette of Commissions, closely modelled on Army practice, as Colonel. This over-militarization did some damage to its long-term prospects when it became closely linked to the British War Office in 1911. Smith had initially reacted critically to the formation of the CLB - he was against an associated Anglican section working separately under The Boys' Brigade umbrella.³

At first, the CLB, unlike the B.B., lacked support among prominent Bishops - in 1893, for instance, the Archbishop of Canterbury became a patron of the more 'broad church' Boys' Brigade.⁴ Significant backing from military ranks was, however, rapidly forthcoming; for instance, Lord Chelmsford became the first Governor of the CLB in 1893. This was the beginning of a long line of high-ranking army officers who would take up posts. In 1892, the consolidation of military organization and government of the CLB took place, with the establishment of a Governing Brigade Council. By 1897, every diocese in England and Wales was represented, with one company in Scotland. By 1893, the movement had 8 000 boys.⁵

In 1908, the CLB was challenged, like The Boys' Brigade, when the Boy Scouts⁶ were formed and rapidly expanded its membership. To ward off competition by Baden-Powell's youth movement, the CLB tried to duplicate the success of the Scouts by setting up its own version of scouting, called the Incorporated Church Scout Patrols. On the whole, despite its proclaimed social intentions, the Church Lads' Brigade never really succeeded in reaching the unskilled elements of young working class society, tending to influence those of the operative or artisan class - the sons of skilled workers: "The Church Lads' Brigade was always at its strongest in the lush pastures of the South of England."⁷ One factor which tended to exclude the low-paid and unskilled was the cost of membership. Each boy had to pay 1s.6d. on entrance in the mid-1900s, and a penny a week towards general funds, as well as 2d. a

³ Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, pp. 37-41; p. 47n6.

⁴ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Stedfast*, p. 69.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ P Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements 1908-30', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4(2) 1969, p. 7.

⁷ Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', p. 142.

week towards a seaside camp. Most casual shop boys and errand boys only earned a few shillings a week.⁸

Normative values such as sobriety, thrift, self-help, punctuality and obedience, were stressed in Brigade handbooks. The general aim was to turn CLB members away from 'slouching' in the streets towards self-discipline as the illustration of an enrollment form on the next page shows. The Church Lads' Brigade was relatively more militarized⁹ and more explicitly nationalistic than the Scottish B.B. This was clearly demonstrated in its response to the South African War - when members were actively encouraged to fight. The features distinguishing the CLB from the B.B. were even more clearly outlined in the years leading up to the First World War. The Church Lads' Brigade decided in 1911 to accept official recognition as local Territorials cadets. It acquired a khaki uniform and became affiliated to the Army Cadet movement from 1911 to 1936. Thus, for twenty five years, the CLB was directly under the command of either the County Territorials or the British National Cadet Association, leaving it little autonomy for the elaboration of religious goals.¹⁰ It also caused the CLB to be popularly perceived as a body linked directly to actual military recruitment.

The decline in membership of the Church Lads' Brigade during the inter-war period can thus to some extent be linked to its military affiliation. After 1935, an attempt was made at 'demilitarization', with the CLB withdrawing from Cadet affiliation in 1936. Further shifts took place after the end of the Second World War, with the abolition of full dress khaki in favour of outdoor equipment - cap, belt and haversack. This pushed the CLB's public identity closer to that of the B.B. But, by this stage, as Springhall has confirmed, the movement had become a negligible uniformed rival to the B.B.¹¹

THE JEWISH LADS' BRIGADE (JLB)

The Jewish Lads' Brigade which emerged in 1895, also developed from the B.B. model, focussing upon Jewish immigrant boys in the East End of London. The man responsible for this brigade was Colonel Albert Goldsmid, who inspected CLB and B.B. company routines. The Jewish Lads' Brigade aimed at reforming poor Jewish boys in the East End, keeping boys away from criminality after they had left

⁸ Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 48 n16.

⁹ Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', pp. 142-5.

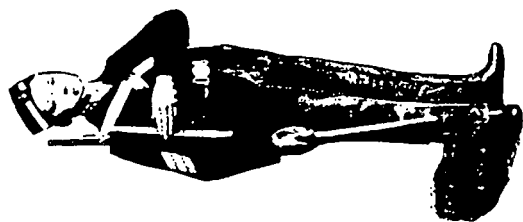
¹⁰ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Steadfast*, p. 69; Fraser, *Ph.D.*, p. 400

¹¹ Springhall, *Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism*, pp. 142-148.

WILL YOU HELP US TO TURN
THESE

INTO
THIS?

IF SO



PLEASE FILL UP AND RETURN THE FORM
ON OPPOSITE PAGE.

A Church Lad's Brigade leaflet of the 1890s that set out to attract subscriptions by its emphasis on the movement's potential as an agency of social discipline.

"YOUTH, EMPIRE AND SOCIETY" (1977), p. 94-6



Walter Mallock Gee, Secretary and founder of the Church Lads' Brigade, in the uniform of a Colonel in the Brigade.

"YOUTH, EMPIRE AND SOCIETY" (1977) (p. 94-5)

Board School, until they were old enough to join a Men's Club or other Boys' Club. Goldsmid's idea received the backing of the Maccabeans - a society of English Jewish intellectuals consisting of professional men and artists. Most of the early JLB recruits came from Jewish Board Schools. Later, as the Jewish community spread, so too did the movement. Only middle class Jewish officers were allowed into the Brigade, and only after their social respectability had been checked.¹² Another key function of the Jewish Lads' Brigade was the integration or assimilation of Jewish immigrant boys of the East End ghettos into the English community. Thus, the Brigade acted as a facilitator between the immigrant Jewish Community and the English 'way of life' outside the ghetto. The JLB became the instrument for what one of its advocates termed, "the Anglicization of the narrow chested, round-shouldered, slouching son of the Ghetto, converting him with extraordinary rapidity into an erect and self-respecting man, a living negation of the physical stigma which has long disfigured our race".¹³

In this manner, the Jewish Lads' Brigade promulgated the self-improvement ethic as part of a self-evidently desirable 'English tradition'.

THE CATHOLIC BOYS' BRIGADE (CBB)

Another brigade formed and based on The Boys' Brigade was the Catholic Boys' Brigade. The CBB was started in September 1896 at the Dockland Students' Institute - the reason given: 'to stem the great tide of leakage from the Church'. Members were drawn from the sons of a largely unskilled or semi-skilled Irish Catholic labouring class in South East London.¹⁴ Offering military training and recreational programmes such as physical exercises and sports to supplement religion, the CBB later spread to Ireland and elsewhere in England. Its main aim was to keep Catholic adolescents within the church, and to retain moral supervision, until they were old enough for the Catholic Young Men's Society from which most of its Officers were recruited. In the later 1900s, the CBB which by 1906 had around 8 000 members, experienced criticism due to its increasingly militaristic tone. After the First World War, the Catholic Boys' Brigade began to decline and after 1927 there is no further trace of its operations.¹⁵

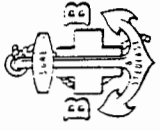
¹² Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 42.

¹³ Cited in Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 42.

¹⁴ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Steadfast*, p. 69.

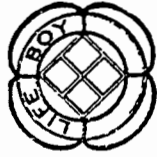
¹⁵ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, *Sure and Steadfast*, pp. 69-70.

The Crest



After Union the red cross of the BLB crest was added to the Anchor of the BB Crest, thus giving the BB the crest used today.

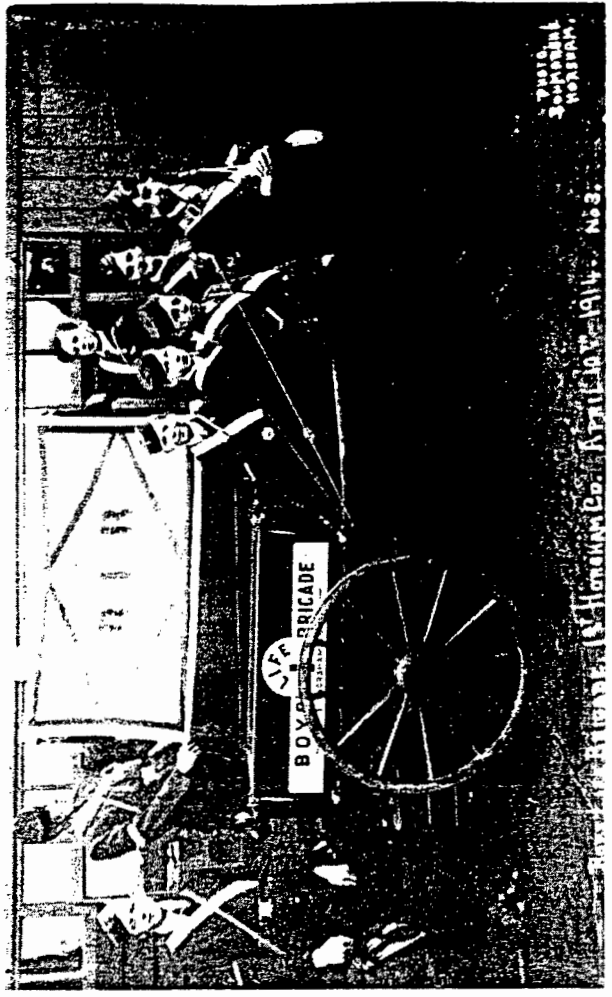
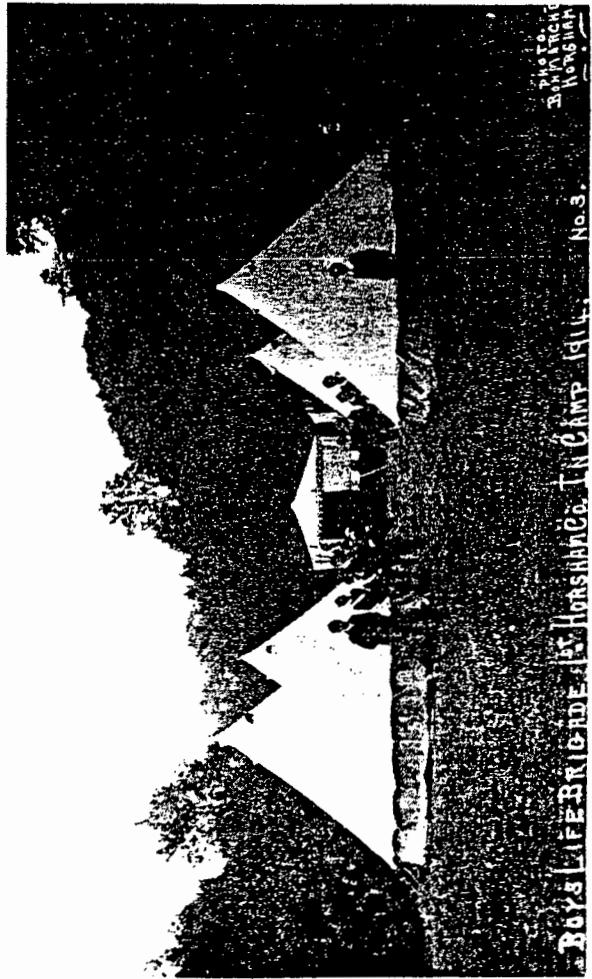
In the same way the Lifebuoy used by the Lifeboys was added to the Anchor used by the Boy Reserves.



Camp

THE BOYS' LIFE BRIGADE

As in the BB, camp was an important part of the year's programme and Officers were encouraged to use the opportunity to take their Boys Camping. In general the arrangements, planning and programme, etc., ran on very similar lines to those used in the BB at that period.

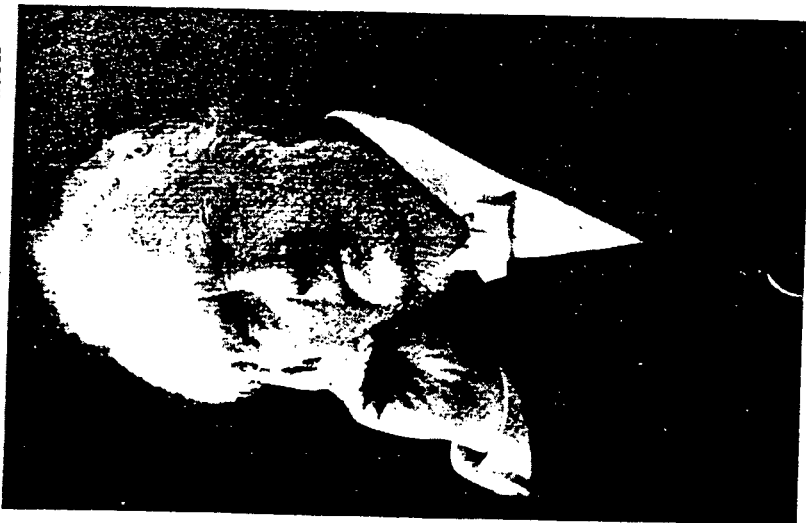


Boys' Life Brigade at Camp (U.S. No. 3. Photo. Boy Scouts of America)

"THE BOYS' BRIGADE with which is united THE BOYS' LIFE BRIGADE" (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1986)

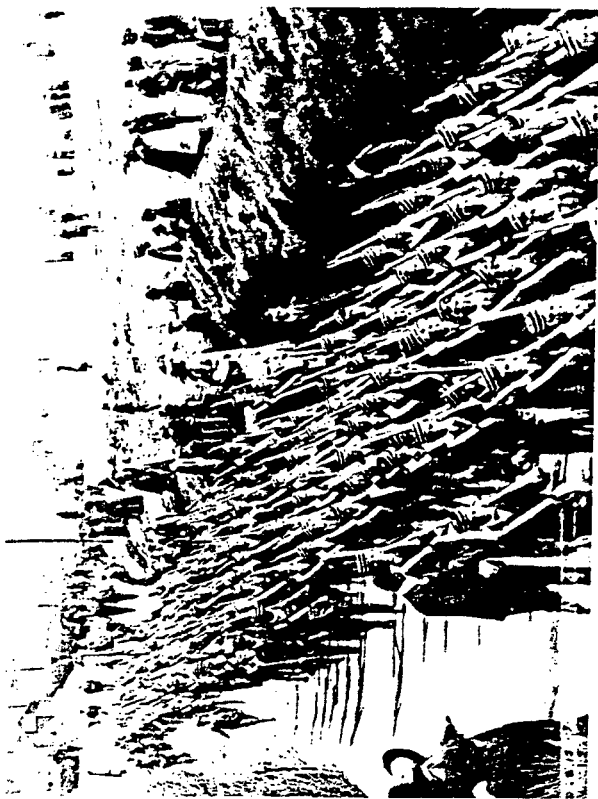
Photo. Boy Scouts of America

Founder Dr John Brown Paton

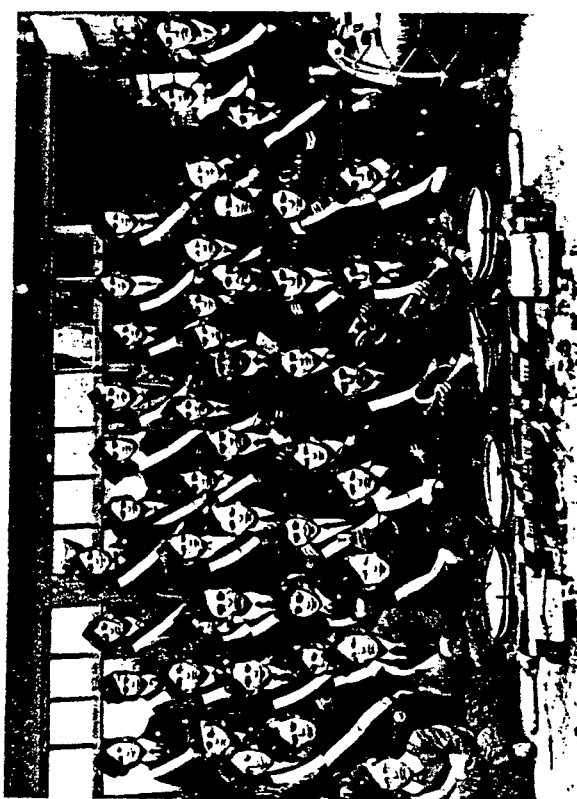


John Brown Paton was born in Galston, Ayrshire in 1830, the son of a hand-loom weaver and small shopkeeper. He lived most of his life in England having trained as a Congregational Minister. Following one brief pastorate he became Principal of the Nottingham Congregational Institute, a position he held for some 35 years. His energies and interests were wide, giving leadership and support to many organisations and societies, including the BLB, of which he was Founder and President until his death on the 26th January 1911.

"THE BOYS' BRIGADE with which is united THE BOYS' LIFE BRIGADE"
(Archive Press, BBHQ, 1986)



Up to 1925-26, some companies drilled and paraded with dummy rifles. The abandonment of the rifle eased the path towards union with the Boys' Life Brigade in 1926.



The 1st Horsham Company of the Boys' Life Brigade prior to amalgamation with the B.B. The B.L.B. was founded in 1899 with an emphasis on lifesaving in place of military drill.

THE BOYS' LIFE BRIGADE (BLB)

Yet another Brigade was The Boys' Life Brigade, founded in 1899 by the Rev. John Brown Paton. This emerged because of antagonism towards The Boys' Brigade military method, so disliked by some Nonconformist Churchmen. As Paton put it, "Personally I do not object to the military form of The Boys' Brigade, but it is useless to ignore the fact that many people do."¹⁶

The Boys' Life Brigade, organised on non-military lines, was linked to the National Sunday School Union. It worked along similar lines to The Boys' Brigade but without militarist paraphernalia. The Boys' Life Brigade stressed the ideal of heroism and selflessness through drill "by means of drill which is not associated with the use of arms, but with instruction and exercises in the saving of life from fire, from drowning and from accident."¹⁷

Life saving drill was to be used in the BLB to provide training in discipline without resorting to the military method used by the B.B., although the BLB uniform was close to that of the B.B. The BLB's greatest strength was in the Nonconformist Churches, especially the Methodist Church.¹⁸ By 1914, it had more than 15 000 boys, and a leadership heavily opposed to the Government's Cadet Scheme. Its pacifist stance prevented it from early amalgamation with the B.B., due to the latter's use of a dummy rifle and heavy military drill.¹⁹

MOVEMENTS FOR GIRLS

Movements for girls followed those for boys. The Girls' Brigade was formed in Dublin, Ireland, in 1893. In 1900, the Girls' Guildry was founded in Glasgow, the latter founded for girls between their leaving Sunday School and becoming communicants. The Girls' Life Brigade was founded in 1902 on the lines of The Boys' Life Brigade. It was built on strong temperance lines of the National Sunday School Union. In 1965, the Girls' Guildry and the Girls' Life Brigade amalgamated with the Girls' Brigade of Ireland to form The Girls' Brigade.²⁰ The Girls' Brigade drew up their own programmes and

¹⁶ Leeds Mercury, 12 October 1899.

¹⁷ Cited in Springhall, Youth, Empire and Society, p. 44.

¹⁸ The Boys' Life Brigade, (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983).

¹⁹ The Boys' Life Brigade, (Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983).

²⁰ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, p. 71.

domestic activities specifically for girls. These did not place much emphasis on drill. Their primary object was, as it remains today, "to make girls followers of the Lord Jesus Christ". Girls' brigade companies were also affiliated to a Church or Christian body. Historically, most companies have had joint Church parades with Boys. Otherwise they are autonomous.

The emergence of the various brigades established in the 1900s, shows that there was both popular enthusiasm from male youths for drill in uniform and a distinct middle class interest in linking this to forms of religious, moral and social control. Equally, the growth of brigades also suggests that, within the pressures of a short-term market demand for boy labour, particular middle class social interests recognized that more leisure time was becoming available for the 'ordinary' working boy and that appropriate controls were desirable. As John Brown Paton wrote in the early 1900s, **"of all physical exercises that can be used to allure and capture boys, to hold them fast and make them amenable to the finest discipline and some of the finest influences that can mould their character, the best are found in The Boys' Brigades, which have happily now come into vogue."**²¹

This was a late Victorian period of emphatic anxiety concerning the behavioural problem of 'juvenile delinquency'²² in urban society. It was also a time when socially aware sections of middle and upper-middle classes were being made more conscious through various mission institutions and clubs, of grinding poverty and job hopelessness. In this philanthropic climate of a 'discovery' of poverty, numbers of men enrolled as officers in brigades which relied on young Volunteers for military training, and the local church minister for religious instruction.

After the First World War, only The Boys' Brigade managed to weather pacifist criticism reasonably intact. And in the inter-war period, attitudes changed towards the 'brigade idea' - a decline in "Christian manliness" beliefs was accompanied by a relaxation of subordination to authority and regimentation in British society. Although Brigade conservatism continued to exercise an influence, by the 1950s and the 1960s, they had come to be seen as obsolescent and authoritarian - the Scouts, in contrast, appeared more acceptable because they appeared less militaristic and had no direct church affiliation.²³

²¹ Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p. 45.

²² See Gillis, 'The evolution of Juvenile Delinquency', pp. 96-126.

²³ F. Milson, *Youth work in the 1970s* (Pergamon, London, 1970), pp. 44-45; J.R. Gillis, *Youth and History*, Ch. 10.

Uniformed parades and military drill no longer had the same appeal as in the 1890s - they were seen as boring, repetitive, dull and unrepresentative of modern "teenage" trends and interests. As the Bishop of Exeter remarked in 1966, "if the Church Lads' Brigade is to remain an Anglican, uniformed, military structured, single sex organisation, it would be unrealistic in the prevailing moral and social climate to expect it to make a broad-front appeal to boys."²⁴

The next derivative movement, the Boy Scouts, was to historically overshadow the B.B.

THE BOY SCOUTS²⁵

As already suggested, the origins of the Boy Scouts in the 1900s would seem to owe more to The Boys' Brigade than is commonly accepted and known. For a start, the seminal manual written by Baden-Powell on scouting, based on his army manual, Aids to Scouting for N.C.O.'s and Men (1900), did not emerge until after his association with the founder of the B.B..²⁶

Baden-Powell was born in 1857 into a well-connected, professional middle-class family. The most formative influences on him were supplied by the corporate ethic of institutions, particularly his Charterhouse public school and the British Army. Against the nineteenth century backdrop of 'manliness', 'muscular Christianity', and 'masculine games', the Scouts emerged as a body founded on the image of the 'open' air and outdoor life. Apart from the traditions of the Victorian public school which formed part of the basic philosophy of Scouting, it was Powell's career as a soldier which shaped the organisation. It was essentially this experience which provided the material for his famous Boy Scout handbook. His military career in India and Africa, especially South Africa, during the siege of Mafeking, provided favourable public elements in the formation of the Scouts.

Baden-Powell became a Vice-president²⁷ of The Boys' Brigade in 1902, partly due to the admiration in which he was held. In 1903, attending the London B.B. display at the Royal Albert Hall, he was impressed by what he saw, "considering the number of boys available in the country (Smith told him

²⁴ cited in Springhall, Youth, Empire and Society, p. 46.

²⁵ For a historical account also see: E.K. Wade, The Chief: The life story of Baden-Powell (Wolfe, London, 1975); E.K. Wade, 21 Years of Scouting (Wolfe, London, 1929); E.E. Reynolds, The Scout Movement (Richmond, London, 1942).

²⁶ BB Gazette, February 1941, pp. 83 - Tribute by the BB on the death of Baden-Powell.

²⁷ BB Gazette, February 1941, p. 83.

the B.B. totalled 54 000), there ought, in the space of twenty years, to be ten times that number in the ranks, if the programme offered them were sufficiently varied and tempting."²⁸ In April 1904, Baden-Powell again reviewed the boys of the Glasgow Battalion.²⁹

Baden-Powell suggested that popularising reform should include a form of scouting. William Smith then suggested that B.P. rewrite his book, 'Aid to Scouting', as a handbook for boys.³⁰ This was later published in 1907, in the Gazette of The Boys' Brigade.³¹ Thus, the Boy Scouts, which was soon to dwarf the B.B., perhaps owed its original founding indirectly to Smith. To put his initial ideas into practice, B.P. organised a famous experimental camp on Brownsea Island, in Poole Harbour, Dorset, in 1907. Ten of the boys came from the 1st B.B. Poole Company. Initially, Baden-Powell had no intention of establishing a "separatist" movement. In October, 1908, he wrote that:

"the development of the scheme of Boy Scouts has assumed very large proportions and has gone beyond what had been expected in its first initiation six months ago. It was started with the idea that its chief points might form useful additions to the present attractions or training held out to boys by the different organizations, such as The Boys' Brigades, Y.M.C.A., Boys' Clubs etc., but it has been found in practice that a large number of lads have preferred to band themselves together as Scouts, independent of existing organizations."³²

Baden-Powell, as statutory B.B. Office-bearer, went around several B.B. companies to promote scouting in their company work. In 1909, for example, a special uniform was adopted for use in the B.B. for scouting activities, and a special B.B. Scout badge and certificates were devised. But many companies did not adopt the Scouting Scheme.³³ Scouting was eventually incorporated in a B.B. award and a distinctive uniform code finally discontinued in 1927. The Boys' Life Brigade also adopted such parts of B.P.'s Scouts Scheme as were considered to be useful. Later, in 1909, it became clear that Baden-Powell had visions of one combined organization under his authority. William Smith feared that this would fundamentally change the character of the Brigade movement, for Scouting's heavy emphasis on outdoor pursuits could mean less emphasis on the B.B.'s religious mission. Smith even declined, in

²⁸ BB Gazette, February 1941, p. 83; Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', p. 131,

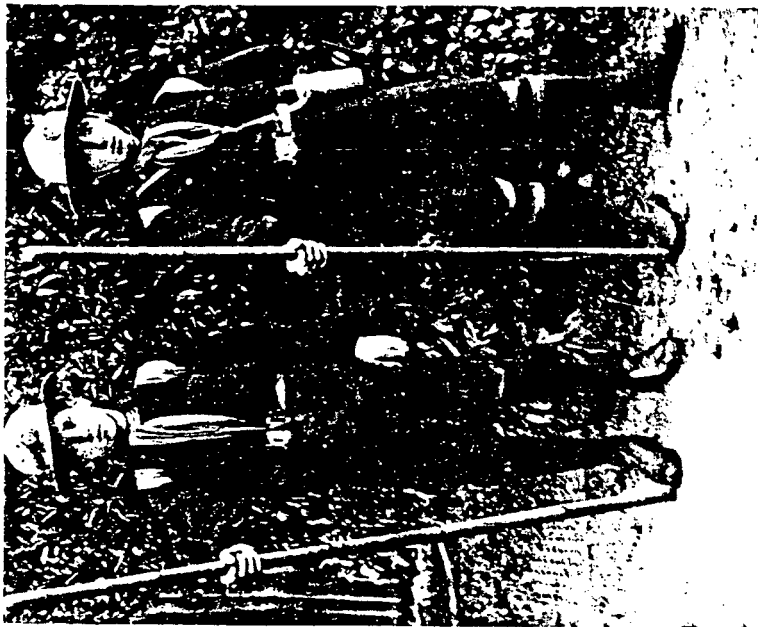
²⁹ BB Gazette, February, 1941, p. 83.

³⁰ T. Jeal, Baden-Powell (Pimlico, London, 1989), pp. 360-362.

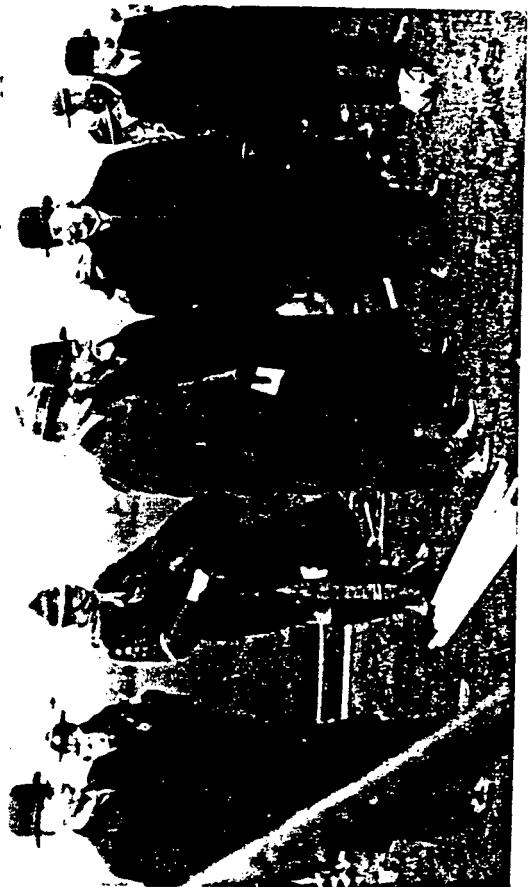
³¹ BB Gazette, February 1907, p. 83.

³² cited Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', pp. 131-132.

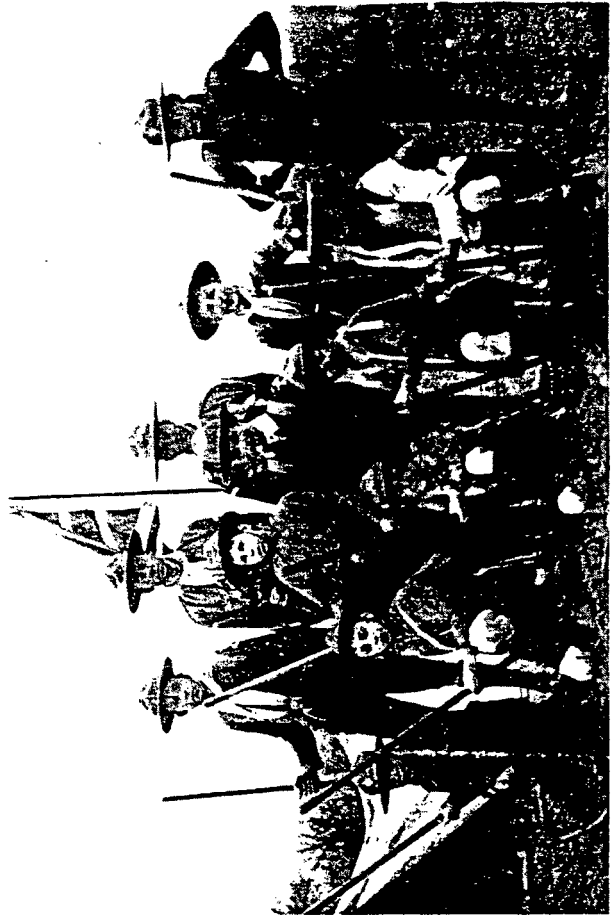
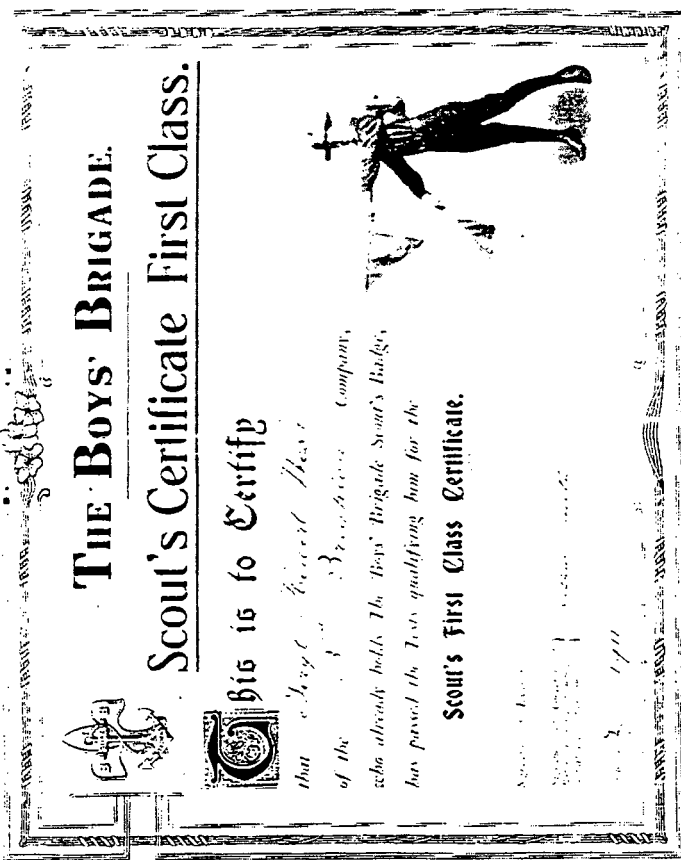
³³ The Boys' Brigade and Scouting (Archive Press, BBHQ, London, 1983), p. 4.



Prior to the formation of the Boy Scouts in 1908, scouting was already established as an activity within The Boys' Brigade. These boys are scouts of the 6th Enfield Company of the B.B.



Smith (on the left) and Baden-Powell at an inspection of the Glasgow Division of Boy Scouts in March 1911.



The 6th Enfield Company BB Scouts on an excursion with the 5th Enfield Troop BP Scouts. 1910.

"THE BOYS' BRIGADE AND SCOUTING" (Archive Press BRHO 1983)

"SURE & STEDFAST" (1983) p.109.

December 1909, an offer to sit on the Boy Scout Advisory Council.³⁴ Baden-Powell attempted to put pressure on Smith by writing again in 1909:

"We all naturally look up to you as the leader of the Boy movement - if you decide to help...the other heads will follow suit"³⁵ Also, **"my object, as you know, in starting the Scout idea was not to form an additional organisation, but to give to the B.B. and CLB, etc. an extra attraction and additional character training"**³⁶

This, however, did not alter Smith's view, despite the establishment of the Incorporated Church Scout Patrols in 1908, run by the Church Lads' Brigade until its affiliation to the Boy Scouts in 1914. Smith did not adopt an accommodationist position. The movements went ahead separately in 1909, and the Boy Scouts soon came to dwarf The Boys' Brigade in membership. The appearance of the Scouts helps to explain the decline in B.B. membership from 63 122 boys in 1909 to 55 819 in 1912.³⁷

In the aims of British youth movements, the Scouts were central to Edwardian ideologies of national purpose, gradually replacing earlier Victorian religious and moral justifications, however much the latter remained part of popular rhetoric. Baden-Powell had a vigorous vision of better citizenship and imperial preparedness, and saw youth as being effective in the defence of Empire. The later 1900s crystallised Baden-Powell's vision of the Scouts' role of national vigilance as illustrated by a notable Punch cartoon (see illustration overleaf). It has also been argued by Arthur Marwick that the Scouts had a clear planning purpose, as **"Baden-Powell's Edwardian zeal in preparing the armies of the future"**³⁸ This impulse had its origins in the military weakness which the South African War had revealed in the British Empire, along with the fears of unchecked German naval expansion. As Baden-Powell himself declared, **"it will largely depend on you, the younger generation of Britons that are now growing up to be the men of the Empire, don't be disgraced like the young Romans who lost the Empire of their forefathers by being wishy-washy slackers without any go or patriotism in them. Play-up! Each man in his place, and play the game!"**³⁹

³⁴ *BB Gazette*, February 1941, p. 83.

³⁵ cited, *Sure & Stedfast*, p. 103.

³⁶ *BB Gazette*, February 1941, p. 83.

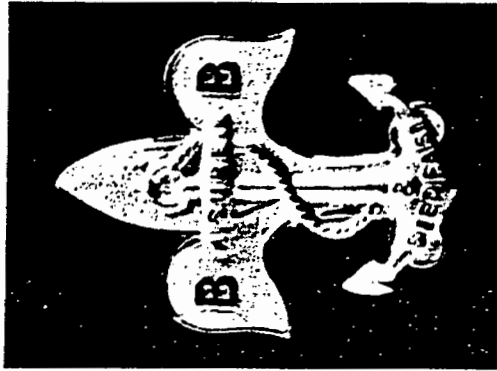
³⁷ *BB Statistics*, 1909; 1912.

³⁸ A. Marwick, 'Youth in Britain 1920-1960: Detachment and Commitment', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5(1), 1970, p. 44.

³⁹ Springhall, *Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism*, p. 150; Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p. 382; Springhall, *Youth, Empire & Society*, p. 58.

THE BOYS' BRIGADE SCOUTING BADGE

Regulations from the 1911 edition of *The Boys' Brigade Manual* for the use of Officers.



"THE BOYS' BRIGADE AND SCOUTING"
(Archive Press, BBHQ, 1983)



Our Youngest Line of Defence'. The celebrated *Punch* illustration by Bernard Partridge, linking Scouting with national defence at the time of the Crystal Palace Rally of Boy Scouts in September 1909.

"YOUTH, EMPIRE AND SOCIETY" (1977), p. 94-6

In 1910, Baden-Powell remarked on the 'bourgeois' social composition of the Boy Scouts, at a meeting of the National Defence Association - middle and lower classes were especially strongly represented in its troops in London and the home counties.⁴⁰ Reasons for a low proportion of working class members were cited as the high cost of uniform (10 shillings), "it proved difficult to bring the poorest class of boy into touch with Scouting, owing in great part to the expense",⁴¹ the fact that working class boys preferred joining a non-denominational working Boys' Club, instead of a Scouts Troop which encouraged church-going, and a British working class tradition in some areas of resistance to organized militarism.⁴²

The outbreak of the First World War offered an opportunity for Scouts to show their dependability as a national auxiliary, and to undertake other duties on the Home Front. Thereafter, the post-war period saw Scouting re-orientated which placed emphasis on recreational culture and peaceful pursuits. Scouting numbers grew from 232 000 in 1920 to 422 000 in 1930. From the late 1930s the movement continued to expand and flourish among middle class children and youth with spare leisure time.⁴³

WOODCRAFT GROUPS

Although many attribute the Scout-idea directly to Baden-Powell, there are scholars, such as Brian Morris, who give the credit to Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946), an English-born naturalist who lived in Ontario, Canada and who founded the Woodcraft Indians. An anti-militarist and an internationalist in outlook, Seton never envisaged that his ideas should be taken over by a patriotic and military preparedness movement such as the Scouts. It is ironic that Seton and Baden-Powell met cordially in England in 1906. At this meeting, the two even agreed to share and exchange knowledge, including permission for Baden-Powell to incorporate some of Seton's Indian camp games in his handbook.⁴⁴

Another opposition venture, the **Order of Woodcraft Chivalry**, was founded by Ernest Westlake. This, like Seton's movement, was based on secular education and was politically independent. This movement

⁴⁰ Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', pp. 138-9.

⁴¹ The Headquarters Gazette, 14 November 1911, cited in Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', p. 140.

⁴² Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', pp. 140-1.

⁴³ Springhall, 'Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', pp. 125-158.

⁴⁴ B. Morris, 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the origins of the Woodcraft Movement', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5(2), 1970, pp. 183-194.



(above) A 'tug-of-war' between the sexes in a Woodcraft Folk Camp near Sheffield, circa 1935, which, unlike the more traditional youth movements, highlights their co-educational basis. Note the fringed jerkin uniform (*centre*) and the distinctive badge worn on the breast of certain onlookers.

"YOUTH, EMPIRE AND SOCIETY" (1977), p. 94-7

Thus, while the Boy Scouts' leaders believed that by teaching boys to use their individual initiative and to become physically fit the nation and Empire would be saved from decline, the intention of the Woodcraft Folk was to bring up physically fit, intellectually alert young people who would 'find new life among the green growing things' and with this health be more able to fight for a collective socialist future.⁵⁰

During the 1930s, the Woodcraft Folk demanded more nurseries, parks and playing-fields, more effective town and country planning, protection of children against exploitation and bad living conditions, the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen, the abolition of the school Cadet Corps and Officers' Training Corps, better conditions of employment for young workers, adequate maintenance for the young unemployed, and the protection and endowment of motherhood. In 1932, the Folk took part in a demonstration in favour of a national health service. Into the late 1930s, the Folk also continued to play an active part in working-class politics. In 1935, it gained official recognition from the Labour Party for its campaigning spirit on behalf of collective social provision.⁵¹ The Folk also exhibited strong pacifist trends. In 1939, it opposed the Military Training Act and was also represented at the conference of the No Conscription League. In the 1960s, the movement became involved with campaigns such as the Leukemia Fund, Nuclear Disarmament and the Vietnam War Campaigns. As an ideological rival to Scouting, the Woodcraft only succeeded in attracting small numbers of members.⁵²

All British youth movements can be seen as differing attempts to respond to specific social needs and demands in specific historical periods. In terms of common effect, they brought about improvements in training and recreational facilities, especially for the working-class in the urban and industrialised cities. Equally, as movements of social reconstruction and reform, they were all grounded in an ideology of physical development through a rural environment, whatever the differing weight of religious beliefs.

⁵⁰ Prynne, 'The Woodcraft Folk', p. 84.

⁵¹ Prynne, 'The Woodcraft Folk', pp. 85-6

⁵² Prynne, 'The Woodcraft Folk', pp. 92-5.

was also recognized by Seton as the truest British version of his own woodcraft training ideas, and he became its honorary Grand Chieftain in 1923. While always fragile, it outlived Francis Vane's anti-militarist Peace Scouts, which did not long survive its founding in 1910.⁴⁵

A more ambitious and potentially more serious alternative to Scouting was the **Kibbo Kift Kindred** founded in 1920 by John Hargrave. He, too, was a keen follower of Seton's ideas, who had become Commissioner for Camping and Woodcraft, resulting in the Scout movement bearing the stamp of his personality - many saw in him a possible successor to Baden-Powell. However, Hargrave was also a rebel, both attacking the scouts' 1914-18 war-time record and further suggesting that the Scout Council was a military cabal controlling a great educational movement. Due to his criticism, he was quietly expelled in 1920. His Kibbo Kift Kindred was non-imperialist in ethos, but could not compete on the scale of the Scouts. Early in its history, the influence of Social Credit theory became clear, and Kibbo Kift emphasised the importance of guild socialist economic reform. The movement was eventually assimilated into the Social Credit movement in the 1930s.⁴⁶

In 1925, Leslie Paul of the Kibbo Kift started the **Woodcraft Folk**.⁴⁷ This was founded to provide a more imaginative and outdoor education alternative for working-class children. Its formation was again generated by dissenting bodies from the Baden-Powell Scouts who were against its militaristic and jingoist direction. The Woodcraft Folk declared for a 'naturalist' rural collectivism, **"to develop in ourselves, for the service of the people, mental and physical health, and command responsibility, by camping out and living in close contact with nature by using the creative faculty both of our minds and our hands, and by sincerity in all our dealings with our neighbours."**⁴⁸

Members were taught that the welfare of the community could only be achieved when the instruments of production were owned by the community for common use, instead of private gain. This was a clear sign of its socialist orientation.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ P. Wilkinson, 'English youth movements 1908-1930', pp. 18-19.

⁴⁶ J.L. Finlay, 'John Hargrave, the Green Shirts and the Social Credit', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5(1), 1970, pp. 53-71; see also Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements', pp. 18-20.

⁴⁷ L. Paul, *The republic of Children: a handbook for teachers of working-class children* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1938); L. Paul, *The Folk Trail* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1929).

⁴⁸ D. Prynne, 'The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement 1925-70', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18(1), 1983, p. 83; see also J.L. Finlay, 'John Hargrave', pp. 53-71; Jeal, *Baden-Powell*, p. 416.

⁴⁹ Prynne, 'The Woodcraft Folk', pp. 83.

CHAPTER 3

THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

In the early part of this study, the origins of The Boys' Brigade movement and its derivatives in Britain have been located within the context of a contemporary social, economic and religious environment. Likewise, these forces were to shape its South African context. Not least, the early role of Cape Town, with its "respectable" Victorian tradition and ideals, and its strong evangelical outreach, would form one of the crucial areas within which the organisation would take root.

THE CONTEMPORARY BACKGROUND

The development of the B.B. in South Africa should be set against a late nineteenth century background of dynamic industrial transformation.

The development of mining led to the redistribution of the white population of South Africa. Beside miners from the two Boer republics who moved to the mining centres, large numbers of people trekked from the Cape Colony and Natal to Kimberley and the Reef where mining towns sprang up almost overnight.¹ After the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, urbanization increased ever more rapidly.² The same phenomenon was already noticeable in growing harbour cities. By the mid-1870s, Cape Town had about 45 000 people and Port Elizabeth about 13 000.³

Mineral discoveries also resulted in flows of immigrants streaming to South Africa from the British Isles, America, Australia and elsewhere.⁴ It was these 'Uitlanders' who first brought the idea of the Brigade to the Reef. P.S. Horn, of the Presbyterian Sunday School, wrote in 1896, "and the formation

¹ D. Denoon & B. Nyeko, *Southern Africa since 1800*, New Edition, (Longman, London, 1989), p. 94; W.H. Worger, *South Africa's City of Diamonds, Mine Workers and Monopoly Capitalism in Kimberley 1867-1895* (AD. Donker, Yale University, 1987), p. 25.

² C. Van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914, New Babylon-New Nineveh*, 2 vols. (Ravan, Johannesburg, 1982), pp. 1-10.

³ Denoon, *Southern Africa since 1800*, pp. 93-4.

⁴ F.A. van Jaarsveld, *From Van Riebeeck to P.W. Botha* (Perskor, Johannesburg, 1982), p. 185; see also B. Kennedy, *A Tale of Two Mining Cities, Johannesburg and Broken Hill, 1885-1925* (AD. Donker, Johannesburg, 1984); Denoon, *Southern Africa since 1800*, p. 93; see also B. Roberts, *Turbulent City* (D. Philip, Cape Town, 1976).

of a temporary company have been arranged... There is no doubt as to the necessity for such an institution in this town (of at least 100 000 European inhabitants), and it has long been a...question as to how a hold on the senior scholar...is to be retained"⁵

In this increasingly urban environment, economic conditions created a more complex class structure, with a rapid increase in the number of white collar workers such as clerks, accountants, lower grade civil servants and state employees.⁶ Most of them aspired to the middle-class values of the late Victorian age. Many of the first recruits to the B.B. came from the families of this grouping.⁷ The pattern of community life for urban working-class people also changed, especially in expanding Johannesburg and Cape Town. On the Rand, population pressures aggravated the lack of decent housing, worsening and overcrowded living conditions, squalor and the abuse of liquor.⁸ In Cape Town, geographical fragmentation meant that artisan classes lived in one area, worked in another and attended church in another. Membership of an organisation could thus be determined by a man or youth's area of residence, his employment, education or the church to which he belonged or the church which reached out to him.⁹ Many areas were riven with poverty, were increasingly prone to social disturbance¹⁰ and were perceived to represent an increase in health hazards. These strains created growing anxiety amongst authorities.¹¹

At the beginning of the 1880s decade in which The Boys' Brigade was established, social reform initiatives were being shaped by public interventions. Public health reform had become visible already by the 1870s, with the Contagious Diseases Act of 1868 addressing the issue of prostitution in Cape Town.¹² This in itself highlighted the low standard of poorer classes' health, and among churches, illuminated the need for an agency which could promote physical as well as moral fitness.¹³ Slum areas also came under scrutiny¹⁴ and brought into focus the classic environment for the work of an 'improving' agency such as The Boys' Brigade.

⁵ BB Gazette, 1 April 1896, p. 89.

⁶ V. Bickford-Smith, 'Commerce, Class and Ethnicity: Cape Town at the advent of the Mineral Revolution (c,1875)', Social Dynamics, 13, 1987, pp. 61-82.

⁷ BB Gazette, October 1892, p. 130.

⁸ Van Onselen, New Babylon, pp. 44-47.

⁹ A. Badham, 'The badge of Respectability: Anglicanism in turn-of-the-century Woodstock', Studies in the History of Cape Town (6), 1988, pp. 83-95.

¹⁰ R. Hallet, 'Violence and Social Life in Cape Town in the 1900s', Studies in the History of Cape Town (12), 1984, pp. 126-176.

¹¹ E. Bradlow, 'Cape Town's labouring poor a century ago', S.A. Historical Journal (9), 1977, pp. 19-26.

¹² E. van Heyningen 'Prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Acts: the Social Evil in the Cape Colony, 1868-1902', Studies in the History of Cape Town (5) 1984, pp. 80-87; Van Onselen, New Babylon, pp. 103-143.

¹³ E. van Heyningen 'Poverty, Self-Help and Community: The Survival of the Poor in Cape Town, 1880-1910', S.A. Historical Journal (24), 1991, pp. 128-143.

¹⁴ Bradlow, 'Cape Town's labouring poor'; pp. 25-26; Van Heyningen 'Prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Act', pp. 80-87.

Increased concern for physical well-being was also reflected in the establishment and growth of organised sport and recreation in South Africa, such as Association Football. With sports quickly incorporated as an attraction into B.B. activities, the Pretoria Battalion typically reported in 1892, "The Battalion Cricket Club has done fairly well, a healthy interest in the game being taken by the members."¹⁵

The spread of the Brigade idea through South Africa was partly facilitated by the improvement of transport and communication which had important social consequences. The expansion of the national telegraph network in 1864¹⁶ shortened communications distances, as did the expansion of the railway system in the 1880s and 1890s. Railways were especially important to a mobile body with a programme based on excursions, meetings, and camps. Thus, the 1st Cape Town Company went on its annual camp to Muizenberg by train from Cape Town and boys would embark en route with clockwork precision "Companies will leave Cape Town by the 5.5 train, but the Country Companies must join the train which leaves Cape Town at 4.35, Woodstock, 4.40, Salt River, 4.43, Observatory, 4.47, and Mowbray, 4.49. The two sections will join the same train at Rondebosch. We are due at Muizenberg about six, and immediately march to the camp."¹⁷ The expanded railway network further facilitated the development of the organisation by allowing inter-company contact - such as the companies of the Strand/Somerset West area which came to form part of the Cape Battalion. The improvement of postal facilities between South Africa and Britain meant further that contact could be maintained between international Headquarters and the growing number of individual units from 1889 onwards in all parts of South Africa.

Communication in the last two decades of the 19th Century was also expanded by the growth of a modern urban press. Newspapers such as the Cape Times (Cape Town), Cape Daily Telegraph (Port Elizabeth) and Natal Mercury (Durban) reached growing parts of the literate English-speaking population. These newspapers reported regularly on Boys' Brigade inspections, camps, and displays.¹⁸

¹⁵ BB Gazette, October 1892, p. 130.

¹⁶ Van Jaarsveld, From Van Riebeeck; p. 181.

¹⁷ Cape Times, 29 December 1894, p. 7.

¹⁸ Weekly column 'BB Gazette', p. 7 in Cape Times on Saturdays from December 1894-1895; Cape Daily Telegraph, 4 February 1899.

RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT

By the late nineteenth century, major denominations, such as the Church of England (Anglican), Presbyterian,¹⁹ Congregational and Wesleyan Methodist churches, had a dispersed presence. Moravians and Lutherans also continued to establish their own mission stations. The Boys' Brigade became affiliated to most of these churches.²⁰

In late Victorian Cape Town, as in contemporary late Victorian London, a charitable base for church missionary work to the poorer classes provided for social action. An evangelical spirit which came to South Africa through clergy and middle-class elites promoted a spirit of 'social outreach' and mission work, building an environment in which Boys' Brigade companies were to take root. For instance, in the 1890s, some poorer illiterate boys were taken into The Boys' Brigade on the basis of roving street recruitment.

More particularly, uniformed evangelism began to be transmitted to South Africa as a distinct component of mission 'youth' work. Thus, The Boys' Brigade came to be formed alongside others such as the Y.M.C.A.,²¹ Salvation Army and Temperance Movements.²²

Typically, groups of working-class boys in large cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg would be sought out by individual middle class philanthropists who wanted to exert moral concern for respectability through B.B. personal association. For instance, in Pretoria, E.F. Bourke of E.F. Bourke & Co. became involved in importing B.B. uniforms, and later became a company captain.²³ In Cape Town, Maxwell & Earp imported uniforms,²⁴ whilst the Mayor of Cape Town, Liberman, presented a shield for Cricket Competitions in 1906.²⁵

¹⁹ E. van Heyningen, 'Poverty, Self-help and Community: The survival of the poor in Cape Town, 1880-1910', *S.A. Historical Journal* (24) 1991, p. 137; G.C. Cuthbertson, 'The impact of the emancipation of slaves on St Andrew's Scottish Church Cape Town, 1838-1878', *Studies in the History of Cape Town* (3) 1984, pp. 49-63; D.K. Martin, 'The Cape Town Church Building Boom', *M. Phil. Thesis*, UCT, 1993, pp. 8-13; 89-90.

²⁰ Enrolments in Extract of *BB Overseas Register* c. 1889.

²¹ Van Onselen, *New Babylon*, pp. 116-7. The YMCA in Johannesburg felt that the church had to take a more active role in the debate on moral issues.

²² E. Van Heyningen, 'Poverty, Self-help and Community', pp. 133-4; 138.

²³ *BB Gazette*, October 1892, p. 130.

²⁴ *BB Gazette*, April 1901, p. 117.

²⁵ *BB Gazette*, November 1906, pp. 44-45.

When one considers the religious setting within which The Boys' Brigade movement originated and developed, one must look at the importance of the Sunday School movement. Many officers felt that the B.B. could assist the Sunday School because boys were compelled to attend Bible Class as part of their B.B. programme.²⁶ According to J.M. Parker, Captain of the 1st Cape Town Company, in 1890: "for the Lord's work we must not refuse the privilege of helping such a movement, so important for the rising generation. My experience in Cape Town of what can be accomplished by this Brigade amongst the Boys is marvellous."²⁷ The idea of manliness, energy and outdoor physical vitality, was seen as an instrument to keep boys occupied and to mould them into respectable future colonial citizens. Such ideas were fostered by early local B.B. leaders.²⁸

IDEOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Adolescent years came to be seen as no less a problem in colonial South Africa as in Britain, with the B.B. Gazette declaring: "We picked them off the streets, of the roughest Boys in town, and oh! were they wild!... They are now a lot of boys that I am proud to be with. When I first saw these boys I thought it would be impossible to do anything with them"²⁹ This social intervention was seen as essential in the interests of the social and moral future of colonial social order, not least with physical and moral decline having been identified in cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Kimberley.³⁰

As in Britain, social elite patronage of the B.B. was developed. Figures such as the Administrator of the Cape, Sir William Gordon Cameron; Dr Muir, Superintendent General of Education and F.W. Reitz, Secretary of the State in Transvaal, became members or patrons of the B.B. in the 1890s.³¹

A large portion of British imperial reading material found its way to South Africa, and was placed at the disposal of young readers in the 'Boys Rooms' which were created in places such as Cape Town in the 1890s. Among papers were copies of the B.B. Gazette. These in turn might have influenced new recruits in their beliefs about the B.B. movement, although the transmission of knowledge is naturally difficult to estimate.

²⁶ BB Gazette, April 1896, p. 89.

²⁷ BB Gazette, October 1890, p. 35.

²⁸ BB Gazette, December 1894, pp. 190-1.

²⁹ BB Gazette, October 1890, p. 35.

³⁰ Van Onselen, 'New Babylon-New Nineveh', pp. 44-45, 106-7; Roberts, Turbulent City, pp. 84-85.

³¹ BB Gazette 1894-1904.

The existing social, economic and religious mood of the 1880s created an environment within which The Boys' Brigade took root and expanded. Church interests, aware of the adolescent problem in the form of unruly boys loitering on streets, were drawn in to address it. The main reason for asserting control was in the interests of established authority, and the spiritual and moral guidance which was of concern to self-proclaimed urban Christian communities. This concern is evident in a revealing quote from the B.B. Gazette column in The Cape Times of 1895: "A Boy is a gregarious animal and unless some good companionship is found for him, he will find company for himself that is probably not good."³²

In order to obtain a summary view of formative influences in local situations where companies originated, we should now turn to different regions, and their dynamics.

³² Cape Times, 2 February 1895.

CHAPTER 4

THE FIRST BOYS' BRIGADE COMPANIES: 1889-1902

In the closing years of the nineteenth century, word of the establishment of The Boys' Brigade in Scotland spread not only across Britain but overseas as well. Not surprisingly, some of those who were to establish the movement in South Africa were ex-B.B. members from British companies, while others trickled in to provide further support. Typically, in the words of one Cape Town B.B. pioneer in October 1890, there was pleasure at "a visit the other day from Mr Murray, late Captain of the 11th Edinburgh Company, and his presence will help greatly."¹ A range of informal church associations and contacts, resting on word-of-mouth, was crucial to despatching volunteers and sympathisers to fledgling B.B. initiatives. A tiny volunteer minority started and sustained companies, relying on past associations and the befriending of 'known' strangers, "I had a visit the other day from a...late Captain,...I was happy to see him, though a stranger; the want for good workers is a terrible draw-back with us."²

In 1906, William Smith remarked aptly of mission work overseas: "It is a great stimulus to us in the old country to know that there are thousands of our comrades beyond the seas enrolling in The Boys' Brigade, and helping to keep the flag flying for all that is good in Boyhood and Manhood."³

For its part, in the 1890s, Brigade Headquarters was not particularly interested in this unplanned and somewhat disorganised overseas expansion. Reports of B.B. work overseas were mostly made by people visiting there, or through irregular reports and letters by various captains and officers. Control and contact were informal, and resources slight, since nearly all effort went to support and sustain B.B. work in Britain.

The foundations of the movement in South Africa were mainly laid by later nineteenth century British immigrants. These included Scotsmen prominent in commercial, investment, professional, trade and church connections who arrived with knowledge of B.B. activity.

¹ Reported by John Parker, 1st Cape Town Co., BB Gazette, October 1890, p. 35.

² BB Gazette, October 1890, p. 35.

³ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure & Stedfast, p. 72.

At most, B.B. Headquarters in Glasgow could only support such emigrants by piecemeal advice in the B.B. Gazette, for resources were limited. No local B.B. literature existed, and companies and officers relied on overseas manuals and books for models upon which to base derivative operations.

William Smith, the B.B.'s founder, played a leading role in what minimal overseas extension commenced. As an able administrator, for example, he tried to keep up morale with a constant flow of letters to officers in the field, offering encouragement.⁴

THE B.B. IN NATAL

The first white B.B. company was formed on 1 February 1889 at Pietermaritzburg in Natal.⁵ This company, and a later Durban initiative, had a short life, partly due to misidentification by some parents of the Brigade with colonial Volunteers, an active militia force in the region.

Another adverse challenge was the colonial government Cadet Forces. It was noted by B.B. observers that whereas the B.B. was taking root in the Transvaal, the early movement was struggling in Natal. An apparent reason was that it could not compete with officially supported Cadet Boys of the Natal Colony.⁶ These recruits were provided with real guns and permitted target shooting, as opposed to the B.B. dummy rifles. Moreover, each day-school had the compelling attraction of its own resident company of armed cadets.

In 1895, a short-lived Durban Battalion with five companies was established : two were linked to the Presbyterian Church; two to the Wesleyan Sunday School and one to the Congregational Church; but they did not survive the 1890s. A temporary upswing in B.B. work occurred with the outbreak of the South African War of 1899-1902, when white refugees from the neighbouring Transvaal fled to Natal and attached themselves to Christian communities. Among them was the displaced secretary, H. Bolton, of the Transvaal Battalion, who assisted the movement in Natal and despatched regular field reports to Britain, "I am pleased to tell you that we have organized a Company of the B.B. here in

⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵ Extract Overseas Register, p. 24; (BBHQ, London.)

⁶ BB Gazette, November 1902, p. 42.

Maritzburg.⁷ This renewal of mission-work was, however, also fragile, for it was continuously difficult to compete with the colonial Cadet Scheme. Numbers in the 1st Maritzburg Company reached a mere forty by 1901. Thereafter, Ambulance work was attempted, and an Easter Camp planned. September 1901 saw the Company's first anniversary, with a display in a YMCA hall. The company also took part in the official reception of the Duke (Brigade Patron) and Duchess of York who visited the Colony in August 1901, along with Lord Kitchener who joined the royal party. The Boys' Brigade only had about sixty to seventy boys parading next to an 800-strong Natal Volunteers force and about 1 000 School Cadet Boys.⁸ This clearly illustrated the B.B.'s inability to compete with more militaristic and better endowed colonial youth institutions.

In 1891, work among the Zulu in Natal was started. John M. Moir, former captain of the 1st Aberdeen Company, Scotland, a cousin of Lord Aberdeen (B.B. President, Britain), founded the 1st Umsinga Company at the Gordon Memorial Mission. He had left Scotland having been a Church Elder, Superintendent of the Wellington Road Sunday School, President of the Abstainers Union and Band of Hope as well as being the founder of the Aberdeen B.B. Battalion. Moir was, in many ways, an exemplary B.B. personality. He initially reported about 28 members in the movement; by 1892 they had received uniforms from Scotland and were being taught drill. English command guides provided the basis for squad control, with Moir noting, with unconscious humour, "In drilling we have found it necessary to stick to the English words of command, as the Zulu translation of them are often too round about."⁹ Moir later learned northern Nguni himself and was also assisted by regular local Zulu interpreters.

ORANGE FREE STATE (ORANGE RIVER COLONY)

In 1854, the Orange Free State became independent under the Bloemfontein Convention. Citizenship was limited to whites, and English speakers who identified with the Republic were welcomed. Although only Dutch was permitted in the Volksraad, English was commonly spoken in town and business life. Even though the region never acquired a large 'Uitlander' (British) element, because of the contiguous

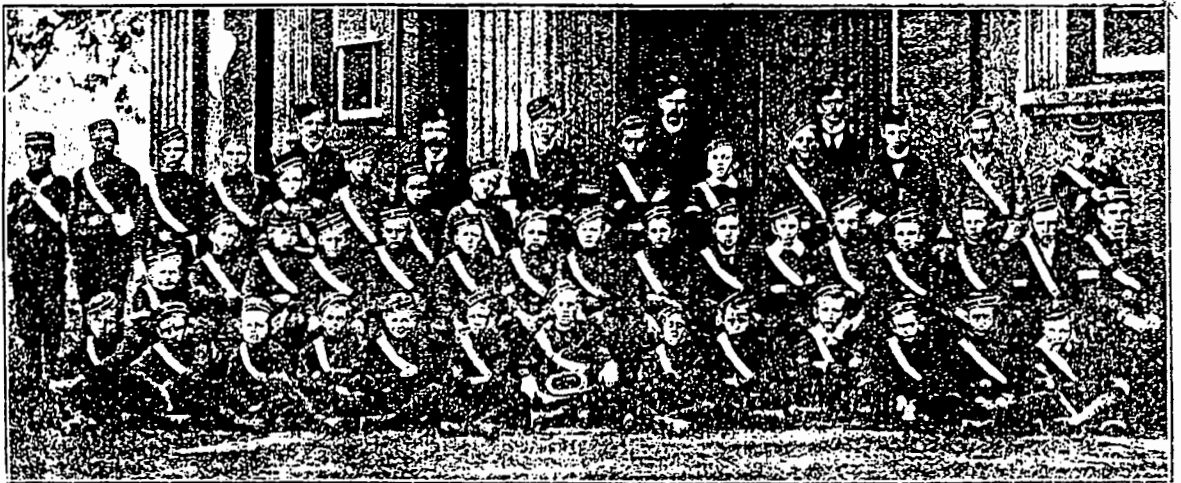
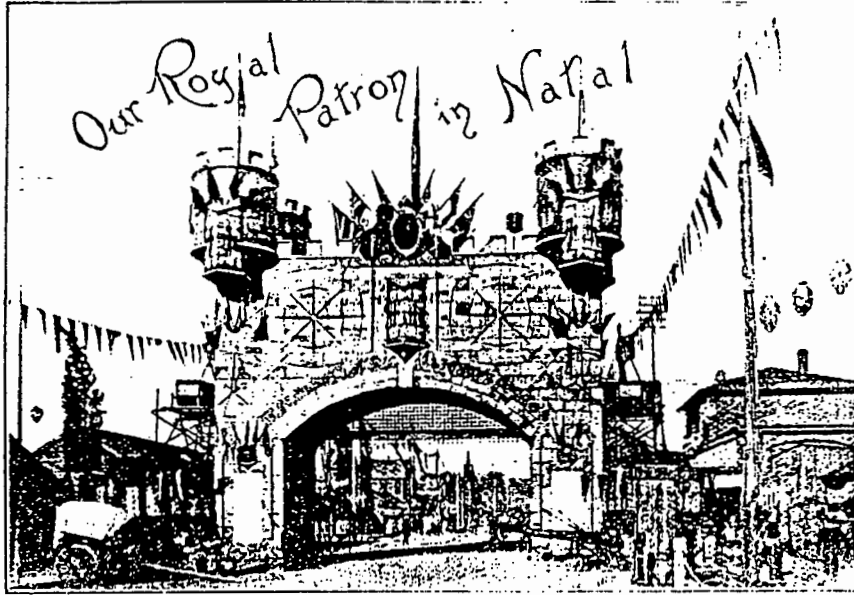
⁷ BB Gazette, January 1902, p. 16.

⁸ BB Gazette, October 1894-November 1902; Annual BB Report 1895/96; The Brigadier, December 1901, p. 189.

⁹ BB Gazette, December 1894, p. 191; February 1891; p. 20; Annual Reports 1891-1895.

Dec 1901

THE BRIGADIER



1ST MARITZBURG AND 1ST DUNDEE COMPANIES

THE BRIGADIER DEC. 1901.

commercial influence of the Cape Colony, the OFS was tied into British colonial networks. Not surprisingly, there was a small cultural basis for the formation of B.B. companies.

One early company was formed in Ficksburg, connected to the Wesleyan Methodist Church, under the Captaincy of W. Arthur Quail. Another was formed at Harrismith in 1899 and linked to the Presbyterian Church. This company had 30 members.¹⁰

TRANSVAAL (SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC - S.A.R./Z.A.R.)

The B.B. in the Transvaal was comparatively more visible and showed more growth and activity than the Orange Free State. Due to the booming mining economy, a strong British commercial and technical presence supplied a settler population from which both staff officers and young recruits were drawn into Boys' Brigade networks.

The first company was started on 14 April 1891, linked to the Presbyterian Church in Pretoria, under Rev. James Gray. Its captain was the merchant, E.F. Bourke. Very soon, a British Pretoria Battalion with three companies was operating with 140 members, all of whom were linked to the Presbyterian Church. This Battalion was both active and well-endowed, and hosted various recreational activities for its members, including cricket, football, cycling, and sports. Various parades and exhibitions were also held and a guard of honour was reported for the State President of the S.A.R. in 1898. The B.B. was scrupulously impartial in a troubled 'Uitlander' political atmosphere; it carefully observed constituted authority. In line with the B.B. in Britain, where military officers would do inspection, it was envisaged that General Piet Joubert would perform this function. The Battalion, however, did not grow, and soon ceased operation in 1895, due to leadership difficulties.¹¹

A more durable Transvaal Battalion was formed when companies were started in Johannesburg and surrounding areas. By the late 1890s, there were eight initial companies. A more sustained initiative came about in July 1898, due to the efforts of Rev. J.C. Harris, of the B.B. company in Cape Town. Driven by his enthusiasm and effort, the Battalion's strength ultimately stood at 14 companies and about 500 boys by the end of the decade. Almost all Protestant churches were represented: Wesleyan,

¹⁰ BB Gazette, October 1894, pp. 172-3.

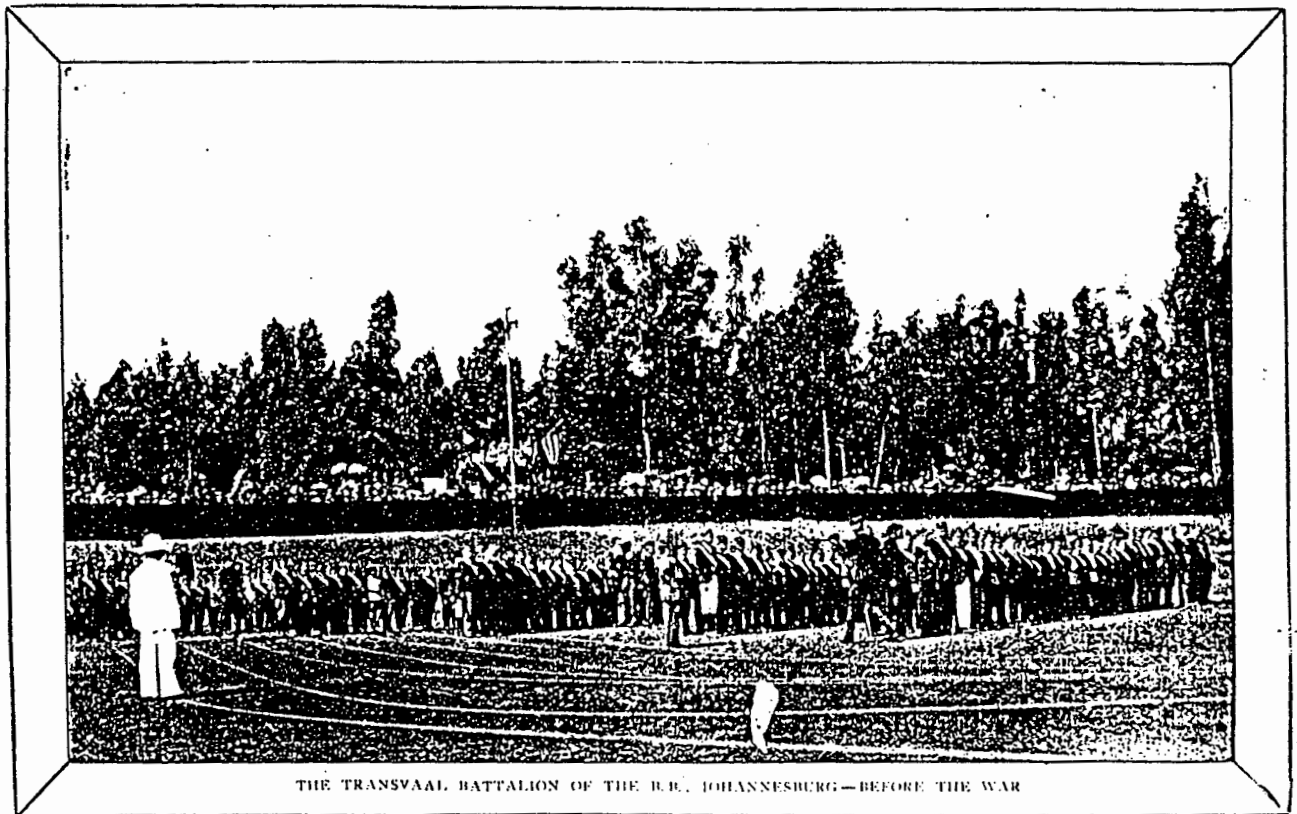
¹¹ BB Gazette, October 1892, p. 130.

The Brigadier

VOL. I. No. 8

AUGUST 1901

PRICE ONE PENNY



THE TRANSVAAL BATTALION OF THE R.F. JOHANNESBURG—BEFORE THE WAR

'The Brigadier', August 1901

Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Dutch Reformed, Congregational, and United Church were all linked to companies. The B.B. thus succeeded in crossing English-Dutch linguistic and cultural boundaries. Companies were formed in Jeppestown and Clifton, suburbs of Johannesburg, and at Boksburg and Krugersdorp. Rev. Harris became Battalion President and F.W. Reitz, State Secretary, became Vice-President. Of interest is the fact that one Johannesburg company had 20 Jewish boys among its 90 members. A clash of creeds seemed inevitable, and in 1899 a Jewish Lads' Brigade, of 150 boys, was established, after which a fraternal form of communication was established between the B.B. and the JLB. In the years before the outbreak of the South African War, the Transvaal Battalion secured the patronage of the S.A.R. through Reitz's position as Vice-President. In his view, as he wrote to Harris:

"I trust that, under God's guidance, your organization and your paper may justify their existence, by turning Boys, who might else have gone astray, into the right path, and making of them true Christians and loyal citizens of the land they live in."¹²

By emphasising the notion of 'loyal citizens', Reitz was underlining a political claim, given the contested citizenship position of Transvaal 'Uitlanders'. In a subsequent wartime letter to Harris, Reitz added that he did not like the name "Transvaal Battalion". He wished it to be called the "South African Republic Battalion", to affirm B.B. identity with the Republic. Harris's report further records that at another demonstration in a Johannesburg hall, Reitz ventured that he hoped that if ever boys had to shoulder real rifles instead of dummies, it would be in defence of the local Boer state against its enemies. Considering that ninety percent of boys were British, it was a touchy statement. The situation was helpfully saved by "Laughter" and the "next item".¹³

The pre-war background had already been one of intensifying political tension and strain due to Britain's imperialist policies of encirclement in the 1890s. In one instance, when dummy rifles from overseas arrived on the Rand in 1899, it proved difficult to clear them through Republican Customs. No sooner were they issued to boys, than they were arrested by ZARPs (police). The guns were taken away, and another British 'plot' was revealed and squashed. Reitz had to be approached to intervene and clear up the misunderstanding. The Transvaal Battalion also had no flag. Due to the political atmosphere, it was not feasible to use a British flag, neither could the B.B. use the 'Vierkleur', for its commanding officers did not have citizenship as 'Uitlanders'. The experience of the JLB is instructive. Spurred on by

¹² BB Gazette, September 1899, p. 12.

¹³ BB Gazette, May 1901, p. 135.

a B.B. Guard of Honour to Paul Kruger, the JLB ceremonially assured him of its loyalty in 1898. As they marched under the flag of David, the President rebuked them and ordered them to return with a proper flag. They did, returning with a 'Vierkleur'. Pleased, Kruger declared, "Now you are my children, for you follow my Flag."¹⁴

The pre-war expansion of the B.B. in the Transvaal was not without predictable problems. One factor was the shortage of skilled officers who had experience of B.B. methods in Britain. The result was that each captain became his own 'Manual;', and acted with a high degree of autonomy.¹⁵ A second factor, then, was that individual B.B. companies had difficulty attaining easy cohesion.

At the turn of the century, Rev. Harris reported that there were no coloured or African companies in the Transvaal: "there were no coloured Boys in the Transvaal Battalion. Probably Companies would have been started had circumstances permitted."¹⁶ Here, he was cognisant of segregationist realities. The Z.A.R. had firm attitudes towards both blacks and 'outsiders' and on the nature of its recognised community. As Donald Denoon has noted, "at least a million people lived in the Transvaal Republic in the 1890s, but the effective political community was very much smaller. When ...Kruger had to reach a decision, he could often disregard the opinions and interests of the African majority entirely;...he need attend mainly to the interest of the Africaner 'notables'..'het volk'...Most Uitlanders, too had minimal access to the State."¹⁷

CAPE COLONY

Historically, the strength of the B.B. movement in South Africa over time came to lie principally in the Cape Colony, especially in the Cape Town Battalion, which was formed in 1894. This Battalion had 500 members and 16 Companies by 1895.¹⁸

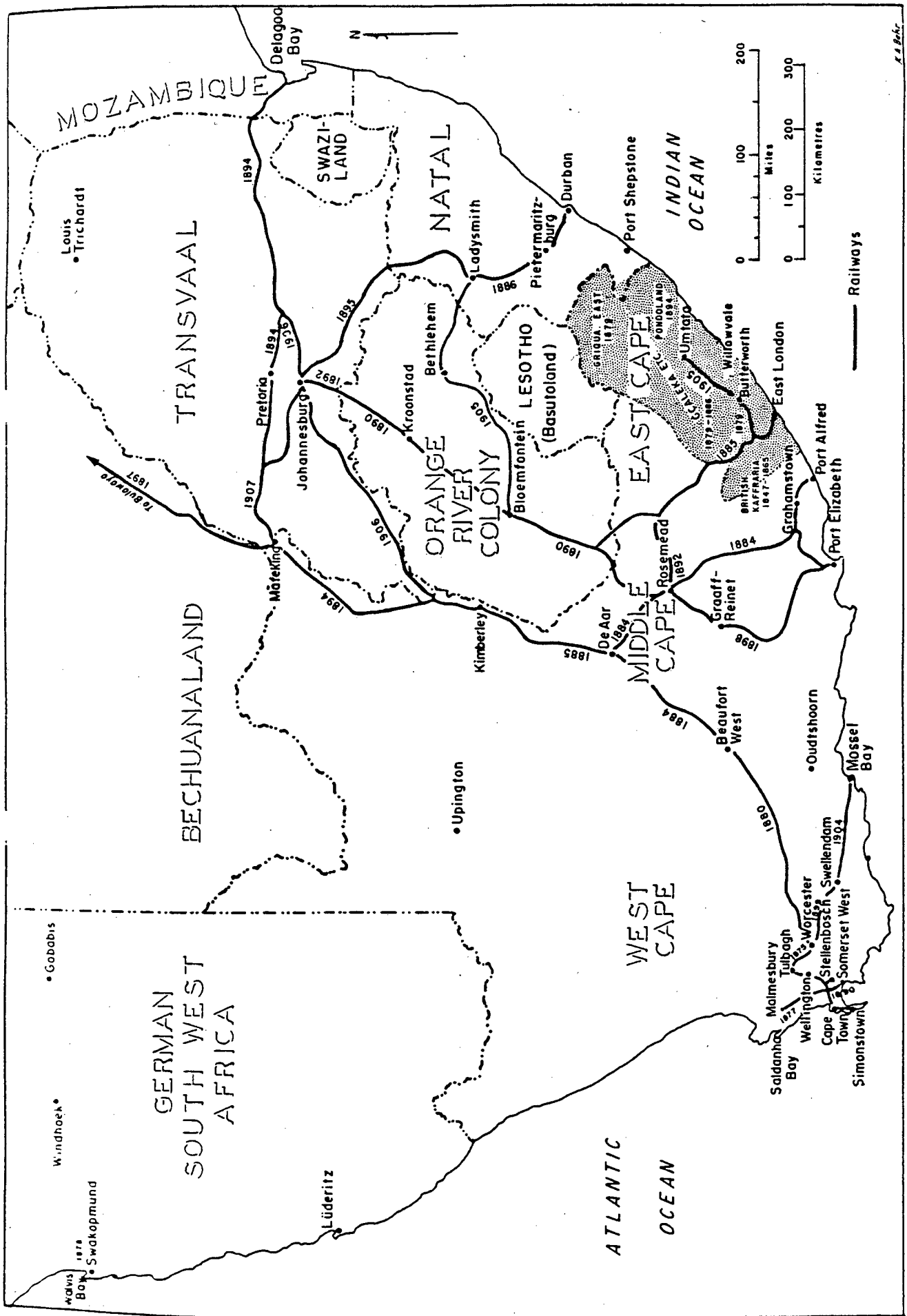
¹⁴ BB Gazette, May 1901, p. 135.

¹⁵ BB Gazette, May 1901, p. 134.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁷ D. Denoon, 'Capital and Capitalists in the Transvaal in the 1890s and 1900s', The Historical Journal, 23,1 (1980), p. 117.

¹⁸ BB Gazette, October 1895, p. 14.



CAPE COLONY CIRCA 1909

In order to understand this expansion, certain questions have to be asked: What were the conditions behind the establishment of the B.B.? Which social interests favoured a uniformed youth movement and for which groups? What were local conditions like at the time of the founding of the B.B.?

It is necessary, before considering the formation of the B.B. in Cape Town and its environs, to provide a brief picture of the economic, social and religious climate prevailing at the time.

Cape Town, by 1829, was the capital and largest town of the Cape Colony. In the years since it had become part of the British Empire in 1806, its permanent white population had grown continuously, not least through immigration. By the 1830s, suburbs like the Gardens, Green Point and Sea Point, and other villages such as Wynberg or Rondebosch, most of which would come to have B.B. Companies in the 1890s, already existed as settled communities. By 1875, urban Cape Town already had 33 000 people,¹⁹ the population including a mixture of local rural immigrants as well as British immigrants. Strong communications and cultural links within each identifiable community readily facilitated the expansion of 'social outreach' from churches and other religious agencies, once such activity was started.

Of particular importance to both religious and government authorities in the later Victorian period was the increasing urban population. According to Elizabeth Van Heyningen, an emerging crisis of living in Cape Town was partly related to a population increase, aggravated by the preponderance of males. Cape Town became a predominantly male city, adding to the already existing problems of maintaining order in a volatile, heterogeneous colonial society. Predictably, male population preponderance was linked to a growth in prostitution and fed alarm over public morality. Through the 1890s, concern grew for supplementary mechanisms of order from those groups articulating religious and moral values or to those disciplinary agencies associated with 'social control'.²⁰

All poor black and white Capetonians experienced hard times. Living conditions were dank and unhealthy and many lived in cramped and overcrowded conditions. A typical house with 4 rooms in Lynde Street, was occupied by 18 people; a room in Russel Selkirk Street, had 18 people.²¹ Many large

¹⁹ Bickford-Smith, 'Commerce, Class, Ethnicity' p. 61; c.f. his Ph.D., 'Commerce Class & Ethnicity in Cape Town', pp. 35-95; Van Heyningen, 'Public Health and Society in Cape Town', Ph.D., p. 226; 1875 - population Cape Town 33 239 (suburbs 12 001); 1891 - Cape Town = 51 251.

²⁰ Van Heyningen, Public Health, p. 227.

²¹ Bickford-Smith, 'Dangerous Cape Town', Studies, (4), pp. 33-34.

coloured and African households were poverty-stricken. On top of severe poverty, the population as a whole was affected by the insanitary state of the town, and the 'looseness' of the poor. In 1876, for example, the Cape Argus described living conditions of the lower strata of society in Waterkant Street: "a perfect hive of people of all shades of colour...men and women who for the most part spend a considerable portion of the year in goal...The children seem to be as thick as caterpillars and like their parents spend most of their time quarreling...The ordinary relationships of social life are unknown..."²² Further anxiety existed amongst the middle-classes about the possibility of epidemics.²³

Against this troubled background, social trends within Cape Town's economic and social infrastructure favoured the philanthropic prospects of early B.B. Companies. By the 1870s, Cape Town had a powerful mercantile elite, and also had numerous clerks, accountants and other white collar workers. Many of the early Brigade Battalion Office-bearers, such as Sir William Cameron (President), Sir David Tennant and Dr Muir (Vice-President) came from the upper levels of these white collar sectors.²⁴

Obviously, the direct effect of Cape Town's economic and class structure on the work of reforming and charitable agencies is not easy to determine. But businesses assisted attempts such as those by the YMCA and Salvation Army after 1880, to assist poorer young people and the destitute. For instance, provision assisted the Salvation Army to fill "an important need when it established night shelters in the city after its arrival in 1883."²⁵ To some extent, too, requirements such as recreation and unemployment relief were identified and social and financial assistance provided by philanthropic immigrants such as those of the Cape Town Jewish Philanthropic Society.²⁶

In tracing the origins of a Church-based youth organisation such as The Boys' Brigade, it is obviously necessary to pay attention to the religious context within which it took root. This in itself may provide some indication as to why the movement's growth should have been generated in any particular area and through any particular denomination. As we have seen, in Britain the B.B. was an inter-denominational organisation with a strong Scottish evangelical flavour. In Cape Town, the first local companies were formed in close association with the Congregational, Wesleyan and Presbyterian Churches. By 1904,

²² Bradlow, 'Cape Town's labouring poor', S.A. Historical Journal (9), 1977.

²³ Bickford-Smith, 'Dangerous Cape Town', Studies, pp. 29-65.

²⁴ BB Gazette, December 1894, pp. 190-91.

²⁵ Van Heyningen, 'Poverty, Self-Help and Community', pp. 133-134.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 137.

there were 14 companies registered in South Africa as a whole which belonged to the Presbyterian movement, emphasising the influence of the Scottish connection.²⁷

Social provision linked to religious establishments was a feature in the survival prospects of Cape Town's poor. Philanthropy based on the Victorian ideal of 'upliftment of the poor' was evident in the form of the Salvation Army, established here in the early 1880s, to evangelize amongst those beyond church congregations. Another was the Cape Town Jewish Philanthropic Society, which underwent a revival in 1880. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and St. Stephen's, the ^{later-day} coloured Dutch Reformed Church, had been actively involved with mission outreach work to slaves and ex-slaves since the 1830s.²⁸ The outreach programmes of the Churches brought some of the 'deserving' poor closer to respectable Christian communities, and made middle-class philanthropy more accessible. Most of their societies were branches of British societies or closely modelled on them. Furthermore, Dutch-speaking mission churches were also active - one being the Z.A. Zending Gesticht, founded in 1804 by the South African Mission society. Thus, by the 1890s, when the first B.B. was started, Cape Town had well-established Christian Churches and Missions, providing a layer of Christian resource and endeavour.

Another factor was the ethos of 'respectability', absorbed by many of the British immigrants who came here. 'Respectability' and 'religion' thus converged as a combined force in the Victorian religion imported to South Africa by British immigrants. Most clergy were British-born and trained, and many had close contact with mission societies. Clergy, alongside other immigrants, brought their philosophies and ideals with them, in which 'respectability' came to be a major determinant of social acceptability and improvement. 'Respectable' classes were those who were seen to be morally upright and financially independent. To this end, the Church became involved through the rendering of support for an orderly and self-respecting way of life. 'Respectability' could be seen as linked to steady work, worthy status, sober conduct, and good morals and values.²⁹ Fittingly, part of the 'B.B. Object' rested in the cultivation of 'respectability', emphasising "habit of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, Self-Respect and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness."³⁰

²⁷ Extract, Overseas Register, 1889-1904.

²⁸ Van Heyningen, 'Poverty, Self-Help' pp. 133-143.

²⁹ G.M. Young, Portrait of an Age: Victorian England, 1973, pp. 13, 24; cited in A. Badham, 'The Badge of Respectability', p. 83.

³⁰ BB Object as formulated by W. Smith (founder); Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, p. 39.

By the late 19th century, Cape Town had also come to exhibit distinctive class and workplace segregation. The middle-class and their businesses, such as banks and shops, were in the central area as well as in dwellings in better off areas and adjacent suburbs, such as Gardens and Sea Point. On the other hand, certain middle-class suburbs like Mowbray were close to working-class areas, such as Observatory, Woodstock and Salt River. It was within the close 'class border' confines of Observatory or Mowbray that some of the early lower middle-class B.B. leaders were to be found.³⁷ Most of their subsequent mission activity was at a short distance from parent congregations.

The first company in Cape Town was formed in August 1890 and linked to the Christian Mission. This company, however, foundered in 1892 due to leadership weaknesses. As John M. Parker, Captain of the 1st Cape Town Company complained to B.B. Headquarters, "the want of good workers is a terrible drawback with us...I was paving the way for No. 2 Company to be enrolled, and could not find desirable workers."³⁸

As in London, part of the B.B. focus fell upon reclaiming 'street children', as Parker emphasised "we picked them off the streets, of the roughest boys in town, and oh! were they wild!"³⁹ Here was a characteristic example of the late Victorian 'civilizing mission' to 'rescue' the youthful urban poor to produce a reformed adulthood.

According to John Gillis, the concern exhibited here was not new, for public concern with juvenile delinquency has been a recurring phenomenon since at least the sixteenth century, with each successive cycle of anxiety manifesting new definitions of the problem. During the early nineteenth century, attention was focused on poverty as a causative factor. In the 1880s, juvenile crime was still associated primarily with the children of the poor, who tended to be treated as a race apart from the children of higher social strata. However, in subsequent years, the young of all social groups were acknowledged to share certain characteristics, with a common potential leaning towards delinquency.⁴⁰

After the first B.B. company withered, a recovery occurred in 1892, under the efforts of Rev. John Harris, one of the most influential B.B. leaders of the pre-war years in South Africa, who lived in Cape

³⁷ See addresses of Captains of early companies in Overseas Register, 1889-1935.

³⁸ BB Gazette, October 1890, p.35.

³⁹ BB Gazette, October 1890, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Gillis, 'The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency', Past & Present, May 1975, pp. 96-126.

Town from 1892, and from 1898 in Johannesburg, where he revived B.B. work. Harris set himself the task of establishing further B.B. Companies through Sunday Schools, noting, "I have been...striving by voice and pen to awaken interest and get the Sunday Schools to start fresh companies...I write to report the formation of five companies in Cape Town and suburbs, and one at Ficksburg, far off in the Orange Free State."⁴¹ The new companies formed were: 1st Ficksburg, Wesleyan Methodist; 3rd Cape Town Co., Gardens Presbyterian Church; 4th Cape Town Co., Holy Trinity, Church of England; 5th Cape Town Co., Dutch Reform, Hanover Street; 1st Wynberg Co., Wesleyan Church; 1st Salt River Co., Railway Mission; 1st Observatory Co., Congregational Church; 2nd Observatory Co., Wesleyan Church.⁴²

The B.B. in the 1890s acquired the patronage of leading members of the governing elite of the Cape, such as its Administrator, Sir William Cameron. Cameron publicly wished the B.B. well in its endeavours, stressing its utility in inculcating obedience and good discipline.⁴³

By late 1894, and early 1895, it was clear that the Cape B.B. was showing steady growth. As an extract from the Cape Times of January 1895, noted, 'The Boys' Brigade in the Colony was a small and a struggling affair at the commencement of last year. There was but one company - the 1st Cape Town, with about fifty Boys and three Officers. Now we have a battalion of fourteen Companies and a least 500 Boys and over 40 Officers... But let us all, Officers as well as 'Men', keep our object ever in view.'⁴⁴

The Battalion busied itself by forming new companies and arranging Battalion events, such as Drill competitions and exhibition parades. Membership fluctuated but the B.B. sustained a presence. The Cape Battalion was also instrumental in the formation of companies as far afield as Port Elizabeth, although it was to be weakened during the 1899-1902 war years, when some of its members went to war.

⁴¹ BB Gazette, October 1894, p. 173.

⁴² Ibid., p. 173.

⁴³ BB Gazette, December 1894, pp. 190-1.

⁴⁴ Cape Times, 'BB Gazette' column, 5 January 1895, p. 7.



A RECRUIT OF "THE BLACK WATCH."

'The Brigadier' 1895.

J. C. HARRIS



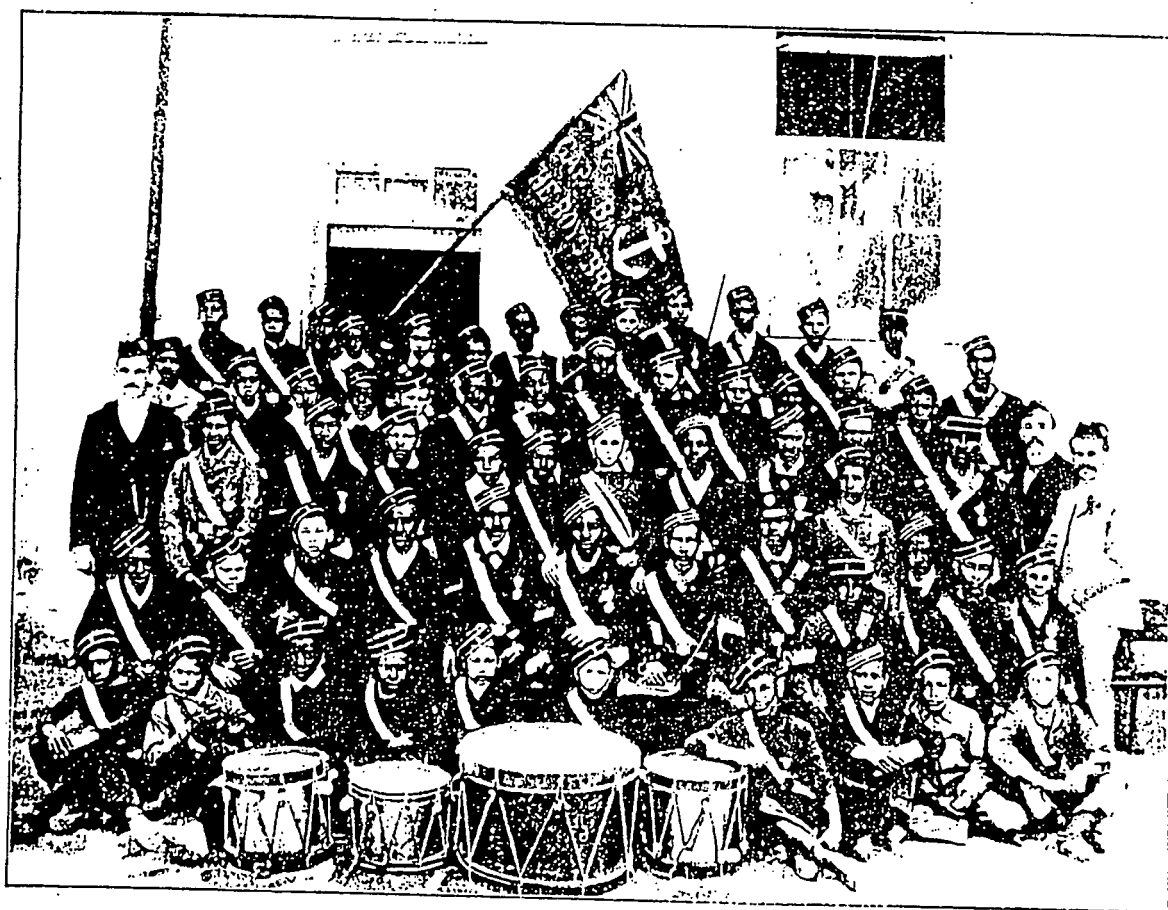
'The Harvest of Hope'
(Congregational Church in S.A.)

The Boys' Brigade Gazette.

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HEAD-QUARTERS OFFICE, 162 BUCHANAN STREET, GLASGOW.

1ST DECEMBER, 1896.



"THE BLACK WATCH."
1ST CAPE TOWN COMPANY, THE BOYS' BRIGADE.
WINNERS OF THE CAPE BATTALION CHALLENGE BANNER.

Head-Quarters Notes.

We have pleasure in presenting our readers with the above picture of a representative Company of The Boys' Brigade in South Africa, the 1st Cape Town Company, known among the Boys of the Cape Battalion as "The Black Watch." Those of our readers who can refer to the photograph of this same Company at an earlier stage of its development, which was reproduced in the *Gazette* of December, 1894, will be struck with the marvellous improvement even in the outward appearance of the Boys, an improvement that, we doubt not, has its counterpart in their inward lives and characters.

B.B. Gazette, December 1896

EASTERN CAPE (PORT ELIZABETH)

B.B. mission work at the Cape influenced middle-class reformers and church ministers to start B.B. companies in Port Elizabeth. The 1st Port Elizabeth Company was formed on 8 March 1897. Prominent figures here were the Chaplain, Rev. J.R. Macpherson, and J.F. Smith, the secretary. Forty nine recruits were enrolled. The movement here grew fairly quickly. By December 1897, total membership stood at 39 Officers and 350 Boys in 7 Companies, and a Battalion was formed. Various parades were held and a local Jubilee Day. By 1899, B.B. work was well established, but was to be disrupted by the South African War.⁴⁵

LOCAL B.B. WORK

The 1st Cape Town Company - The Black Watch Company, was the first B.B. Company started by Rev. John Harris in Cape Town, while in charge of a Mission in Barrack Street.

In comparison with the white B.B. companies in the Transvaal, the first boys which he recruited were black - many of them the sons of ex-slaves in and around Cape Town. As Harris reported in the overseas B.B. Gazette: 'Some forty Boys of all sorts and shades - a large assortment ...black boys, and brown boys, mahogany boys, and boys in light coffee, Kaffir boys, Hottentot boys, Cape boys, nondescript boys, boys with curly hair and boys with no hair - only wool.'⁴⁶ In this, the B.B. leader seemed to echo A.C. Jackson, a Cape Town doctor who had noted in the 1870s, "in Cape Town we cannot be particular about colour; the touch of the tar brush is so common and of so much variety in shade..."⁴⁷

One notable feature is that Harris admitted that black Boys had the same needs and 'improvable' aspirations as the Boys of Britain - he could accordingly work with them and try to make 'better' people of them. This underlined the social ideal of 'respectability' from 'above' down to the 'lower' orders, importantly irrespective of racial 'character':

⁴⁵ BB Gazettes, May 1897-December 1897; February, May 1898; extract from Cape Daily Telegraph, 4 February 1899; BB Gazette, April 1901, p. 117 - Harris reports on P.E.; BB Gazette, November 1901, p. 41 - J. Fox-Smith's letter referring to the war and its disruptive effect.

⁴⁶ BB Gazette, October 1895, p. 15.

⁴⁷ Bickford-Smith, 'Commerce, Class...' pp. 35-95;

"The Boy is a fixed quantity, a known number - wherever you pick him up, and wherever he grows: Brown or Black, or dirty-white; hairy or wooly, British or Boer, Zulu or Mongrel, he is still simple primeval protoplasmic Boy. Tame one Boy and you have tamed the 'Race'; they all nibble the same bait, answer the same call, dance to the same magic of the Pied Piper, which has done so much to bring the chaos of Boy into the cosmos of the B.B.. ...I had seen the miracle work on British Boys - ordinary, unwashed, and untamed cubs of the Great Lion."⁴⁸ He continued, "...but I soon found that beneath their shaded skin and ragged coats beat the same heart of boyhood that I had known in the 'far-away'. To Harris, all poor boys were essentially the same, irrespective of colour.

Shaping this black company was no easy task. Recruits were wholly undisciplined - though with some systematic drill they eventually shaped up into a sound unit. In time, they became so well-drilled in Harris's view that he felt confident that they could compete against British companies. 'and I would undertake to let them compete in company drill with almost any of the British companies.' As if to prove his point, the 'Black Watch Company' outclassed other local companies in 1896, and walked off with silk honours, presented by William Cameron.⁴⁹

Harris also reported honestly on the limits of Boy reform : "And at first the Cape Town coloured⁵⁰ Boy had very decided opinions about the world in general and myself in particular, as he declared in Cape Dutch⁵¹ they sounded very bad. It is not pleasant to find a dozen impudent-looking miniatures of Ham⁵² passing rude and personal remarks about you, in an unknown tongue, but answering all your polite enquiries in suave English!"⁵³

Although recruits understood English, he felt incapable of comprehending them fully and unable to prevent their cheeky subversion of his command. For Boys could imbue the B.B. with their own sense of guile and enjoyment.

⁴⁸ *BB Gazette*, April 1901, p. 116.

⁴⁹ *BB Gazette*, April 1901, p. 116.

⁵⁰ Bickford-Smith, *Studies*, 6, 1988, pp. 61-82; the term coloured was used by at least some of those who thought of themselves as white. Coloured was used to refer to descendants of mixed marriage or liaisons between Europeans, Khoisan, Asiatic slaves and Africans.

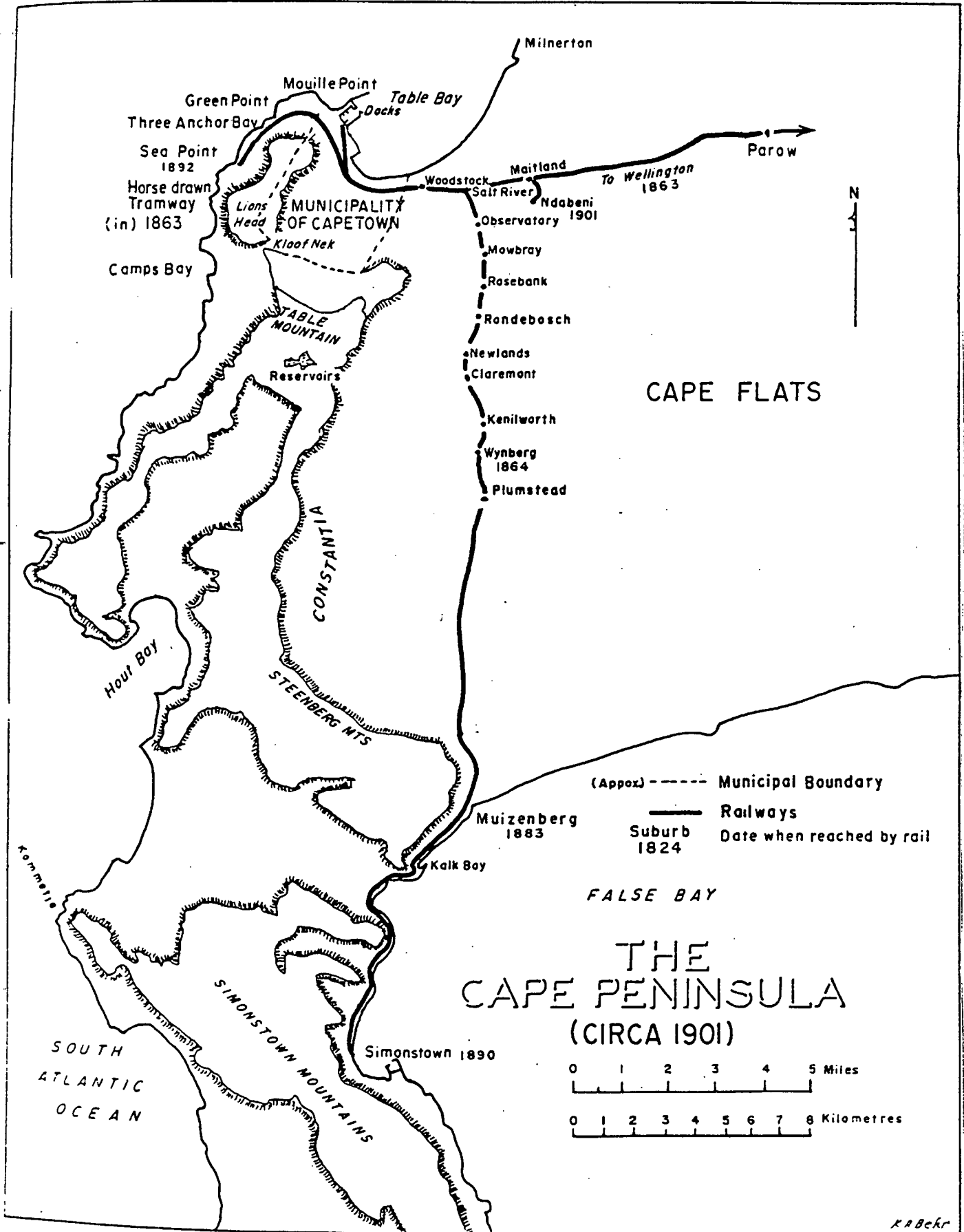
⁵¹ Van Heyningen, 'Poverty, Self-Help...' *S.A. Historical Journal*, (24), 1991, p. 134 - the indigenous coloured community spoke a form of Dutch which distinguished them from white Dutch-speakers in the city.

⁵² see Adhikari, 'The Sons of Ham', *S.A. Historical Journal* (27), 1992, pp. 95-112;

⁵³ *BB Gazette*, April 1901, p. 166.

Some of First Companies in Cape Peninsula: 1890 - 1910

- Cape Town - 1890; 1892
- Claremont - 1892
- Wynberg - 1904
- Woodstock - 1904
- Observatory - 3 companies
- Mowbray - 1904
- Rondebosch - 1904
- Kenilworth - 1904
- Sea Point - 1904
- Salt River - 1904



K A Beck

The name Black Watch Company was initially given to the 1st Cape Town Company at its Battalion camp, linking both Scottish and local racial identities. At this point, the Battalion was mixed but some individual companies were segregated.⁵⁴ Within this racial division, the Black Watch Company remained a leading body, the more so for its perceived transition - from 'wild ones' to disciplined recruits.

Harris recorded a religious awakening amongst boys, and a change of heart by those who used to give cause for concern. Some of those boys prior to joining the B.B. were, in his words, "**the terror of the mission folk. They smashed the windows and disturbed the Sunday School and jeered the good people**"⁵⁵

THE CAPE COLOUR QUESTION

How significant a role did colour play in the early companies of The Boys' Brigade at the Cape? Although the Cape has been long portrayed as liberal, recent studies⁵⁶ have provided a more critical perspective. Forms of racism could be picked up in subtle undertones or direct actions, such as the classification of people by race as early as 1830. Likewise, the government census of 1875 did the same - the main division being 'European or White' and 'Other than European or White', the latter with further subdivisions: Malay, Hottentot, Fingo, Kaffir and Bechuana, Mixed and Other. Equally, the Cape was less prescriptively racist than the SAR or OFS. In contrast to the two Boer republics in the north, people of colour had greater rights in the Cape. But this did not suggest common multi-racialism.⁵⁷

Ethnicity, therefore, was an ever-present factor in B.B. structures, as typified by Harris's description of his 1st Cape Town Company recruits. Yet, John Parker reported in 1890 on the B.B.s policy of open admission at entry, "**We admitted all and sundry, white and black**"⁵⁸

Harris reported on 23 May 1894 to B.B. Headquarters:

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, according to Harris, 300 out of the 500 were Europeans.

⁵⁵ *BB Gazette*, April 1901, p. 116.

⁵⁶ see Bickford-Smith, 'Commerce, Class, ...', *Studies*, 6, 1988, pp. 69-75; c.f. Bickford-Smith, *Ph.D.*, pp. 35-95.

⁵⁷ I. Goldin, *Making Race*, (Longman, Cape Town, 1987), pp. 19-27; G. Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A history of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, Bradlow, 'Cape Town's labouring poor a century ago', *SAHJ*, 9, 1977.

⁵⁸ *BB Gazette*, October 1890, p. 35.

'There are peculiar conditions of difficulty here...The one bete noir is 'colour'. In Cape Town, of course, we have large numbers of coloured people, and although race antipathies are not so pronounced as further up-country, still they exist. A white boy will not associate with a coloured boy...I have been taking my 1st Company out and giving expositions of Brigade Drill and principles to Sunday Schools...the impression produced upon the colonial white lads, with their hereditary scorn for the 'nigger' is not always favourable...our aim should be chiefly to reach the poorer and rougher lads, and they are black: still out of the five companies reported they are all for both - that is there is no colour distinction. That I insist on as sine qua non, as I regard a colour line as being disastrous and unchristian.'⁵⁹

Inevitably, local social realities outside individual companies soon impinged upon the views of even the most liberal social optimists. This was so much so, that by 1901, Harris had grasped and accepted fully the emerging social exclusivities of Cape Town, noting of the Cape Battalion:

'As far as possible we ignored colour altogether, for in Cape Town, so bewildering is the variety, it was not possible to classify. As a rule we found it best to allow the white boys to have companies for themselves, for in spite of sentimental theories, we could not advise indiscriminate mixture. I think this colour difficulty has been one of the drawbacks of the Cape Battalion, but it has also tended to intensify the spirit of competition.'⁶⁰

Thus, segregation, though viewed in a troubled light, had the advantage of providing a basis for competition between 'white' and 'coloured' companies. The Drill competition won by the Black Watch Company could perhaps be seen as one where boys of colour could strive to prove that they could be equally competent at doing things, in an ethnically-diverse movement. In 1895, sixty percent of the membership in the Cape Battalion was white,⁶¹ with Rev. Harris reporting, 'of the 500 members I should say at least 300 are Europeans - and belong to very 'respectable' families.'⁶² The balance of 200 'non-Europeans' were made up mostly of the early recruits from a mixed origin and who were now 'different' according to Harris: "It is found that the coloured 'Boy', although possessing many of the

⁵⁹ *BB Gazette*, October 1894, p. 173 - letter from Harris, 23 May 1894.

⁶⁰ *BB Gazette*, April 1901, p. 117.

⁶¹ *Overseas Register*, South African Companies, 1899-1901, BBHQ.

⁶² *BB Gazette*, October 1895, p. 15.

main characteristics of his white brother, has in addition a few developments of 'original sin' which call for much patience and tact."⁶³

Finally, discrimination or colour consciousness did not affect only white and black B.B. ranks. Harris records some coloured boys objecting to taking orders from a 'Kaffir' during drill, "Private Sambo refuses to obey the lawful commands of Corporal Hendrik, and when sternly reprimanded, indignantly and impenitently asks, if he has to be bossed 'bout by a Kaffir..."⁶⁴

THE BOYS' BRIGADE AND MILITARISM

As had happened in Britain, some anti-war groups or individuals were critical of the B.B.. This was natural, given the close links which the B.B. always immediately established with an army establishment. In Natal, for instance, the movement, as already noted, was sometimes misidentified with the Volunteers. In one 1895 report "Some folks have a very hazy idea, indeed...One fond parent did not like the B.B. because her son was rather young, and she did not like the idea of his being suddenly 'called out'...The good lady had mixed the Volunteers and B.B. together...Well we have to explain to the parents the objects and aims of the Brigade, and when we are on 'visiting patrol', we carry a good pocketful of rations in the shape of 'What is the Boys' Brigade'."⁶⁵ Misidentification was naturally aggravated by uniform-wearing and by military drill. For drill, the B.B. invariably used officers from a variety of British regiments or colonial contingents stationed in South Africa, some of whom also became B.B. officers. 'Mr George Hale (late of the Cape Mounted Rifles) has been appointed convener of the Drill Committee'⁶⁶ reported the Secretary of the Transvaal Battalion in 1899. The military also serviced local Boys' Brigade companies in essential ways. Army establishments rendered assistance especially at B.B. annual camps when tents were provided. In a typical camp experience at the Cape in the 1890s, 'A detachment of men from the York and Lancashire Regiment went down a day or two beforehand, and pitched all the tents.'⁶⁷

⁶³ *BB Gazette*, December 1892, p. 161.

⁶⁴ *BB Gazette*, April 1901, p. 116.

⁶⁵ *BB Gazette*, December 1895, p. 41.

⁶⁶ *BB Gazette*, January 1899, p. 72.

⁶⁷ *Cape Times*, 29 December 1894; *BB Gazette*, October 1895, p. 35.

The following extract from the 'B.B. Gazette' column, in the Cape Times, stressed the familiar B.B. refrain on military drill: 'People who only see the Drill and discipline may think we are aiming at making you soldiers or Volunteers - and nothing else. These things are only means to an end. Your Christmas Pudding was very nice, no doubt; but it would have been a queer thing if those who made it did as the Frenchman did - forgot the cloth. Now what the cloth is to the pudding, Drill and discipline are to the Boys' Brigade - very necessary. But it is the pudding we are after.'⁶⁸

BOYS' BRIGADE SOUTH AFRICA MEMBERSHIP, 1889-1902

Year	Natal		Cape		O.F.S.		T.V.L.		E.P.		Totals	
	Cos.	Members	Cos.	Members	Cos.	Members	Cos.	Members	Cos.	Members	Cos.	Members
1889	1	20					1	20			2	40
1890	1	20	1	40					2	60	4	120
1891	1	28	2	100			3	140			6	268
1892	2	40	2	100			3	140			7	280
1893	3	40	2	100					4	140	9	280
1894	3	80	9	500							12	580
1895	6	170	16	550	1	30	1	50			23	770
1896	6	170	16	600			3	86			25	856
1897	1	60	16	600			1	28	7	389	25	1077
1898	1	60	16	600			1	90	8	440	26	1190
1899	- WAR -				1	30			- UNKNOWN -			
1900	- WAR -		WORK SUSPENDED -						- UNKNOWN -			
1901	- WAR -		- WORK SUSPENDED -						- UNKNOWN -			

The above statistics give a fair idea of the growth of the movement in its founding period. Because there was no central headquarters available, each region and company reported its progress directly to Scottish Headquarters. Figures are compiled from reports published in Gazettes as well as in Annual Reports of B.B. Headquarters on South Africa. At certain stages, only an estimate is given in a report. In general, this period was one of modest activity and growth which was severely disrupted by war.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ BB Gazette, April 1895, p. 25.

⁶⁹ Extracts, Annual Reports, BBHQ; BB Gazettes, 1890-1902.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR (ANGLO-BOER WAR) 1899-1902

While most disruption occurred in the Boer Republics and Natal, B.B. activity in other areas also suffered as men enlisted in military units.

Natal was invaded by the Boer republics in October 1899. Now, for the first time in its brief history, one branch of the movement found itself divided, dispersed and disrupted by war. Rev. Harris reported in 1901 that:

'Many of our Officers and some of the bigger Boys are at the front, enduring hardness and loyally doing their duty. A few are, or were, on commando with the Boers, for we had one company almost exclusively of Dutch Boys.'⁷⁰

Here is evidence of members of different B.B. companies choosing sides - youths of British descent siding with British forces and Dutch boys with the Boers. The disturbing effects of the war can be seen in a typical Overseas Minute Book:⁷¹

"1899-1900" - 'As was expected the war in South Africa has completely upset all Brigade work, and it is suggested that in order to evolve something like cohesion and unity among the scattered forces of the Brigade, communication with the President of Port Elizabeth Battalion, Mr J. Fox-Smith would result in some sort of order.'

"1900-1901" - 'The Boys' Brigade like everything else suffered from the ravages of the War and activities of companies and Battalions had to be largely suspended during the past two years.'⁷²

The Secretary of the Transvaal Battalion, who regularly reported to Overseas Headquarters, fled to Natal, after which activity in the Transvaal came to a standstill as Bolton relocated to the Natal battalion. B.B. activity in the Port Elizabeth area was also badly affected, with J.F. Smith recording in 1901, 'we are not doing anything in the B.B. work. Several of our officers and quite a number of our Boys are away at the front fighting for King and their country, so we think it best to be quiet for the present until the war is over.'⁷³

⁷⁰ BB Gazette, May 1901, p. 135.

⁷¹ Minute Book, 1902.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ BB Gazette, November 1901, p. 41.

B.B. perceptions were that things were beginning to settle down by 1903, and that people were slowly moving back to the Transvaal. Among them was the Transvaal secretary who had stayed in Natal for the full duration of the war. However, it would prove a hard struggle to establish a B.B. mission presence after the war, as the authorities established a Cadet Corps against which the B.B. could not successfully compete or even survive as a partner body.⁷⁴

After the South African War, the B.B. work was resumed at a slow pace, especially in the Transvaal. Few officers of the Transvaal battalion could be re-instituted. Some had settled elsewhere, some had returned to Britain, and some had died in the war. The secretary, Bolton, mustered together a few associates and on this frail basis B.B. activity was resumed, by 1904. By 1905,⁷⁵ the Transvaal was reporting 600 members. But by 1911, the B.B. in the Transvaal was practically extinct. This was due to the remodelling of most B.B. companies which were incorporated into the colonial Cadet scheme in what local leadership it saw as an inevitable development: **"The reason why we decided as Boys' Brigade Council to go in for the cadets, was because we came to the conclusion..., that the B.B. would not be able to compete with the Cadets, and so we should not lose our boys. It was a question of either giving up the B.B. or else trying this experiment"**⁷⁶

In the Transvaal after British annexation, it was this link to the new compulsory Government Cadet Scheme, which resulted in B.B. decline and eventual collapse. In the Transvaal, principal white schools had Cadet Corps, with many boys eager to learn to shoot. The B.B., with its dummy rifle, could not compete on these terms. In 1903, the Milner administration approached the B.B. to have it recognised as Cadets for drill purposes, while leaving the body free to organise itself for religious ends. The authorities also provided a uniform, carbines and bandoliers - with the B.B. a cap, belt and haversack, and also provided a capitation grant of two pounds per boy. At first, things went smoothly, until, as one officer reported in 1911, **"we found in the working out of the scheme that we were subjected to a great deal of red tape and officialism. A lot of our time was taken up with filling out Returns, keeping track of stores, conforming to petty regulations and others."** He further reported a loss of control over admission, **"other types of Boys than those usually attracted to the B.B. came forward**

⁷⁴ *BB Gazette*, April 1903, p. 117.

⁷⁵ *BB Gazette*, April 1905, pp. 118-9.

⁷⁶ *BB Gazette*, June 1911, pp. 156-7.

for enrolment...Many of the Boys proved unsatisfactory. They would not attend Bible-Class...the point of view of the military authorities...is military efficiency, while that of the B.B. is the building up of Christian character...Both organizations have their part to play. My opinion is that they can best do it apart."⁷⁷ Only in the Cape Battalion would the B.B. survive on the basis of effective independence in this post-war era.

B.B. STRUCTURE

On what basis did B.B. Companies in South Africa operate? Because they were often formed under the influence of overseas ex-members of the B.B., they tended to emulate what they knew - thus a company was structured generally in the same British manner. However, for companies in South Africa, as we have noted earlier, it was not always possible to stick strictly to the Manual. Here, enrolled officers formed a Battalion Council for the management of Battalion affairs. Unlike Britain, where a National Council was constituted, unintegrated colonial conditions meant that different areas only operated at battalion level.⁷⁸ After Battalions were formed, any neighbouring church or Sunday School wishing to establish a company received appropriate literature from a Battalion secretary. Thereafter, sanction had to be obtained from the governing authority of a church or other Christian organization. The new company also had to prove itself by having six meetings before it was formally enrolled.

As already indicated, the officers in the first companies were drawn from a middle-class or lower middle-class background, whereas the black or white boys they commanded were drawn overwhelmingly from the lower classes. An analysis of early leaders drawn from B.B. Gazette reports of 1890-1902 gives some indication of their respective backgrounds. Of a total of 36 names, 53% were businessmen or lower middle-class office-workers, 11% were ministers or Sunday School workers, 22% were Army or Volunteer members and 14% were ex-B.B. members.⁷⁹ A company captain would thus by definition be a 'respectable' man.

How did officers donate time and effort to the movement? In addition to Sunday activities, they also carried out many B.B. activities during the week. From reports sent in during the period 1889 to 1902,

⁷⁷ BB Gazette, June 1911, pp. 156-7.

⁷⁸ It was only in the 1960s that a serious effort was made to have an all-embracing National Body.

⁷⁹ BB Gazettes, March 1890-November 1902.

one sees wide concern for the adolescent and his well-being, and in providing for his spiritual and recreation needs: "It was a weary business getting elementary ideas of discipline and obedience into the wild and woolly-headed youngsters", noted Rev. Harris in the B.B. Brigadier in 1895.⁸⁰ Many of the officers responded readily to the challenge of Christian improvement on the basis of William Smith's method of rigorous training. Individual businessmen believed that by disciplining youth via mission outreach, they might form a better (loyal) B.B. Boy; as revealed by a merchant's declaration in the Cape Times of 1895: "Now, Boys, be men! Keep up the honour of the Brigade. Remember that when a Boy does a mean thing, or stoops to do anything low or dishonourable, that Boy disgraces not only himself but 500 others in the Cape...Be proud of the B.B., too proud to dishonour it"⁸¹ Here were the classic elements of B.B. self-respect: Self-control, group loyalty, and honour.

UNIFORM

Because of their close links with the B.B. in Britain, local Brigades wore the same uniform, with various companies ordering supplies from abroad. Here, the B.B. was fortunate, for some shipping firms had owners connected to B.B. officer service. Prominent were E.F. Bourke of Messrs. Bourke & Company, Pretoria, and directors of Maxwell & Earp in Cape Town. But some groups had to apply for uniforms and equipment to be sent directly.⁸²

The denominational composition of The Boys' Brigade cut across a broad spectrum of churches, with a naturally heavy Scottish Presbyterian tone, even when attached to other Protestant bodies.

⁸⁰ Brigadier, 1895, p. S39.

⁸¹ BB Gazette, April 1895, p. 25.

⁸² BB Gazette, October 1891, p. 20; April 1901, p. 117. Although uniforms in South Africa changed over the years, the basic belt, cap and haversack remained. Whereas earlier uniforms were imported, recent ones have been locally manufactured since the 1970s.

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF BOYS' BRIGADE COMPANIES 1889-1902⁸³

Denomination	Natal		Cape		OFS		TVL		EP		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Presbyterian	4	50	2	20	1	50	8	67	1	11.1	16	38.1
Christ. Miss.	1	12.5	2	20							3	7.1
Congregational	1	12.5	1	10			1	8	1	11.1	4	9.5
Weslyan/Meth.	2	25	3	30	1	50	2	17	3	33.4	11	26.2
Anglican			1	10			1	8			2	4.8
Dutch Reform			1	10					1	11.1	2	4.8
Catholic									2	22.2	2	4.8
Baptist									1	11.1	2	4.8
Totals	8	100	10	100	2	100	12	100	9	100	42	100

Note: More companies enrolled - not all denominations indicated.

With the B.B. emerging as an agency of Christian 'capture', John Thompson of Durban typically reflected of its potential in 1894: "Outside the Sunday School we can at present see very little of the Boys, and we feel... the want of something to bring them and ourselves into contact, for the climate drives them from the family circle and the fireside, out onto the street with all its temptations and pitfalls."⁸⁴

P.S. Horne of Johannesburg, a Presbyterian Sunday School Teacher, was equally typical of those who saw the B.B. as a remedy to 'loose' youth behaviour:

"There is no doubt as to the necessity for such an institution in this town... and it has long been a much and anxiously debated question as to how a hold on the senior scholar of this and other schools of the town is to be retained, and little doubt is entertained as to the success of the project."⁸⁵

For these and other Christian figures, the B.B. was the most acceptable medium through which zealous adults could mediate prospective relations with 'Boys', establishing a Christian hold on their futures.

⁸³ Overseas Register, BBHQ, 1899-1902.

⁸⁴ BB Gazette, October 1894, p. 173.

⁸⁵ BB Gazette, April 1896, p. 89.

CHAPTER 5

PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES

What were local boys doing in their respective companies? A range of activities were quickly developed. Many of these were identical to those which first occupied the boys of 1883 in Scotland, including cricket. P.S. Horne, the Transvaal officer, wrote in 1896:

"I need hardly say that the result of the work... is one of the greatest... The Boys are full of enthusiasm,... the Cricket Club testify to the genuineness of the interest of the Boys... cricket three days in the week."¹

Physical Exercises (P.T.), Games and Sunday Bible Class all proved to be attractions. In addition, parade Foot Drill as well as Drill with a dummy rifle was introduced. One of the recreational innovations with which the Boys' Brigade is historically associated, is organised camping, which got underway soon after company establishments. The movement's spiritual basis was seen to be maintained through Biblical instruction and drill, while many of the sports and educational classes promoted an intrinsic part of the B.B. object of healthy 'Christian Manliness'. Physical recreation and evangelism went together: boys would not become Boys without participating in both.

The Brigade's involvement with leisure activities which would otherwise have fallen beyond the reach of most of its working-class members, was creating a wider constituency from which Churches and Sunday School might eventually draw their membership. The range of activities offered broadly replicated the Scottish dictum - Spiritual, Educational, Cultural and Physical.

DRILL

One of the more regular meetings held was the weekly 'parade night'. This entailed boys attending in uniform for drill, with early companies initially concentrating on military drill. In the Cape Town area, as has been previously noted, special Drill Competitions were held.²

¹ BB Gazette, 1 December 1896, p. 1.

² Cape Times, 23.3.1895; 6.4.1895.

Detailed reports of these early Annual Drill Competitions are to be found in early B.B. Gazettes. Drill organisation was central; it provided the basis for B.B. recruits to march out, to meet with peers and to enjoy an activity outside the household social environment. Small companies enabled close supervision with assistance from army volunteers. In 1892, Harris reported, **'We have 29 Boys on the roll. Have had 9 drills. The instructor is a Quartermaster-Sergeant in the Royal Artillery... Our average at the Drills has been 24.'**³

Peter Petersen, a Coloured ex-B.B. member and former Staff-Sergeant in the 1st Rondebosch Company, which was formed in 1894, recalls:

"I liked the drill for it kept me smart and straight. Most of the boys liked the drill for we enjoyed performing the different squad movements. An officer from the Castle would come and visit the company and I had the opportunity to command and parade the boys in front of him."

To such boys it was thrilling to see how one could move with military precision. Petersen joined the company in the 1920s - an attraction was that B.B. boys were neat and tidy in appearance. From a devout Christian household, he also liked the discipline and the anti-smoke policy of the B.B..⁴ And the B.B. rewarded leadership ability: boys like Petersen could exercise subaltern authority.

In the early years, dummy rifles were used for drilling. As happened in Britain, the use of the dummy rifle in South Africa was also stopped after the 1920s, due to the rise of anti-militarist and pacifist ideas in urban areas.⁵

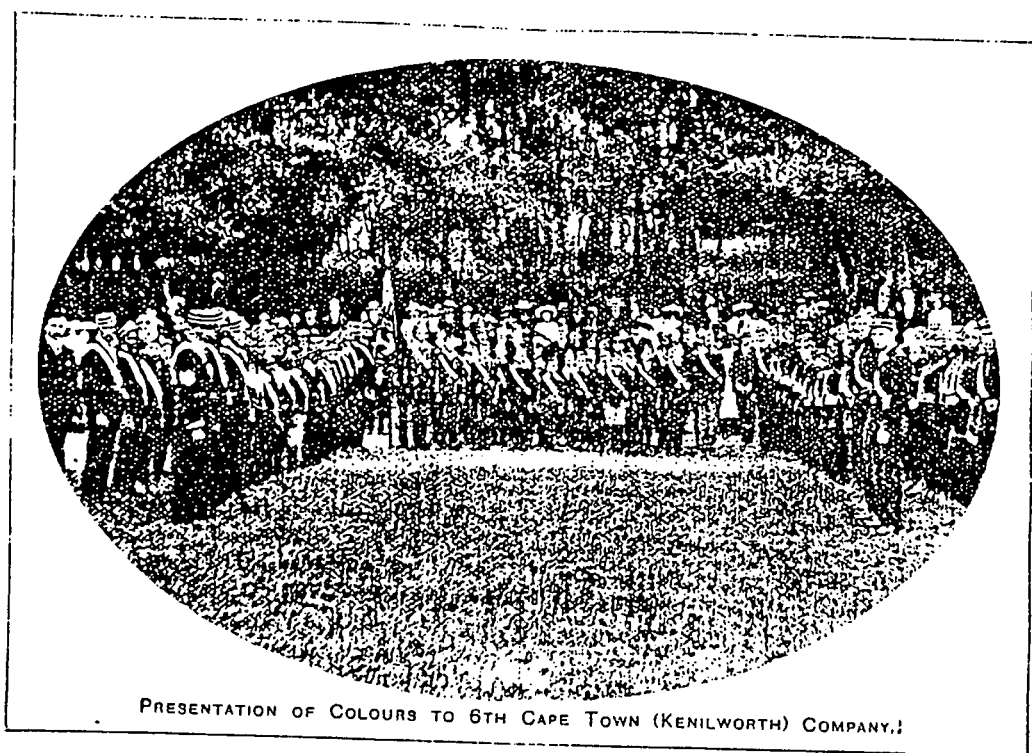
Drill in the B.B. session always ended on a high note when the Annual Inspection and Display (Demonstration) was held. In Cape Town, this was held for years in its Drill Hall. In the early era, the guest of honour was usually a notable with a military background. Battalion inspections and parades were also organised. This gave the movement the chance to present itself and a patron to the wider public. As the Transvaal Battalion reported in 1892, **'The drill evenings are Tuesdays for Military Drill and Fridays (during the winter months) for Gymnastic Drill. Church Parades on Sunday... Inspection, General Joubert, Commandant-General, will most probably inspect the Battalion...'**⁶

³ BB Gazette, December 1892, p. 161.

⁴ Interview, ex-BB member, P. Petersen (91 years old), Grassy Park, February, 1993. He was a member of the 1st Rondebosch Co. formed on 15 November 1894.

⁵ Interview P. Petersen.

⁶ BB Gazette, October 1892, p. 130.



The Cape Battalion had frequent Demonstrations in the Drill Hall, where it often performed for a large crowd.⁷ Drill was seen by many, from leading military figureheads such as Lieutenant-General Sir William Cameron, C.B., of the Cape, to local philanthropists, such as Dr John Muir, Superintendent-General of Education, and James Rose Innes, who all held the office of Vice-President of the Cape Battalion in 1894, as a desirable disciplinary activity for boys joining the Brigade.⁸

In fact, drill was seen as peculiarly important by numerous elite observers. At a Demonstration of the Cape Battalion on 20 October 1898, held in the Metropolitan Hall, the Governor of the Cape addressed the B.B.. He expressed his strong sympathy with the B.B. movement, and spoke of his sense of the value of the lessons in discipline, self-control, and perseverance, which the training of the Brigade was calculated to enforce.⁹ Other civic leaders such as the Mayor of Durban, R. Jameson, President of the Natal Battalion in 1896, and Sunday School leaders, such as P.S. Horn, of the Presbyterian Sunday School, in Johannesburg, also argued insistently that boys were ripe to submit themselves to this form of discipline.¹⁰ Apart from anything else, drill provided the B.B. with its public face.

BIBLE CLASS

Separate Brigade Bible Classes had been formed in Scotland, notwithstanding the fact that The Boys' Brigade was formed to provide 'healthy' week-night activities for Sunday School boys. The B.B. in South Africa followed suit. Bible Classes were mostly held in the afternoon, commencing after Sunday School, and were advertised along with Church notices in local suburban papers. Advance Bible questions for the Bible Class were often also published. Characteristically, some of the questions in the B.B. Gazette column of the Cape Times of 26 January 1895 were: 1) "What is the literal meaning of the name Jesus? 2) What is a Christian? 3) What is "Conscience" and what three things always accompany a "Guilty Conscience?"¹¹

Some boys, however, did not take too kindly to the Bible Class, according to an officer in Durban in 1895, 'You ought to have heard the miserable excuses when I suggested meeting every Sunday

⁷ BB Gazette, December 1894, p. 190.

⁸ BB Gazette, December 1894, pp. 190-1.

⁹ BB Gazette, January 1899, p. 72.

¹⁰ BB Gazette, February 1896, p. 66; April 1896, p. 89.

¹¹ Cape Times, 26.1.1895; This column was published by the Editor and is reported on in the BB Gazettes of 1894 until 1910.

morning for Bible-Class at 9.45.¹² The recommended order of service despatched from Glasgow was as follows:

Roll Call

Opening Hymn

Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Reading Lesson (verse about, Captain naming each boy to read)

Essay (by one of the boys on the subject of the lesson)

Hymn

Address (by Officer or other friend on subject of the lesson)

Prayer

Intimations

Closing Hymn¹³

Responsibility for the Christian Education of the B.B. lay, as it continues to do, with the church or religious mission to which each company was connected. The format or intended syllabus might be advised on by the B.B., but specific religious teaching to the boys would naturally conform to the denominational background of a specific body. There was routine liaison among denominations on parades and battalion services. A.S. Adams, Brigade Secretary, Durban, reported in 1897:

"A very successful institution in our Company is the Monthly Church Parade. We visit in succession the Presbyterian, Congregational and Wesleyan Churches, from which the majority of our Boys are drawn, and besides being good for the Boys, it brings the Brigade constantly before the various congregations..."¹⁴

Thus, as an inter-denominational body, the B.B. could be seen approvingly as one which not only taught boys religious tolerance but also built bridges between different churches, mainly Protestant.

¹² BB Gazette, October 1895, p. 14.

¹³ Glasgow Battalion Annual Report 1888/89, p. 14, BBHQ, Glasgow; cited in Fraser, 'The Origins and early History of The Boys' Brigade', (Ph.D.), p. 176.

¹⁴ BB Gazette, January 1898, p. 71.

BANDS

Company bands were soon formed on the lines of the first B.B. band of 1885 in Scotland. The first edition of the B.B. Manual published in 1886 stipulated band prominence, **'If the Company have a Band, it would probably be brought in before the close of drill, to give some music and marching'**. This leading practice later disappeared, and the band eventually became just one among many company activities. A 1904 field manual stated that the band should not be out of proportion to the Company, recommending not more than one third of Company strength. It was prescribed that the band should not be a major attraction, lest the B.B. be imbued with a frivolous character.¹⁵

Various accounts of the early bands in South Africa are represented vividly in B.B. Gazette reports. Illustrations and early photos, as shown on the following page, show various music instruments. Early ensembles were generally fife and drum bands of uncertain skill. Of the band of the 1st Cape Town Company, Rev. Harris declared:

'The most surprising event which I recall now out of the memories of those days was the formation of a band for the Black Watch. They clamoured for a band, but I feared to face the question of training, etc. "Give us the instruments, Sir, and you will see!"... So I doled out six fifes and a big drum, one Friday evening. The next night I saw - and heard. So did Cape Town! The band had come...'¹⁶

Besides playing for company parade nights, and Sunday Church Parades, bands also played at Annual Inspections, and public displays, such as Annual Demonstrations. They were also often required to play hymns and perform at B.B. Camps. Bugles were added after 1900. Later bands also started introducing brass instruments in the 1930s.¹⁷ Costs of instruments were borne by companies which raised funds at events, and also by donations from churches. The band itself gave many working-class boys the opportunity to learn and play an instrument. Over the years, different proficiency badges for band-work were introduced, with these changing as the badge and award structures changed.

¹⁵ Banging the Drum, (Archive Press, BBHQ, London, 1983).

¹⁶ BB Gazette, April 1901, p. 116.

¹⁷ Today bugle, flute and drum bands are still in the majority although a growth is also shown in brass bands.

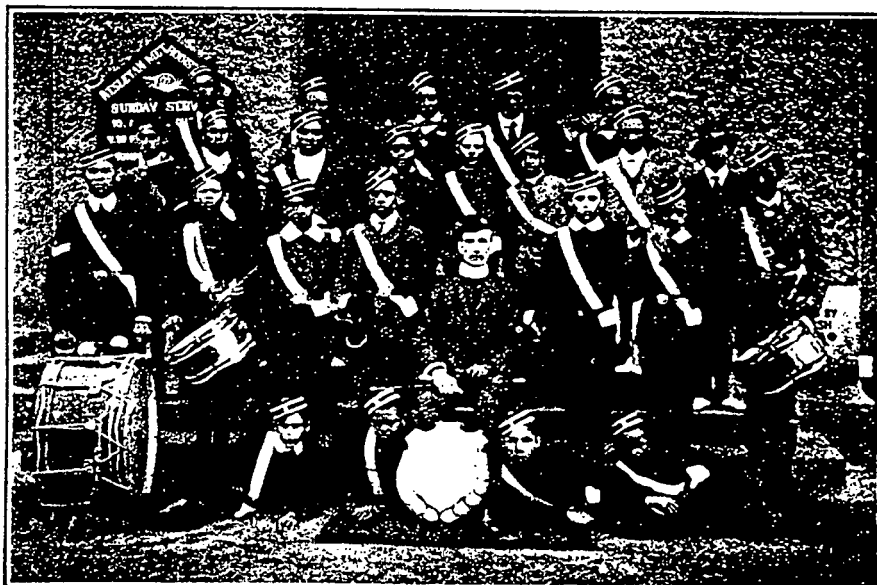
1.



"THE BLACK WATCH"
 1ST CAPETOWN COMPANY, THE BOYS' BRIGADE.
 WINNERS OF THE CAPE BATTALION CHALLENGE BANNER.

B. B. GAZETTE, DEC. 1896, p. 1.

2.



DETACHMENT OF 3RD CAPE TOWN COMPANY.

B. B. GAZETTE, March 1914, p. 109.

1. Black Watch Company
2. Rev. Mason & Strand Company

Bands became such an integral part of B.B. events in areas like District Six in Cape Town in the interwar years, that their presence became a customary part of Sunday street proceedings outside Anglican or Methodist churches. The average B.B. Company Band has continued, and still continues to play, a functional part in the life of the local company, in leading B.B. and other parades.

CLASS WORK

Educational classes were introduced as early as in 1892. These were to teach boys different skills and knowledge. In 1892, the Pretoria Battalion reported holding:

'Classes of Instruction in the rudiments of science, mechanics, etc., are also being arranged for'.¹⁸

The educational or extramural classes introduced by the B.B. followed the philosophy of late nineteenth-century voluntary agencies in imparting 'useful' knowledge and values to the lower class young.

In various parts of South Africa, officers also arranged other forms of Class work, which was expanded to include skills such as First Aid or 'Ambulance'. Most companies had this form of human rescue training. The frontispiece of the B.B. Gazette of 1 March 1897, on the following page, features the mock-heroic photo of the Ambulance Detachment of 2nd Cape Town Company.¹⁹ In 1899, the Transvaal Battalion reported that its Ambulance work was being facilitated by a practical connection with St. John's Society volunteers, **'and with the assistance of the local authorities of the St. John Ambulance Society, we are confident that this important branch of the work will now go ahead'.²⁰** Here, and elsewhere, members of St. John's would assist with formal training and examinations.

BOYS' ROOM (CLUB ROOM)

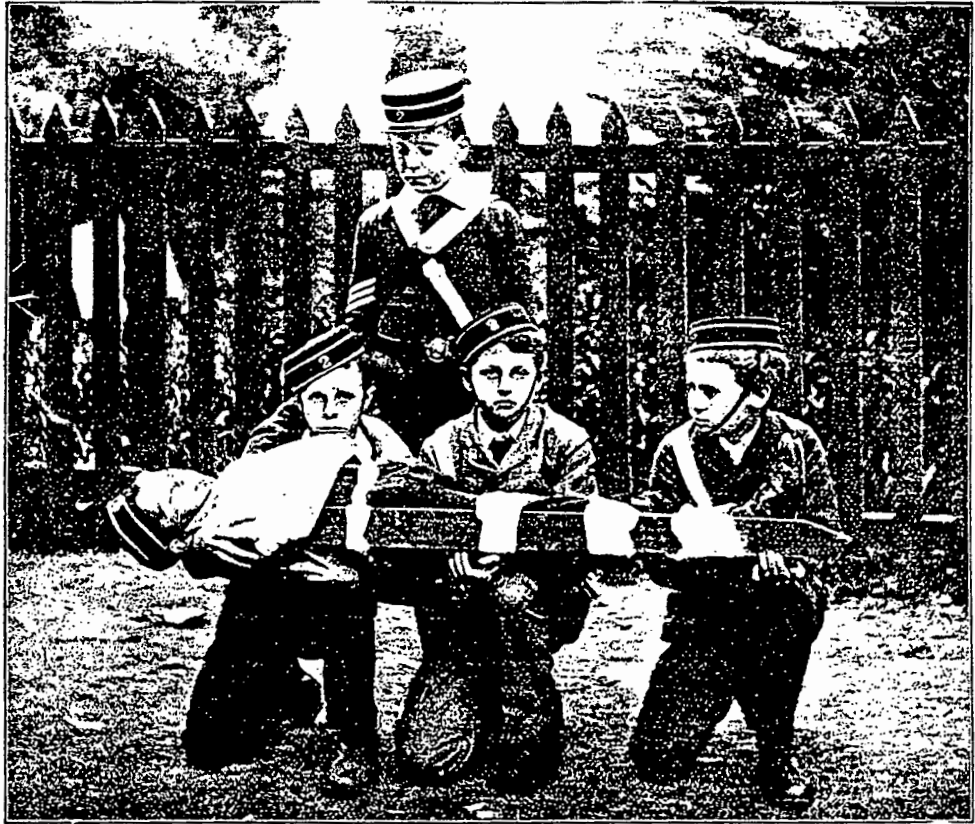
Another innovation of the B.B. was the 'Club Room' or 'Boys' Room'. This was created to provide a structured sanctuary for boys from overcrowded homes, or to keep boys off streets. **"We have for the boys amusements, gymnasium and a fine reading room (or Boys' Room)..."** wrote J.M. Parker from Cape Town in 1890.²¹

¹⁸ BB Gazette, October 1892, p. 130.

¹⁹ BB Gazette, March 1897, p. 1.

²⁰ BB Gazette, January 1899, p. 72.

²¹ BB Gazette, October 1890, p. 35.



"First Aid to the Injured."

AMBULANCE DETACHMENT OF 2ND CAPE TOWN COMPANY.

B.B. GAZETTE, MARCH 1897.

A typical Boys' Room was described as follows when the 11th Cape Town (Mowbray) company opened one in 1895:

'This is an adjunct which in colder climates is found invaluable in influencing the lads, and holding them together. The room will be well furnished and made as home-like as possible, and well supplied with periodicals, books, illustrated papers, games etc. Every member of the Company will be entitled to bring a friend to spend the evening. Tea will be served, and no effort will be spared to make the evening thoroughly enjoyable by all... Boys of the neighbourhood are cordially invited to take advantage of this place of resort.'²²

Many of the other Cape Town companies were encouraged to follow suit and open Boys' Rooms, which were also seen as a means of attracting new recruits into the movement. By the late 1900s, Boys' Rooms were also being created in other parts of South Africa, such as Johannesburg and Durban, normally on church or mission property where boys met habitually in their companies. Parents could despatch children to B.B. rooms, secure in the knowledge of close adult supervision.

PHYSICAL TRAINING AND SPORTS

Physical Training and Games have always been a major feature of Brigade activities - these have retained their prominent place in the company programme across the present century. For B.B. leadership, the promotion of sports and games expressed the keen ethos of 'muscular Christianity', although these activities often had less lofty meanings for youths.

Indeed, sport meant that many boys joined the B.B. to have the opportunity to play a particular sport. Other boys excelled at a particular sport solely by having had the opportunity to play it in the B.B.. Bill Perry and Peter Hauser, post-World War II South African professional footballers with Blackpool, reflected on this in 1956, in the Stedfast Magazine of The Boys' Brigade:

Bill Perry: "Before playing for The Boys' Brigade I had no clue as to the rules of the game as I used to play rugby at school. So actually one might say that I learned to play football in The Boys' Brigade." Also Peter Hauser: "I started playing football for the 7th Johannesburg Company,...

²² Cape Times, 2.2.1898, p. 7.

However, it was, as I would put it, this organisation which helped me to choose my football career."²³

Cricket, not least in the Transvaal, was also a popular sport in early companies. For instance, the Pretoria Battalion reported chiefly on its Battalion Cricket Club in the B.B. Gazette of the 1890s. In the Cape Town Battalion, cricket was played on a competitive level, with the Mayor of Cape Town, J. Liberman, presenting a shield for the competition. Companies which excelled in the 1900s included the 1st Rondebosch company.²⁴

Other activities and sports included bicycling, gymnasium and Indian Club displays. Club displays were performed with wooden clubs, as shown overleaf. Boys also took part in organised Saturday afternoon 'rambles', driven by a turn-of-the-century 'countryside' ideology that exposure to the outdoors and 'nature' would have a beneficial effect on poorer city boys, and could be a means of countering the 'degenerative' effects closely associated with urban squalor. Rambling proved popular with boys in the early period. Captain McNab, 2nd Cape Town company, emphasised its light nature, 'As a rule we start at about three o'clock, taking a train to one of the suburbs, and providing ourselves with buns. We generally visit some particular place of interest, and march back to town'.²⁵

By 1910, further recreational activities such as sword and fencing exercises, and bar-bell exercises, were added.²⁶

In founding decades, concert performances, drill, Bible class, Company/Battalion inspections, and visiting speeches/addresses were among items of company activities most prominently reported, as the following example of a company table demonstrates:

²³ Stedfast Magazine, April 1956, p. 10.

²⁴ BB Gazette, January 1910, p. 76; January 1911, p. 75.

²⁵ BB Gazette, December 1895, p. 42.

²⁶ BB Gazette, March 1908, p. 106. Today more modern day sports have been included, such as table tennis, volley-ball, hill hiking, mountaineering and canoeing.

SIMPLE INDIAN CLUB EXERCISES

Again a very popular form of physical training for many years and still occasionally used by Companies.

A Club Swinging item can be performed by a very small number of Boys as plenty of room needs to be allowed.

A few simple exercises are printed here, and further exercises can be made available on request.

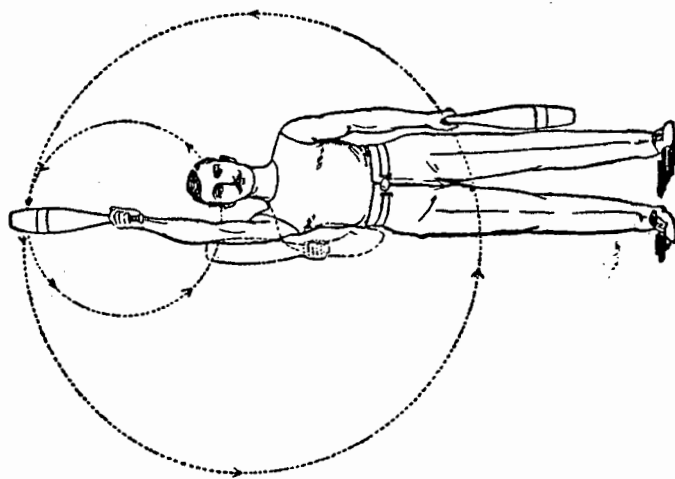
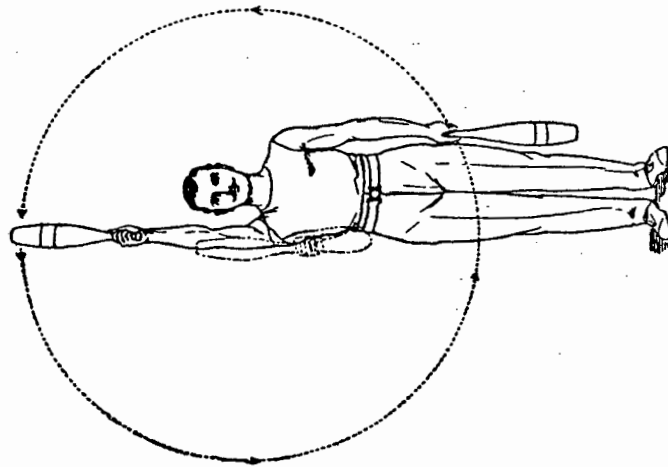
A musical accompaniment will add greatly to the enjoyment of this type of item, both for the participants and the audience.

Exercise 1

A. Allow the left arm to fall at rest beside the body out of action. Raise the right club to a vertical position, so that the top is just above the head. Now straighten the arm, moving the club upwards to the highest point, then let it swing to the right in a complete circle at the full radius of the arm, and lower to the first position. The whole movement should be completed while counting four.

B. Perform a similar revolution with the left club, in both cases repeating the movement while counting, say up to sixteen.

C. Combine these two exercises by performing them alternately, counting thirty-two in all.



Exercise 2

Repeat Exercise 1A, but at the completion of the circle instead of lowering the arm to the first position, continue the swing of the club in a smaller circle behind the shoulders, again counting four. At the end of this movement the club will be in position to repeat the exercise, which may be done *ad lib.*

B. Repeat the movement with the left arm.

C. Combine the two movements alternately, so that when one club is describing a small circle behind the shoulders, the other is being swung round in a large circle in front.

ANALYSIS OF ANNUAL COMPANY/BATTALION REPORTS* ²⁷

	1890-1895	1906-1910
Demonstration	2	5
Drill	5	5
Bible Class	5	5
Band	5	5
Competitions (Drill/Cricket)	1	10
Ambulance	1	2
Camp	2	5
Concert	2	-
Speeches/Addresses	2	5
Parades	2	5
Total for these events	27	47
<i>Total events reported</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>69</i>

*Events of 1st Cape Town Company/Battalion.

A final feature of early company/battalion activities was the regular annual essay competition - one on the first 'Battalion Camp', the other on 'Discipline'.²⁸ Boys were requested to write an essay on the Camp held in December, the other on their developing views of Discipline.

AWARDS

A comprehensive badge structure was started in Scotland and adapted in South Africa. Awards for different categories were created and awarded to boys who qualified. Badges formed part of special awards, as part of uniform and also for proficiency. The only medal constructed was the Cross for Heroism, the highest award which any boy could gain during his service in the B.B.. It has been presented to six South Africans, between 1904 - 1953: the first one to Corporal James C. Morris, aged

²⁷ BB Gazettes, 1890-95; 1906-1910; Cape Times 1.1.1895-29.6.1895; 2.11.1895-28.12.1895.

²⁸ Cape Times, 5.1.1895; BB Gazette February 1895, p. 207.

16 of the 14th Cape Town Company (Rondebosch). This was awarded in October 1904 for saving a life at a railway level crossing. A further three were awarded respectively in 1946, 1951 and 1953.²⁹

The system of Awards overseas commenced in 1889 when the Ambulance Badge was introduced. Through the twentieth century, more were added and a revised system was introduced in 1968. This was completely revised in 1983.

Early awards were structured in stages and grouped to allow for the eventual goal, being the King's Badge, which was introduced in 1913. This badge was gained upon the recommendation of the captain, for 90% attendance for not less than three sessions, holding of an NCO rank, and a specified number of other proficiency badges. In the 1930s, three sergeants of the 2nd Wynberg Company gained this award, these being the first in the province and probably in South Africa.³⁰ In 1952, the King's Badge was replaced by the Queen's Badge, while in 1962, the Queen's badge was diplomatically replaced by the Founder's Badge, as a badge for those countries which were outside the Commonwealth, such as South Africa and the Republic of Ireland. The Ambulance Badge, introduced in 1889, later became a First Aid Badge in 1957, while other badges covered such topics as, Arts and Crafts, Athletics, Band, Bugler's, Camping, Expedition and Drumming. On the following page are some illustrations of the awards.

CAMPING

With some Brigade leaders having had experience of military camps at Volunteer or Army level, this form of recreation of the late 19th Century proved to be popular with boys. In two lighthearted extracts, after a camp at Muizenberg in 1894:

"The tea and coffee was A1; so was the jam and biscuits. There was good sports and bad sports - I mean with the bees... some other Boys were sporting with the bees, but we all got paid;... they got stunged." Another relates that when it came to his turn to go on Sentry duty, he had no overcoat, so wrapped up in a blanket, and: **"had an 'enemy' come they would have been frightened, as I looked more like a Red Indian than a full private of the Boys' Brigade."**³¹

²⁹ BB Gazettes, 1904-53.

³⁰ Badges of The Boys' Brigade, (Archive Press, BBHQ, London, 1980); BB Gazette, December 1935, p. 10.

³¹ Cape Times, 26 January 1895, p. 7.

AWARD FOR GALLANTRY

Johannesburg Boy wins the Cross for Heroism

THE BOYS' BRIGADE CROSS FOR HEROISM has been awarded to CORPORAL M. JENNINGS, aged 17, of the 11th Johannesburg Company for saving the lives of two people from drowning in the sea at Uvongo on 26th December 1951.



AWARDS FOR GALLANTRY

TRANSVAAL BOY WINS THE CROSS

THE BOYS' BRIGADE CROSS FOR HEROISM has been awarded to PRIVATE GLEN LAWSON, aged 14, of the 1st SPRINGS (SOUTH AFRICA) COMPANY for saving a Boy of 8 from drowning at South Beach, Durban, Natal, on the 11th May 1953.





Special Badges and Awards

The Cross for Heroism



Introduced on the 1st September, 1902 First Awarded in October 1904.

Only given for acts of bravery where a Boy puts his own life at risk.



194 such awards have been gained to the end of 1985, of which five have been awarded posthumously.

The basic design has not been altered, just the addition of the cross behind the anchor from 1926.

Originally the ribbon was royal blue and white vertical striped but was changed to plain royal blue in 1941.

BADGES OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Brigade has taken part in this scheme since the Pilot Scheme was started in 1956.

In addition to the official Duke of Edinburgh's Award lapel badges BB Boys are permitted to wear the special BB Arm Badge when in uniform.



Plain bronzed for Bronze level (introduced in 1984).

Silver/Green for Silver level Gold/White at Gold Standard.



Service Badges



Three Year Service Anchor
1888-1926



Three Year Service Badge
1926-1968

Three years' Service with good conduct



Five Pointed or White Star

Used as a Battalion Efficiency or Good Conduct Badge by some Battalions (never HQ issue) from 1887 until the introduction of the One Year Efficiency Badge in 1904.

90% attendance with good conduct required. Worn on right forearm.



One Year Efficiency Badge
1904/1926



One Year Service Badge
1926/1968

Awarded for Good conduct and not more than two absences during the Session.



Long Service Badge
1927/1968

Not earlier than 31st December in Session when age limit attained after not less than four years' service.



Brigade Service Badge
1968

Changing number indicates number of years' service in either the Anchor Boys, Junior or Company Sections.

Buttonhole Badges

This Badge was first introduced in 1911 for Boys to wear when not in uniform, but in 1918 approval was given for it to be worn in the left lapel of the jacket with uniform at the discretion of the Captain. It was not until 1970 that the Buttonhole Badge became compulsory wear for Company Section Boys when in Uniform.



Round button type Badge, blue enamel, with silver anchor. 1911/1926.



After Union with the BLB the red cross was added to either a silver or bronze anchor. BB background.



In 1933 the BB celebrated its Jubilee with a special Buttonhole Badge

also

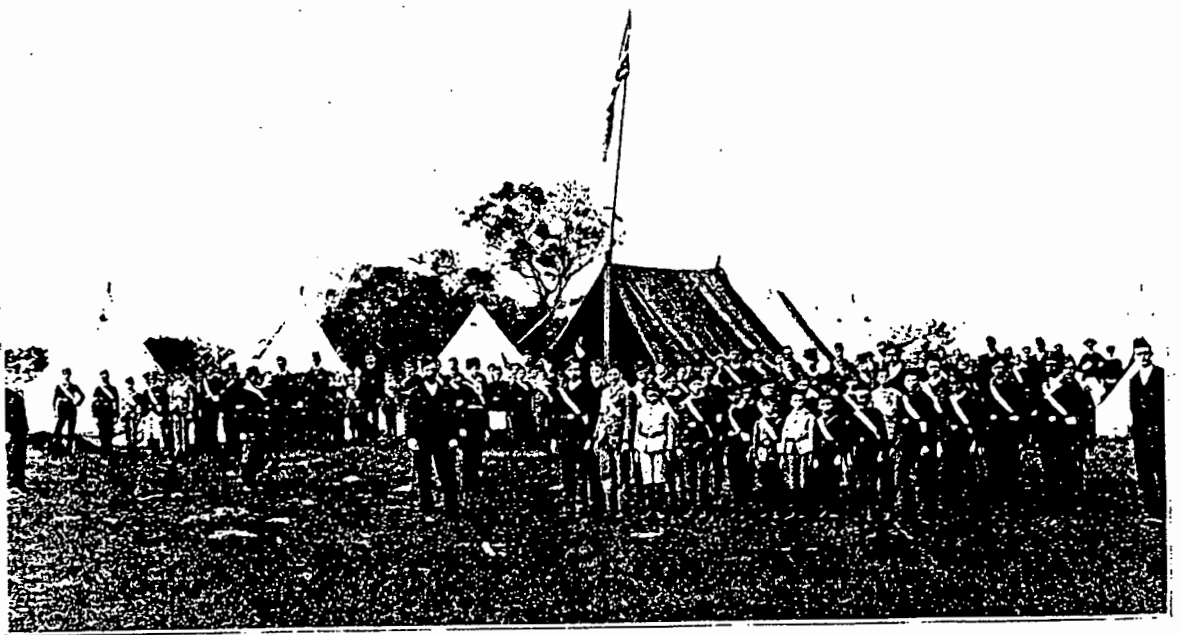
Jubilee Celebrations Badge

Boys who attended the Dechmont Camp were allowed to wear this badge on the left arm after camp and for the remainder of their Boy service. (White metal with blue enamel).

Visiting Officers (gold metal with white enamel).
Glasgow Battalion Officers (Red scroll on top).
Glasgow Battalion Ex-Members (Bronze).



B.B. Archive Press, London, 1985



THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN SOUTH AFRICA
CAMP OF THE DURBAN (NATAL) COMPANIES AT MALVERN, MICHAELMAS, 1895.

The Boys' Brigade Gazette 2 December 1895



CAMP PARTY OF 1ST BLOEMFONTEIN COMPANY,
ORANGE RIVER COLONY.

The Boys' Brigade Gazette April 1905

The Cape Battalion started with camps in December 1894³² and this became an annual event. Camping as an activity in the other regions also developed fairly quickly.

In the 1889 edition of the B.B. Manual for Officers, the benefits of Company Camps for Boys are explained. While much has changed in the style of camping since the first-ever B.B. camp in Scotland in 1886, a great deal of continuity remains. Across decades, camp meant being free from the customary restraints of school and family and the confines of a drab urban surrounding. It also meant another form of regimentation, one however tempered by the potential for fun and adolescent bonding.

Some of the early Brigade camps were highly organized and had tents pitched to military standards, for the military (Volunteers) provided tents, equipment and in some instances also cooked. Discipline was run strictly along military lines with a specific programme laid down. Equally, some officers put less emphasis on strict military discipline and more on the religious potential of a camp. But everywhere traditional Drumhead Services, Church Parades and prayers were a common feature of a Boys' Brigade camp.

Boys were also expected to drill at camps, falling in and out. Scout camps, by contrast, appeared to be more flexible and less organized. They did not have the strict religious supervision of morning prayers and military discipline in the form of drilling. As the Cape Times characterised camp experience in the mid-1890s: **'Arrived at Muizenberg we fell in and marched into camp, headed by the fine band of the 1st Cape Town. A detachment of men from the York and Lancashire Regiment went down a day or two beforehand and pitched all the tents so that we had nothing to do but step in and occupy them... it was an interesting sight to witness the military bearing of the boys duly impressed with their own importance.'**³³

The usual routine of a typical day in a B.B. camp would start with Reveille at between 6.00-6.30 a.m. followed by coffee and biscuits. Morning prayers preceded breakfast, after which a parade was held. This was followed by inspection of tents and kit. Dinner was at midday and boys were allowed to have amusements in the afternoon or a walk to the beach for bathing. They could be out until 5 o'clock. The

³² Cape Times, 29 December 1894, p. 7.

³³ Cape Times, 2 February 1895, p. 7.

evening meal was followed by evening prayers and lights out at 9.00 p.m.³⁴ Boys were also encouraged to take books, games, cricket equipment, draughts and chess with them.

The numbers at different camps naturally varied according to the size of companies or Battalions. For instance, numbers present at the Cape Battalion's annual camps in the 1890s ranged from 300 at the first camp in 1894 to eighty in 1901, down to a mere forty-four in 1910, **"the small number of Boys present being accounted for owing to the difficulty in finding the necessary funds."**³⁵ The Cape depression and unemployment which set in after 1904 perhaps meant that boys did not readily have money to participate in excursions, however cheap. At the first camp in 1894 at Muizenberg, tickets for the train were free, and boys paid a nominal fee of six pence towards costs.

Another feature of camp which boys enjoyed was the posting of 'Guards' or 'Sentries' to do duty at night. Inspections of camp vigilance were often carried out by an officer of a nearby regiment. Thus, at Muizenberg over the December/January camp in 1906, Lieutenant-Colonel Cantwell, Vice-President of the Cape Battalion, came out.³⁶

Newspapers and B.B. Gazettes carried publicity on various camps organised by individual companies or battalions.³⁷ Where, in earlier years, large camps were held at Battalion level, generally smaller camps were being held by the late 1920s, when the 1st Rondebosch company went out on its own. Millicent B. Chapman, an officer of the Transvaal reported of another small camp in 1927, **"The 1st Pretoria is a former B.L.B. Company, of about 35 'white' boys. This was their first camp - possibly the first B.B. camp in the Transvaal."**³⁸

Most past and present members of the B.B. will have no difficulty in recalling amusing or memorable incidents which occurred to them while at camp. In the interwar years, Peter Petersen of the 1st Rondebosch company remembers, **'Up early in the morning - getting fresh milk and meat from the locals at Mamre, the year when we camped there in the 1920s'**³⁹ Of this camp, the Captain, Wilfrid Abbott, reported in the B.B. Gazette of February 1927: **"But by the time home was reached, every**

³⁴ Programme of 1st camp at Muizenberg, 1894/5 - Cape Times, 29 December 1894, p. 7.

³⁵ BB Gazettes, 1894-1910.

³⁶ BB Gazette, April 1907, p. 119.

³⁷ BB Gazettes, 1894-1927; Cape Times, 1894-1895.

³⁸ BB Gazette, September 1927, pp. 8-9.

³⁹ Interview, P. Petersen, ex-BB, February 1993.



B.B.'s



B.B.s & C.L.B.S.

(On Left) Peter Petersen ex-BB of 1st Rondebosch Co. with his Brothers -
2 belonged to Church Lads Brigade. circa 1920s. His Rank: Staff-Sergeant
Interviewed: Feb. 1993

THE BOYS' BRIGADE

Founded by
SIR WILLIAM A. SMITH
1883

With which is united The Boys' Life Brigade

OBJECT: The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys, and the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, Self-respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness



GAZETTE

Vol. L. No. 3.

ABBAY HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1
168 BATH STREET, GLASGOW, C.2

FEBRUARY, 1942



Young Johannesburgers for Camp



CAMP SNAP SHOTS

September, 1954

STEDFAST MAGAZINE

ABOVE: The Commandant greets Officers and Boys from Port Elizabeth (S. Africa).

boy felt that the four days had been packed with enjoyment, and all were eagerly looking forward to another camp at Mamre."⁴⁰

L. le Roux, ex-B.B. member of 1st Somerset West Company remembered: 'The year when gale force winds blew the tents over at Kogel Bay and boys and officers decided to sleep under the flattened canvas after having been awake most of the night and struggling to keep the tents up'.

Of a later period, a present day Officer, L. Adonis, of the same company, remembers: 'Going around at night at Great Brak River and pulling out tent pegs which brought the tents of other B.B. companies down in October 1968 when we camped there for our annual Founder's Day Parade'.⁴¹

Camping has appealed to boys and Officers alike, at all periods of the Brigade's history, being sustained through World War years. Nor was it entirely local. South African B.B.s attended camps in Britain in 1954, 1963 and 1983.⁴²

⁴⁰ BB Gazette, February 1927, p. 92.

⁴¹ Reminiscences of camps by BBs and ex-BBs: Somerset West Co. L. Adonis and L. le Roux, August 1993.

⁴² Special event files: 1954; 1963; 1983; BBHQ, London; BBSA minutes 1963; 1983.

CHAPTER 6

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT : 1902-1980s

1902-1914

After the South African War, B.B. work resumed at a slow pace, although through its principal Cape Battalion it maintained most of its regular activities such as camps and drill competitions into the Edwardian years. The list of prominent people supporting the movement also remained steady. Sir John Buchanan K.T., was appointed B.B. President in 1904, joined by Lieutenant-Colonel L.J. Shadwell as Vice-President and Major J. Sisson as Honorary Vice-President. Membership by 1906-7 stood at 9 companies and 304 members, with one new company having been formed at De Aar. In this session, 1906-7, the Y.M.C.A. offered a seat on its council for a B.B. Officer, to enable the B.B. to recruit more members. This was a useful initiative to put into effect a 1906 recommendation on **"consideration of ways and means for spreading this organisation."**¹ An accompanying report on race relations was also revealing: **"The question of having parades at which both white and coloured Boys participate, has received the attention of the Battalion Council.. to meet the difficulty, the Battalion has been divided into right and left half sections, the former for Companies consisting of coloured boys, of which there are seven, and the latter for the two white companies."**²

The long-term reason for slow growth or actual decline was invariably attributed by the B.B. to a lack of suitable and capable leaders, as shown in typical reports of 1906, **"The principal reason for this decline is the old trouble which has hampered the progress of our work from the very beginning, viz. - the difficulty of getting the right men into the work."**³ and in 1907, **"but the difficulty of obtaining the services of men willing to act as officers is felt as keenly as ever."**⁴

To boost leadership inspiration, the B.B. in Cape Town was graced in October 1912, by a visit by Lord Guthrie, the B.B. President of Great Britain. He gave an address at the Rondebosch company, in which he applauded the B.B. role, in that, **"Sunday Schools supplied a great need, but they did not go far enough. Something was wanted which would hold a boy when he reached the age at which he was**

¹ *BB Gazette*, November 1907, p. 45.

² *BB Gazette*, November 1907, p. 45.

³ *BB Gazette*, November 1906, p. 44.

⁴ *BB Gazette*, November 1907, p. 45.

likely to leave the Sunday School." He also expressed the wish to see more ministers of religion, to tell them of the benefits of nourishing a B.B. company.⁵ Elsewhere, scattered activity continued. The 1st Bloemfontein Company which met on a regular basis in Wesleyan premises and was serviced by ministers from the Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Baptist churches, enjoyed imperial patronage.⁶ In 1908, this company was inspected by Sir Hamilton Goold, Governor of the Orange River Colony, and treated at Government House afterwards.⁷ By the 1910s, the 1st Bloemfontein Company had received material assistance from the Governor and other prominent figures who publicly supported the B.B. as a body capable of 'disciplining' boys on the one hand and drawing them closer to the church on the other.⁸ In another classical development of the 1900s, the 1st Maritzburg company arranged for the Chief Justice of the Colony, Sir Henry Bale, to be appointed Honorary President of the B.B.. There was no question in Bale's mind that the B.B. was proving a real success in providing natural moral leadership.⁹

1914-1945

After 1914, following the spread of mass education for whites and the rise of specifically Afrikaner youth recreational provision, the main strength of the movement was to be found concentrated amongst the Coloured companies of the Cape Province. A prominent Methodist leader of this period was the Reverend William Mason,¹⁰ who started the Strand company, and was perpetually hopeful of newly increased B.B. activity, **"fully expecting a great awakening in B.B. work in South Africa ere long."**¹¹ Also prominent was the Captain of the Strand company, F. Traut, active in Sunday School work as well as other religious spheres. Of this individual it was noted, **"Another who devoted all his free time to his church was Mr Frikkie Traut who, with a horse and cart, daily delivered Divalls bread around the Strand and Gordon's Bay in all weathers. He captained the Boys' Brigade for many years and also preached on Sundays in a disused shed."** Under Traut's prompting, **"the monthly parade and the march round the Strand lead by drum and fife band (later replaced by a brass band) became a popular event for the local inhabitants."** Further companies emerged in the Hottentots-Holland area, at the rural Methodist churches of Sir Lowry's Pass, Somerset West and Raithby. Among farmworkers the link between drill and war service was especially obvious, as B.B.

⁵ BB Gazette, January 1912, p. 76.

⁶ BB Gazette, December 1907, p. 60.

⁷ BB Gazette March 1908, p. 106.

⁸ BB Gazette, January 1910, p. 77.

⁹ BB Gazette, June 1902, p. 158.

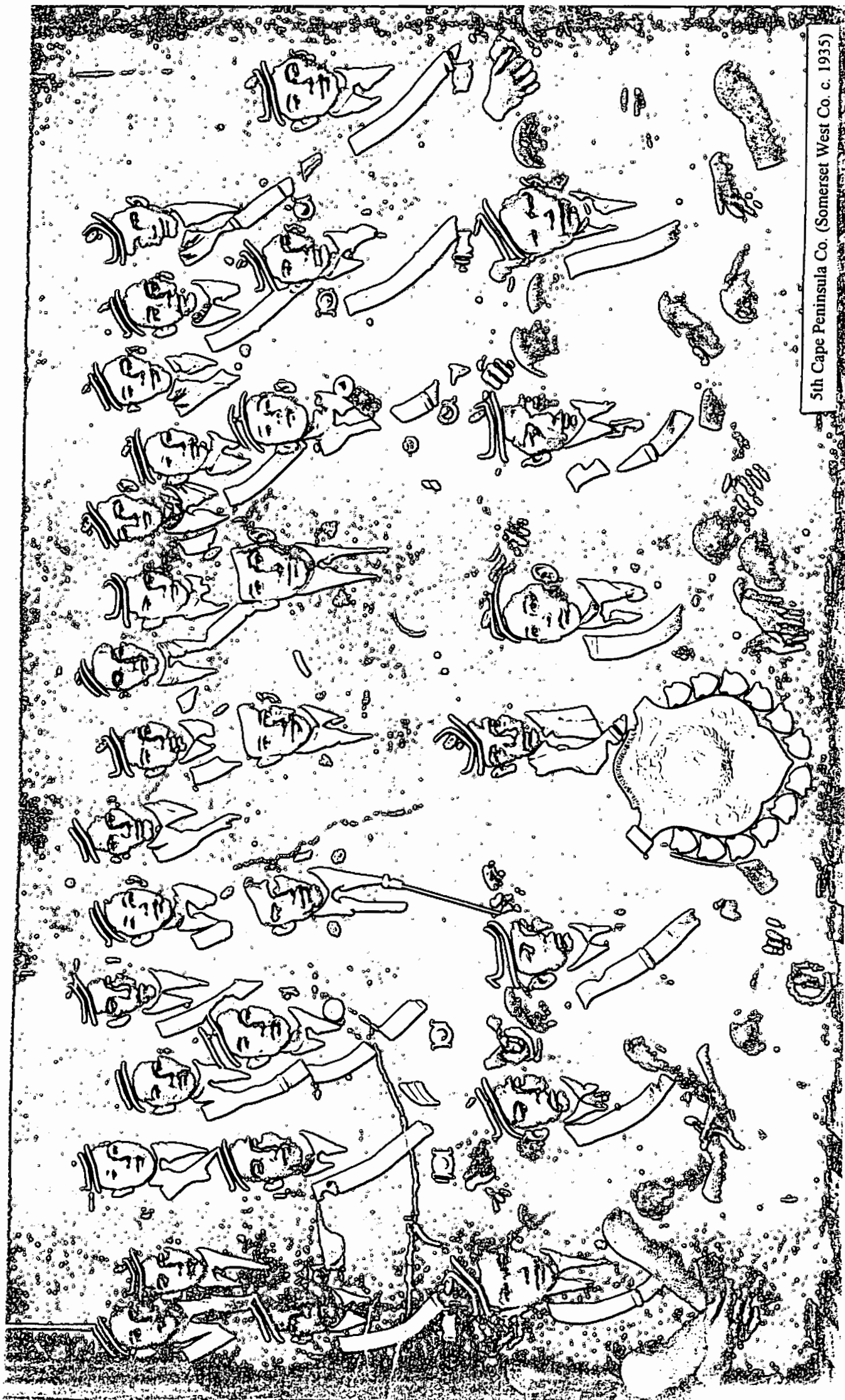
¹⁰ B. Mason, The Ministry of William Mason, Booklet, (Methodist Church, Cape Town.)

¹¹ BB Gazette, March 1914, p. 109.



DETACHMENT OF 3RD CAPE TOWN COMPANY. (*strand*)

B.B. Gazette, March 1914 (Rev. Mason & Boys)



recruits responded to Cape Corps enlistment calls. **"Many members of the Boys' Brigades of the Hottentots-Holland area served in the Cape Corps in both World Wars."**¹²

A number of B.B. units survived through the 1920s until a general revival took place in the mid-1930s. Companies which became prominent, were the 2nd Cape Town (Wynberg) and 3rd Cape Town (Strand), contributing to B.B. growth through Methodist churches in the Cape. Now, B.B. expansion in the Western Cape until the Second World War was almost exclusively amongst coloured boys in semi-rural or rural districts. In 1928, W. Abbott of Cape Town for example, reported, **"there was little chance of the B.B. flourishing among European boys, but there was great scope among the "coloured" and "native" boys."**¹³ Falling white membership was probably linked not least with the historic decline in poor whiteism in the Western Cape region.

In addition to the Methodist route, some advance was also achieved at Congregational churches in the Paarl region in the late 1920s. In 1930, the National Sunday School of South Africa undertook to despatch B.B. information to schools in an effort to boost B.B. membership.¹⁴ By 1934-35, the Port Elizabeth area had become the strongest urban B.B. area in South Africa, momentarily surpassing that of the Cape Town district. By then, South African membership stood at 780 in fourteen companies. Prince George reviewed 400 B.B. members of coloured and white companies at Port Elizabeth in 1943.¹⁵ The 'work' in the Transvaal, mainly in Pretoria and Johannesburg, remained insignificant, only advancing slightly after the mid-1930s.

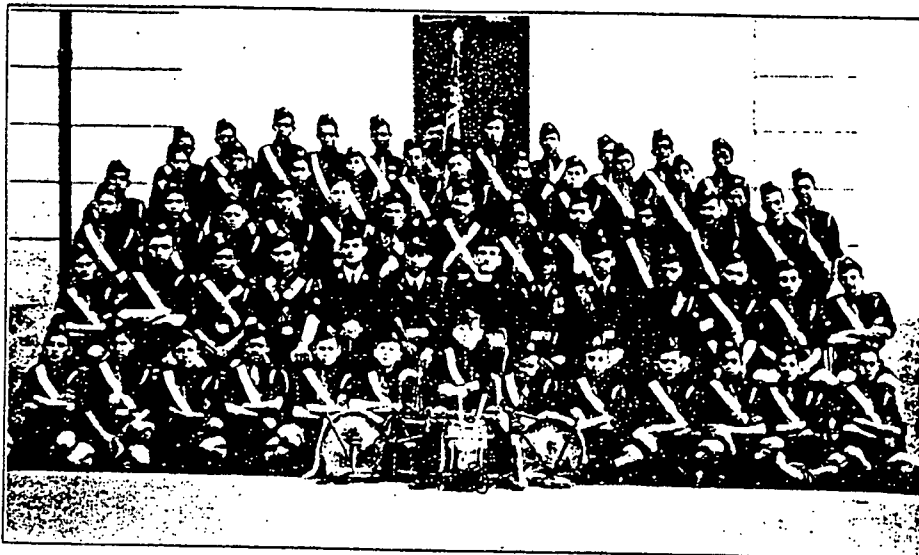
In May 1936, the Cape Peninsula Officer's Council was formed under the leadership of Mason, with Battalion status being granted to this council by B.B. Headquarters, London in 1937. This was the first real effort since the First World War to create some administrative unity among B.B. units in the Cape Province. By 1937, membership in and around Cape Town stood at about 600 in 11 companies. The Coronation Day celebrations in this year saw the largest B.B. parade in Cape Town at which the Governor-General, Sir Patrick Duncan, delivered the following message:

¹² P. Heap, The Story of the Hottentots-Holland, Social History of Somerset West, Strand, Gordons Bay and Sir Lowry's Pass over Three Centuries (Heap, Somerset West, 1993), p. 181.; BB Report, 1943.

¹³ BB Gazette, October 1928, p. 20.

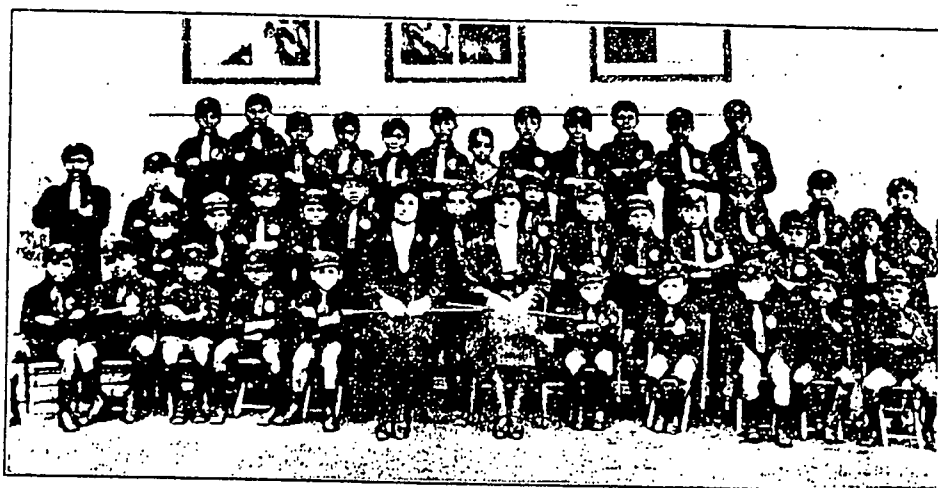
¹⁴ Overseas Secretary Report, 1 September 1930, to BB Executive, U.K.

¹⁵ Overseas Secretary Report, 12 May 1934.



2ND WYNBURG COMPANY (SOUTH AFRICA) IN THE JUBILEE YEAR

B.B. Gazette, October 1933



2ND CAPE TOWN (WYNBERG) TEAM

B.B. Gazette, April 1936



Coronation Day—May 12th, 1937. The float of the 1st Johannesburg Company, Boys Brigade, which took part in the Coronation Procession. The float represented the various activities of the company. The officers (left to right) are: 2nd Lieut. Smith, Capt. R. J. Mitchell, 1st Lieut. Bissett and Sergeant Rehbock.

The Boys' Brigade—10 Years of Good Progress

By R. J. MITCHELL
(who revived the movement in Johannesburg in 1936).

'The Outspan', 15 November 1946



The writer.

"I am glad to send a message in appreciation of the work of the Cape Peninsula Battalion of The Boys' Brigade. You are part of a great organisation, and that means that it lies with you to see that South Africa keeps a worthy place in maintaining high standards of conduct and efficiency."¹⁶

In 1936, a new Johannesburg company was formed under the leadership of Robert J Mitchell of Edinburgh. His company was efficiently run, 'smart', well-drilled and keen. However, it was reported by D.O'Neill, an overseas visitor to South Africa that, **"the spiritual side did not receive sufficient attention...Mitchell keeps things very much in his own hands...he is very strong against allowing the white companies to come into contact in any way with the coloured companies...Hence his insistence that coloured companies wear the "pill-box" cap, whereas white boys wear the B.B. service cap...having any concern with anyone besides whites. While it may not be feasible for the two sections to cooperate at present, I think it should be B.B. policy to work for the day when the colour barrier will be broken down. But few whites in South Africa agree with me, whether in or out of the B.B."**¹⁷ This reflected some of the internal tensions and ambiguities of the B.B.'s existence in a deepening racial society under Hertzog segregation of the 1930s.¹⁸ But this period was also the start of renewed work amongst remaining poorer white boys in the Transvaal. By 1939, a Rand Officers' Council was working, and in 1940, membership in the Transvaal stood at more than 300 boys. Here, the B.B. received strong official support, in the form of inspections by the Governor-General as well as a new flag. Prominent dignitaries included Sir Patrick Duncan and Jan H. Hofmeyr, who became B.B. President.¹⁹

In 1939, the B.B. Overseas Committee in Britain resolved **"that the present challenges to extension in the Brigade work overseas must be met. To this end it is essential that a representative from Headquarters, preferably the Overseas Secretary should visit B.B. centres overseas, and that the first visit should be made to South Africa in 1939."**²⁰ This first visit paid to South Africa by the Overseas Secretary, McVicker during 1939, gave a new lease of life to the B.B. in South Africa, especially in the Cape. A Christian liberal, McVicker reported extensively on his South African trip in B.B. Gazettes of September-December 1939, and noted that: **"It is impossible to generalise about**

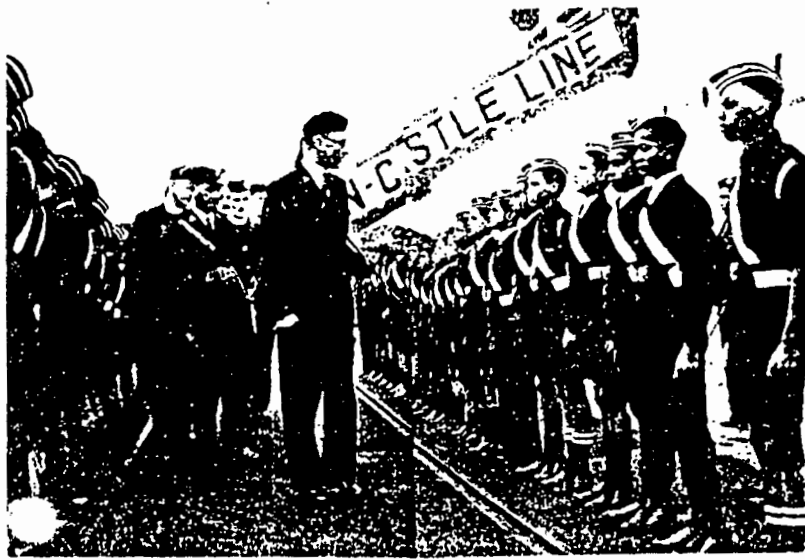
¹⁶ BB Gazette, September 1937, p. 21.

¹⁷ BB Reports, 16.5.1936; 10.3.1943; see also The Outspan, 15 November 1946, p. 57 and J. de V. Heese, Die Voortrekkers en ander S.A. Jeugverenigings (Nasionale Pers, Kaapstad, 1940), p. 147, on the BB work by Mitchell.

¹⁸ Davenport, South Africa, A Modern History, (Macmillan, Johannesburg, 1985), p. 253.

¹⁹ BB Gazette, October 1940, p. 29.

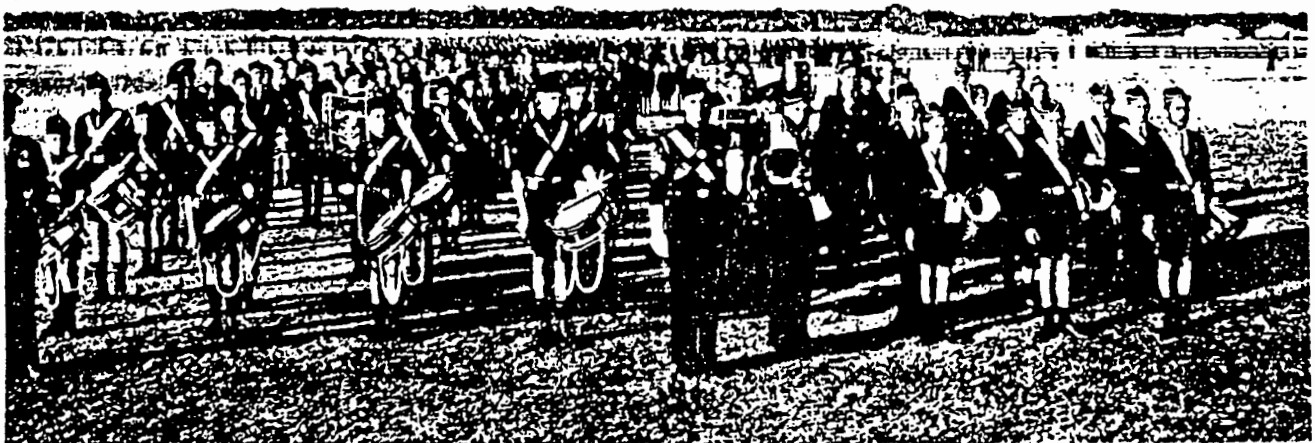
²⁰ Overseas Committee Minutes, 6 January 1939.



The Overseas Secretary arrives at Cape Town September 1939



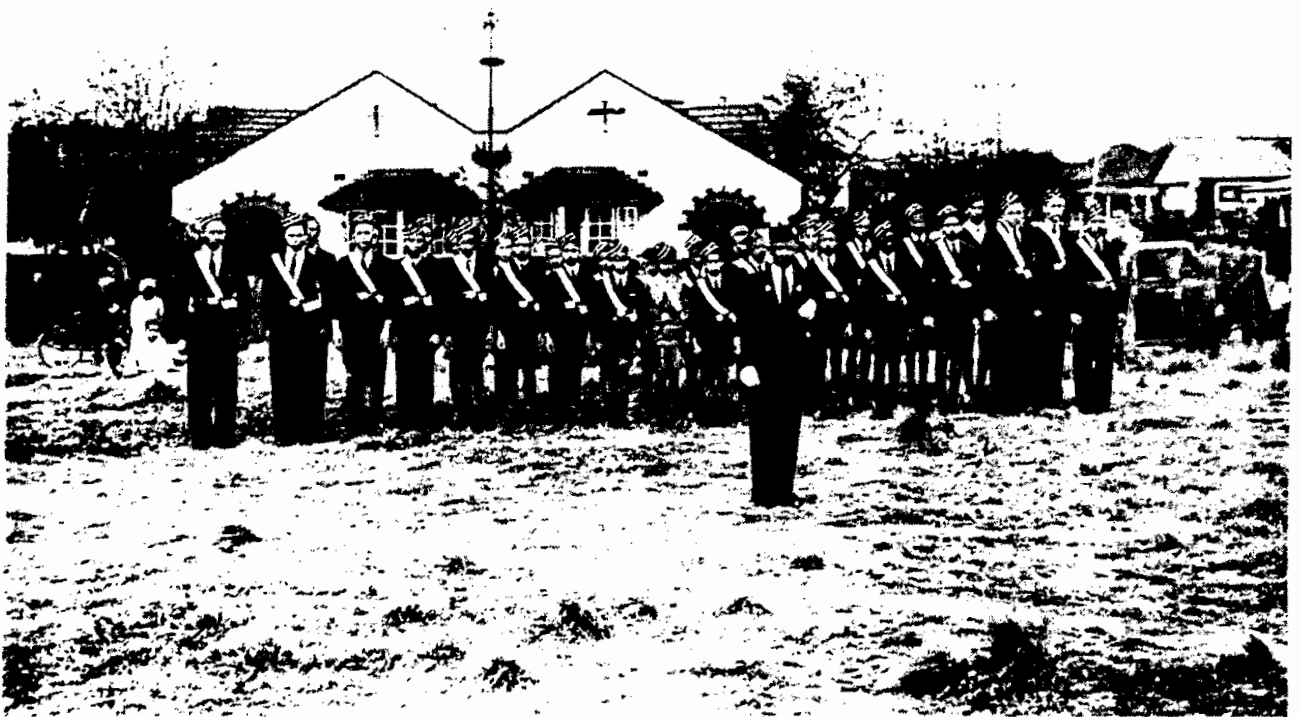
Mc Vicker's visit 1939



Musical Cape Peninsula Bands Paraded on the Occasion of the Overseas Secretary's Visit



Mc Vicker's arrival, Cape Town 1939



Durban Co. & Mc Vicker 1939

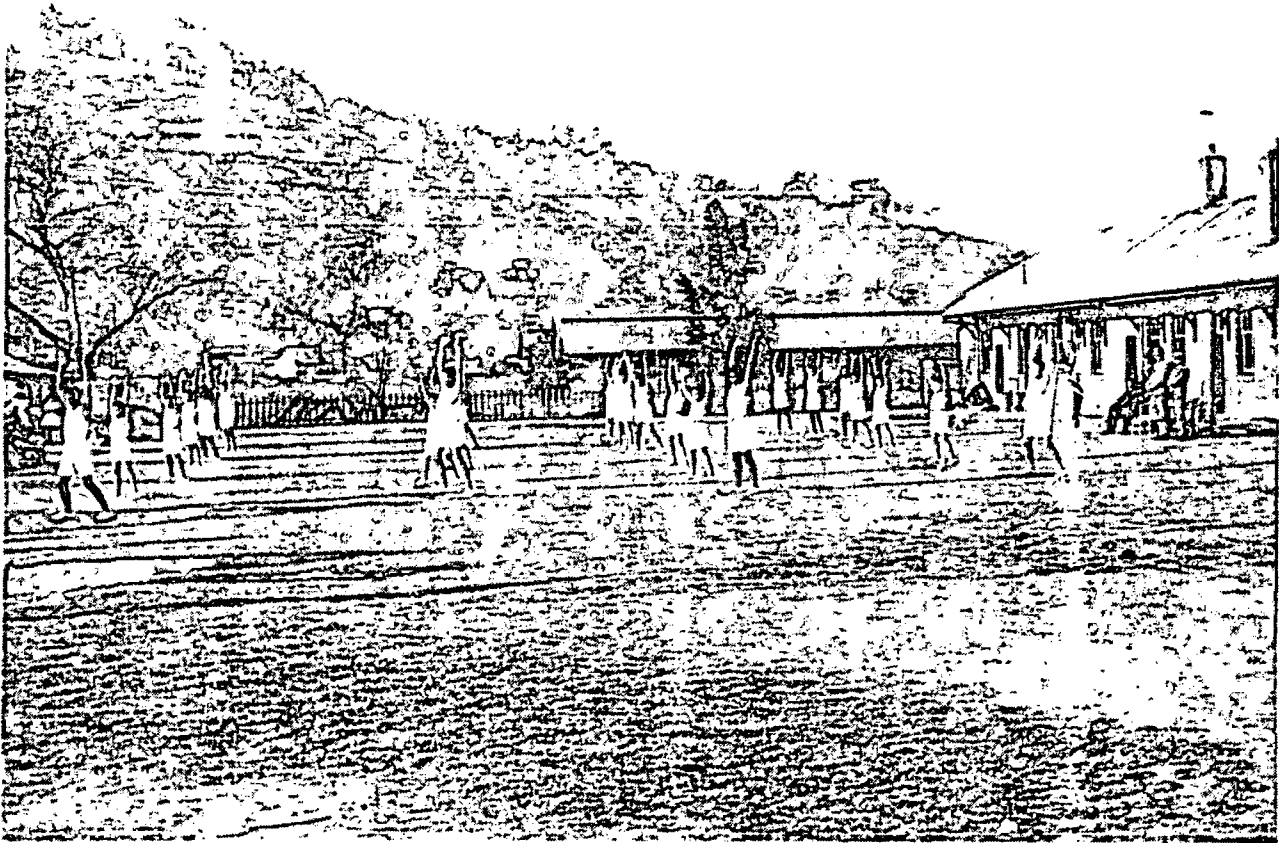


1st Durban 1939



Church Parade at Port Elizabeth

B.B. Gazette 1939
December



P.T. at Pietermaritzburg 1939



1st Pietermaritzburg Team 1939



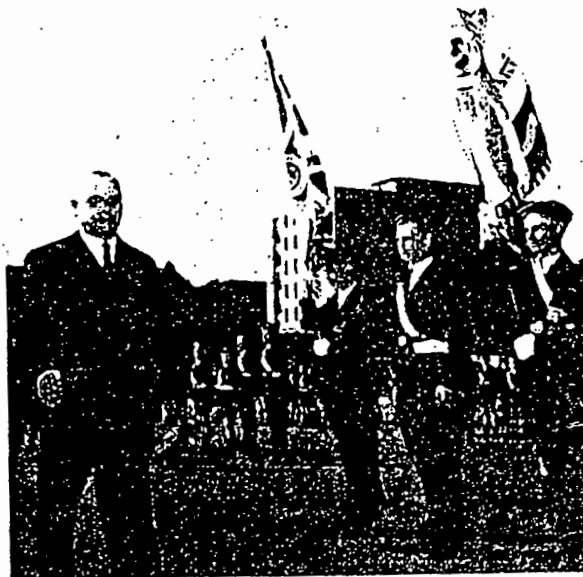
The Governor of South Africa reviews the Rand Battalion

B.B. Gazette, January 1941



Rand Battalion in Johannesburg

B.B. Gazette, May 1941



*The Acting Premier Inspects
J.H. Hofmeyer, (Minister of Finance)*

B.B. Gazette, December 1942

South Africa. It has been said that it has more problems to the square inch than any other part of the world, and its problems...are concerned with human relationships...It is for all the boys of South Africa to strengthen that...unifying influence which alone can solve the problems."²¹

Over the period 1939-40, mainly Coloured membership stood at about 1 500 members, in 32 companies.

War then created a shortage of officers:

"Many of the Transvaal B.B. Officers are now serving with the South African Forces, but in spite of this shortage of man-power fine progress has been made, and courageous plans are in train to maintain the work of the Companies..."²² **"In the sterner campaigns of North Africa many Old Boys have been giving highly commended service in the Cape Motor Transport Corps - almost the only way the coloured community can share in active service for the King."**²³

1945-1980s

After the 1940s, the B.B. grew firmer in the Transvaal, where the Rand Battalion organised work amongst white companies. It also established an equipment depot which served South Africa since the 1950s. However, this period was not without stress. The Rand Battalion decided in 1950 that it would only admit white companies.²⁴ Alongside, coloured companies in the Transvaal functioned under the name of the Ebenezer Group, and later the Transvaal Battalion.

Separation was hardened as a result of segregated areas after the Group Areas Bill of 1950 which empowered the Government to proclaim residential and business areas for particular race groups. This effectively ended the life of any remaining mixed companies. Coloured companies were resentful, and B.B. Headquarters distressed, but were powerless to change the situation. So, battalions such as those on the Rand functioned as separate units. As a result of the country's socio-political structure it was also difficult to establish a national B.B. Council.

Through the 1950s, membership rose to almost 3 000. In 1958, George Mc Arthur, a Scottish missionary moved to the Bantu Presbyterian Church in the Transkei where he started B.B. work. This was also the year in which Leslie Rawson, Overseas Secretary, visited South Africa and the need for a

²¹ BB Gazette, December 1939, p. 63. BB Gazettes, September 1939-December 1939; McVicker's Diary, 1939; Mac's Itinerary.

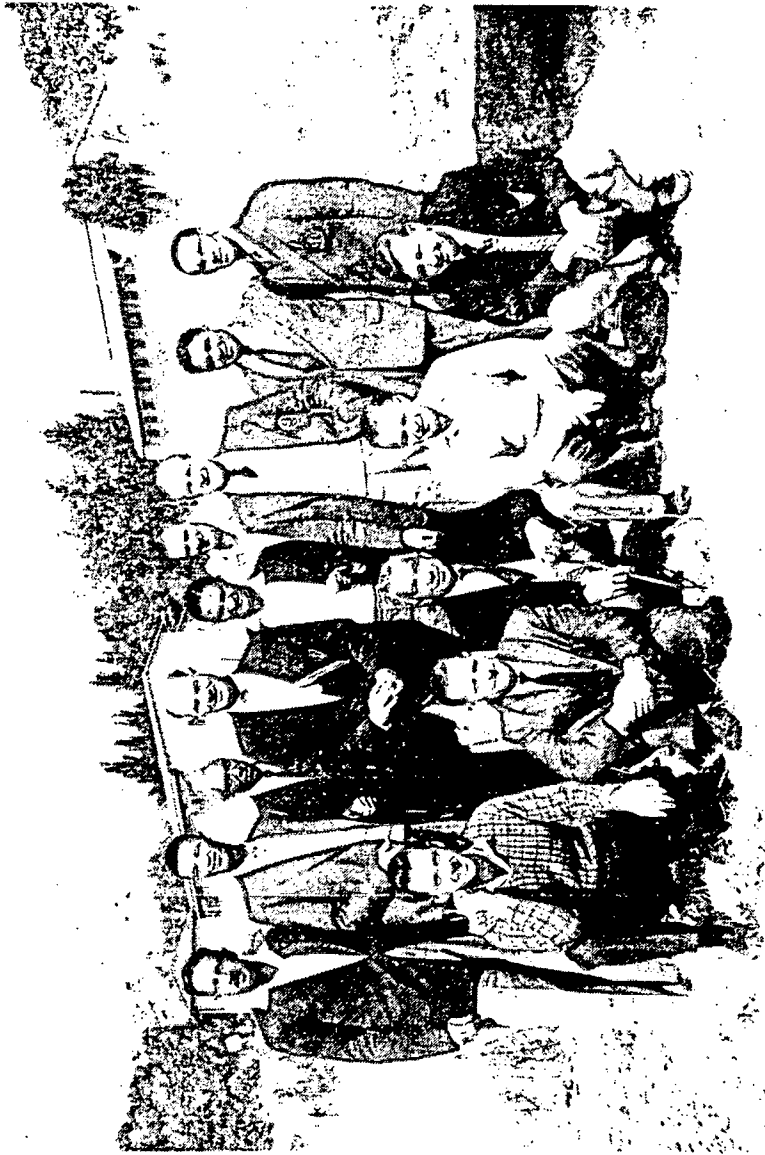
²² BB Gazette, October 1940, p. 29.

²³ BB Gazette, December 1941, p. 23.

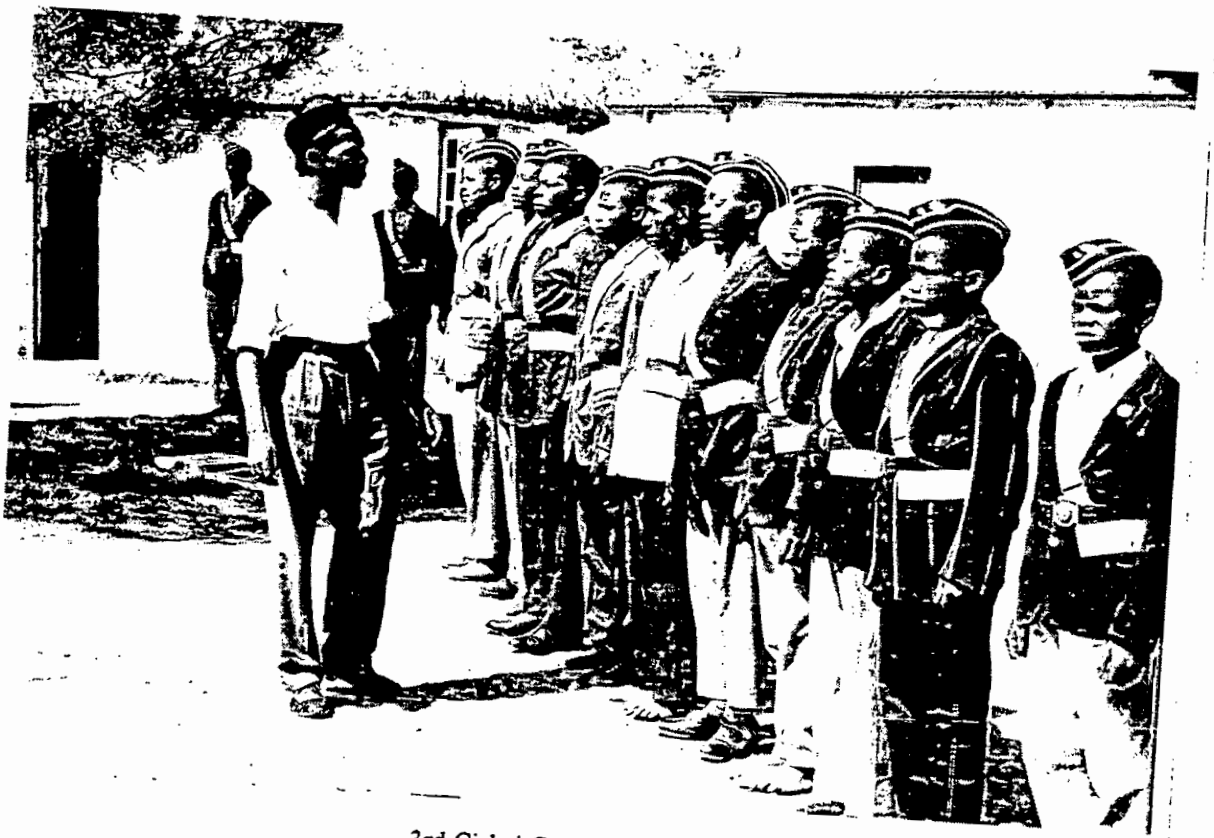
²⁴ Overseas Committee Report, 11 February 1950.



Overseas Secretary, L. Rawon & Wynberg Co. 1958



1st South African Consultation 1961



3rd Ciskei Co. 1964

full-time worker in South Africa was seen.²⁵ It was decided to send South Africans as bursars to Britain to be trained to return to South Africa to work in their respective areas. The first bursars were I. Stober of Cape Peninsula Battalion and C. Goliath of the Ebenezer Group.²⁶

By the time of the first South African consultation, in 1961, where a unitary solution was vainly sought for B.B. work in South Africa, membership stood at more than 3 700 including 22 small African Companies in the Transkei and Ciskei areas. In 1963, two coloured boys from the Western Cape attended a camp in Scotland and Harry van Schalkwyk, a bursar from the Port Elizabeth Battalion, attended the World Conference meeting as an observer. By 1968, B.B. influence was again almost entirely to be found amongst coloureds and some whites, as African companies in the Transkei started closing down after Mc Arthur was refused an entry visa back into South Africa. The Government accused him of training African youths to be 'soldiers'.²⁷ This was a real irony of history. For decades, drill had been approved of by established authority as discipline-forming. Now, under apartheid, African youth drill was considered insurrectionary. In 1968, a multiracial South African B.B. Council was formed, although multiracial companies did not yet exist.

In 1983, white and coloured battalions in the Transvaal were disbanded and new ones formed, comprising of white and coloured companies. This finally gave rise to joint parades and other mixed events. In 1983, a mixed contingent of about 60 officers and boys attended the international camp in Scotland, where the centenary of the B.B. was celebrated. By 1983, numbers stood at 3 434 boys and 329 officers. Since 1984, the B.B. Council began holding a National Leadership Development Training Course, aimed at producing young leaders. This gave white and coloured boys the opportunity to mix socially. South Africa came to form part of the Southern African Fellowship, giving it full participating status of the international World Conference. Since the 1980s, B.B. South Africa has sent officers to various World Conference camps and workshops.

In 1989, Reverend Vernon Openshaw, the first full-time B.B. worker was appointed. This was also the year in which the B.B. in South Africa celebrated its centenary. A national centenary camp was held in December in Pietermaritzburg, where the first B.B. company in South Africa was founded. Subsequent

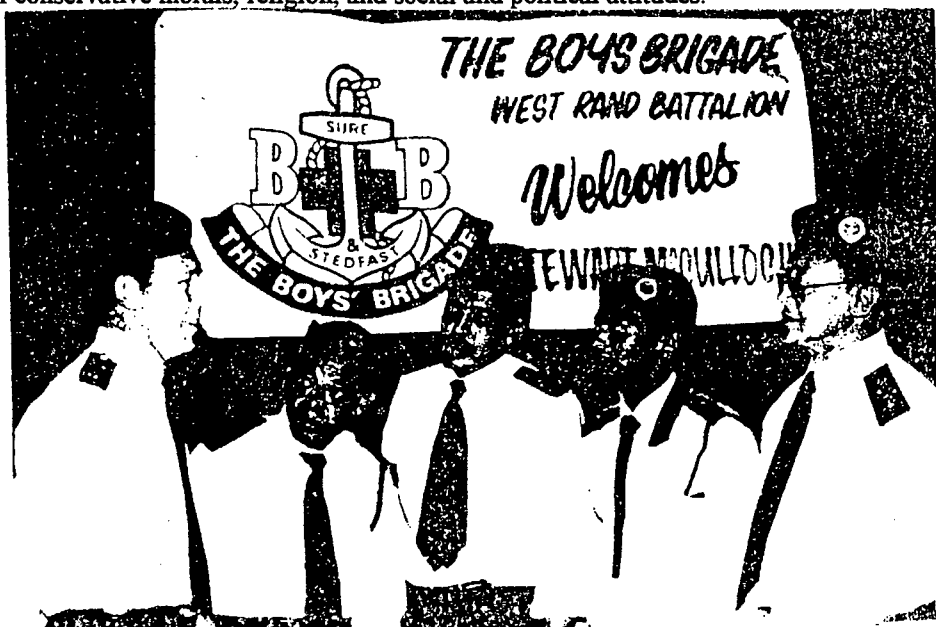
²⁵ *Overseas Committee Reports*: 15 November 1958; 14 February 1959.

²⁶ *Overseas Committee Reports*: 14 February 1959; 30 May 1959; 24 October 1959.

²⁷ Telephone interview, George Mc Arthur, October 1992, England.

initiatives have included a return to old mission grounds, but in new forms. A black fieldworker, Michael Ntombela, has been employed in Natal since 1992 to work among the Zulu, in work established with the assistance of the Salvation Army and local churches. In 1992, the South African Council adopted a Development Plan to further and improve B.B. work despite shrinking revenue sources. Since 1992, the B.B. has had to operate without a full-time worker, due to financial shortages. Current fieldworker and other B.B. administrative costs are mainly covered by a grant from the World Conference, Government Grants (Department of Culture), small Corporate Donations and B.B. members' contributions.²⁸

The last ten years have seen the S.A. Council striving for improvements in the movement throughout the country. This is no easy task, especially considering its size. Statistics for 1994 showed 7 Battalions, 77 companies and 2 741 members.²⁹ These figures represent a body of modest size, considering the population in South Africa and the 'catchment' area of eligible boys. Doubtless, this narrow base can in part be attributed to current companies struggling increasingly to survive - competing against other extra-mural influences. Most are at best trying to hang on to existing boys of their own churches, leaving very little chance of going out to recruit new members. Whereas the B.B. of the William Smith era worked to absorb 'street' boys, for present companies, charity starts at home. Far from ambitious mission outreach, the B.B. now cultivates its own patch, hanging on to the boys of its own churches. No longer enjoying the direction of philanthropic merchants, it now relies exclusively on the services of officers of modest means and strong Christian inclination. Thus continues the B.B. tradition of building youth organisation on the basis of conservative morals, religion, and social and political attitudes.



²⁸ Reports and Minutes, BB South Africa: 1980s-1990s.

²⁹ BB Statistics, South Africa, 1994.

Stewart McCullough meets officers of the West Rand Battalion.

CONCLUSION

The B.B. emerged in a later Victorian era of 'muscular Christianity' and mission outreach to subordinate social classes. It grew also out of a close association with the Sunday School movement. And it grew more widely in the shaping context of Christianity and empire.

It is beyond the scope of this short history to try to measure the influence of the B.B. upon the lives and characters of the boys who have joined over the years, although it may be asked whether this influence has really been as enduring and permanent as B.B. stalwarts have always hoped. It is possible, however, to speculate on why boys should have joined the organization in the first place and what they expected to get out of membership. **"For the success of a youth movement cannot be gauged solely by speeches of figures in authority sympathetic to its aims, but must also take into account the reaction of the membership to the activities on offer. After all, a mass movement like the B.B. cannot be sustained over such a lengthy period without the participation, interest and acceptance of its rank and file."**¹

That interest undoubtedly lay in part in the B.B. provision of recreational pastimes and the thrill of parade ground drill.

This leads us to further questions: namely, how successful historically has the B.B. been in attracting boys into the Church, a central purpose for which it was originally established? Did it retain boys in Sunday School until they were old enough to pass into the organizations connected with local churches and missions? It would also be appropriate to ask why officers gave so much time and unpaid effort to the movement. It may also prove useful to consider the validity of the charges of militarism that have been levelled at the movement almost since its inception.

There are a number of reasonable answers to the initial questions of why 'Boys' joined and what satisfactions they expected to derive as members; and to officers' devotion. The Boys' Brigade, as this account of its history has tried to indicate, met some interests from youths of lower class origins. It combined the glamour of the military in style and ideas - with a simple and inexpensive uniform and, until 1926, the opportunity in some companies to drill with a dummy rifle. It also provided some leisure facilities, such as a 'Boys room', football, cricket, camping and (the musicianship of) bands. Poorly-

¹ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, p. 246.

endowed schools in working class areas, for example, could not supply the recreational capacity of youth organizations. Further 'character building' or 'social' education for 'rougher' classes was seen as the work of voluntary agencies in the nineteenth century, and is still echoed in the present. Basil Jacobs, a B.B. member of the Transvaal Battalion, and long-serving Secretary of the South African Council, suggested of the future of the B.B. in 1992, **"I still see it being the answer to our youth problems of today."**²

Not all boys would have taken to the essential principle of Brigade training - the development of discipline through religious instruction and formal drill. For them, the controlled field individualism of the Boy Scouts would have proved more attractive. It is, however, arguable that drill and discipline held an attraction for many lower class boys in the past. Today, however, surviving companies put less emphasis on drill, with fewer rigid demands being made on members in terms of military compulsion.

The success of the B.B. in attracting boys into the Church is certainly not an easy question to answer. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated³ in the early B.B. era that many boys transferred from youth to adult activity in the church. In South Africa, B.B. service also fostered a sense of religious vocation. Thus, present day ministers such as Revs. Swartz in Transvaal and October in the Eastern Cape are former B.B. boys.⁴ And we can cite the testimony of Father Bradley Swartland of the Anglican Church, Macassar, Firgrove: **"the time I spent in the B.B. at Macassar and the training courses I attended, made me spiritually aware. It was through the exposure of the B.B. that I became a full church member and entered into the ministry."**⁵ Local Sunday School attendance also improved patchily as a result of membership of the Brigade, for boys were prodded to attend Sunday School in place of the old Bible Class of the earlier era.⁶

The proportion of B.B. members who were or became regular church-goers is not easy to determine. However, the B.B. did succeed in boosting church attendance whenever companies attended for a neighbourhood Church Parade service. An example of this would be the Sunday B.B. parade from the Grand Parade in Cape Town to St. Mark's Church in District Six in the 1970s. The B.B. has naturally

² Questionnaire, B. Jacobs, 23 July 1992.

³ Springhall, Fraser, Hoare, Sure and Stedfast, p. 248: The Y.M.C.A. reported an increase of membership in 1889-90.

⁴ Completed questionnaire, B. Jacobs, former BBSA secretary, 1992.

⁵ Reported to B.B. Officials, 1991.

⁶ B.B. Gazette, April 1896, p. 89 - letter of P.S. Horn, Presbyterian Sunday School.

long continued to promote church membership, despite its own declining membership. While the exact gains to Churches are difficult to measure, contemporary reports and opinions from clergy and the B.B. itself indicate a measure of success, especially in smaller communities, in holding adolescent faith to an age when membership of a church congregation becomes possible. Indeed, the point of B.B. experience has often been seen as the provision of Christian learning, whatever individual outcomes. In the view of two former B.B. captains, "no boy who ever joined a company ever left it without having heard the call to a Christian life."⁷

The question of why men volunteered to become officers in the B.B. is again an obvious concluding consideration. Early B.B. officers in Scotland were mostly Volunteers and Christians from a business and professional background. Many of those who started the B.B. in South Africa, were from a similar social background. What mattered originally was the ability to supply both leadership and financial support. Equally, a reason for becoming a B.B. officer in the case of lower middle-class white collar workers could have been linked to the desire to affirm social respectability and church standing. Yet, whatever their class background or social motivation, for an individual to become a leader in the Brigade, officers had to be church members with a real religious conviction and a willingness to give of their time and effort. They also had to show semi-parental concern for boys in their care. And they had to have the characteristics of the Volunteer-self-sacrificing dedication.

Another point worth considering is just how much truth there was to the charge that the movement encouraged a military spirit. It is clear that, however Christian in its declared purposes, it has always embodied an 'army' ethos in its approach. It is also a fact that this church movement, while based on the Sunday School or Bible Class, was initially inspired by men with a part-time military training. Thus, at various times, the Brigade has been criticized for providing a greater degree of church recognition for military organisation and values. Still, it is arguable that the Volunteer-inspired military routines of drill, camping, parades, band and inspections, were always essentially used as a disciplinary means of attaining the B.B. object. Here, one could cite the B.B.'s abandonment of the dummy rifle as well as its unification with the anti-military Boys' Life Brigade in 1926, which indicates that it was often wary of pro-war forces. Ultimately, though, outcomes were mixed. In the Transvaal,⁸ it was shown that when

⁷ Interviews: Late H. Wessels, 20 August 1994; R. Gordon, 16 September 1994.

⁸ *B.B. Gazette*, June 1911, p. 156.

the B.B. linked up with the Government Cadet Scheme, local companies floundered. Yet in the Western Cape, a B.B. background seemed visibly to assist Cape Corps recruitment in World Wars.

The Brigade was exported to British dominions and colonies, where it followed British migration overseas, particularly among businessmen, skilled artisans and professionals, many of these of Scottish origin. The first phase of B.B. overseas development in the late Victorian period also benefited considerably from the fervour of a shared evangelical revivalism associated with Moody and Sankey. The development of the movement in the Cape and elsewhere helped to spread the Christian message among black peoples, as well as white settlers of both British and Dutch descent. It also gave that message a youthful, energetic and public form.

Unmistakably, the B.B. lacked the necessary organization and resources to promote its overseas work on a large scale. Unlike Baden-Powell, Chief Scout of the Boy Scouts, who travelled the world extensively, promoting and visiting Scouting movements, William Smith only briefly visited Canada and America to encourage workers there.

As Smith never really wanted to intervene directly in the fledgling overseas work, nor to advocate strict adherence to the British model of the B.B., the Brigade never played as a direct a role as the Boy Scouts in assisting its overseas branches.

Still, the revival of the B.B. overseas after the First World War saw many European-controlled companies being formed in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. B.B. enthusiasts in the field also set out to train local leaders in the Bahamas, Nigeria and South Africa. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, company formation improved when B.B. Headquarters took a more positive stance towards overseas work. In particular, the appointment of William McVicker as overseas secretary boosted overseas B.B. work. The visit of McVicker in the late 1930s did much to boost the work in South Africa, and in the Cape in particular, as communication with B.B. Headquarters overseas improved, as well as support for the local B.B.. The overseas work was later carried on in 1963 by the World Conference Committee, and in 1978 was transferred to the World Conference.

Throughout the period of this study, the central introduction of B.B. leisure activities among the young did much to liven up an otherwise invariably impoverished existence for lower class youth recruits. With physical health linked closely to Christian character, such traditions as the annual camp gave boys something to look forward to. The playing of B.B. football or cricket fostered local team spirit and a sense of fair play. Boys were introduced to band music via Company bands, and parading in the streets and drilling in front of parents and friends provided a tangible sense of self-importance. As the Glasgow Herald noted in the 1920s, 'the B.B. provided any 'street' boy with an opportunity to blow a bugle, parade on the streets, wear a uniform, and also take part in a wide range of recreational activities'.⁹

The possible ecumenical effects of the B.B.'s interdenominational nature are perhaps more speculative, but it may be reasonable to assume that it contributed to fraternal understanding among Protestant Churches, because B.B. members visited different churches for parades and became used to observing differences in order of services, while worshipping one universal God.

Throughout the 1880s-1980s, most boys who adhered to B.B. discipline and religion remained true to their motto: "SURE AND STEDFAST". Their allegiance to their badge is reflected historically in singing the chorus of the classic hymn, "Will your anchor hold" (Priscilla Jane Owens, 1829-99):

"We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Stedfast and sure while the billows roll;
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!"

Following the celebrations of centenaries in Britain and South Africa, one needs to pose the question: What of the future? Old ex-B.B. members may nostalgically remember the 'good old days', of a cap, belt and haversack and also Drill, Bible Class, and Summer Camp. However, changing male adolescence has always been shaped by changing external influences. In response, the Boys' Brigade has been notably slow to innovate in a changing world. Here, one central theme has been the issue of the B.B. and competition from 'outside' secular influences. In the more modern period, compared to its early flavour of military drill, the B.B. has started to place less emphasis on mock-army routines.

⁹ Glasgow Herald, 20 October 1922.

Programmes are also now more varied, incorporating activities such as volley ball, abseiling and focussed life-skill programmes such as counselling on drug abuse and vocational workshops. Masculine organisation is also being diluted at lower levels. Local girls in the Durban area have been asking to be admitted into the B.B., while other local South African B.B. companies in Oudtshoorn, have already recruited females. The South African Council of The Boys' Brigade decided at its annual Council meeting in 1994,¹⁰ to permit the acceptance of girls as a local option for companies as long as they do not upset existing work of Girls' Brigades. This may mark a final break with the legacy of Victorian anxiety over mixing of sexes.

In present day South African companies, in places like Durban, less emphasis is being placed on traditional ranks and uniforms. Indeed, in Kwazulu where new voluntary work was started in 1992, no military ranks exist due to the politically volatile situation, not least to avoid any confusion of identity with the Zulu Inkatha Youth Brigade. Here, uniform is discreetly minimal with only a B.B. cap with an anchor badge.¹¹ By contrast, some boys in the Port Elizabeth, Western Cape and South Cape region enjoy full dress regalia and a regime based on military title.

Finally, in reflecting upon the influence of the B.B. upon the lives and characters of its adherents, it is probably fitting to remember the words of A. Spencer, Secretary of the Cape Battalion, in his Annual Report, 1906-7, **"Perhaps the best test that may be applied to see how far the Brigade has succeeded in its object lies in the extent of the influence it exercises on its members, and in this connection it is encouraging to find Boys who, by their actions, show that they are growing up to be true Christian men."**¹² This finds an echo in Roger Peacock's 1954 biography of Sir William Smith, **"One of the most marked features of the B.B. has always been its extraordinary hold upon the Boys' affections, and the way in which it develops the best that is in him."**¹³

Despite incremental changes in method, organisation and style of leadership, the B.B. movement has striven to advance its basic aim across time, that of: "the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys." In this, it continues to be embedded in the social life of small church-going communities, across a good part of the English-speaking world.

¹⁰ Minutes, S.A. Council, 24/25 September 1994.

¹¹ B.B. Minutes and Reports, 1989-1994.

¹² B.B. Gazette, April 1907, p. 119.

¹³ Peacock, Pioneer of Boyhood, p. 187.

APPENDIX 1

'BOYS' BRIGADE STRENGTH SINCE 1884 : COMPANY SECTIONS - U.K.

Year	Companies	Boys	Officers	Total Members
1884	1	30	3	33
1890	12	16 752	1 250	18 002
1896	64	32 862	2 676	35 538
1900	906	41 096	3 319	44 415
1906	1 237	53 486	5 402	58 888
1914	1 360	60 244	6 503	66 747
1918	1 078	46 586	4 947	51 533
1924	1 329	58 360	6 708	65 068
1930	2 257	79 339	10 467	89 806
1938	2 756	92 138	12 718	104 856
1942	2 095	64 747	10 251	74 998
1946	2 526	82 502	11 717	94 219
1956	2 933	83 806	13 512	97 318
1964	3 067	79 586	13 933	93 519
1974	2 771	62 365	16 125	78 490
1978	2 661	59 504	16 095	75 599
1982	2 702	53 017	17 330	70 347
1983	-	48 648	17 370	66 018
1992	-	33 676	12 568	46 244

*B.B. Statistics, B.B. Headquarters, England

APPENDIX 2

BOYS' BRIGADE STRENGTH IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1889 - 1994

Year	Companies	Membership
1889	1	20
1893/4	?	500
1895/6	?	1 000
1900-1902	War	War
1910-1930	Unknown	Unknown
1935	10	1 099
1940	?	1 480
1945	?	?
1950	50	2 459
1955	42	2 071
1960	84	3 811
1965	64	2 915
1970	79	3 557
1974	62	2 384
1979	75	3 788
1983	60	3 500
1993	76	2 831
1994	77	2 741

APPENDIX 3

Form No. 1. PLEASE WRITE DISTINCTLY.

Please read carefully "The Boys' Brigade Manual" before filling up this Form of Application.

Entd. Brig. Register,
Entd. Year Book,



The Boys' Brigade.

APPLICATION FOR ENROLMENT OF COMPANY.

To the EXECUTIVE OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE.

I beg to apply for the Enrolment in The Boys' Brigade of the undernoted Company, which the Officers undertake to carry on in accordance with the Constitution and Regulations of the Brigade.

I certify that the OFFICIAL SANCTION to the Formation of the Company and the Appointment of the undernoted Officers has been obtained from the CHURCH or CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATION with which the Company is connected.

Signature of Proposed Captain, William Mason Date of Application, August 1922

To be Countersigned by the Clergyman of the Church or the head of the Christian Organization with which the Company is connected. { Signature, W. Mason }
{ Designation, Wesleyan Minister }

PARTICULARS OF PROPOSED COMPANY.

Proposed Number and Designation (Provisional) 4th Capetown (Beitshams St) Co.

Connected with (See Article 5 of Constitution) Wesleyan Church Beitshams St.

Place, Day, and Hour of Meeting, Wes. School Room, Tuesday, 7:30pm

Probable Strength of Company, 30 {(The Strength should not be less than 30 Boys, and no Boy can be Enrolled who is under 12 or over 17 years of age),}

Number of Drills already held, 8 months (weekly average Attendance, 24)

(At least 6 Drills must be held before this Form is filled up, and these should show an average attendance which warrants the probable strength being stated at not less than 30.)

Number of Boys' Application Forms and Membership Cards required, 30

(Application Forms, Membership Cards, and Order Forms, are NOT issued until AFTER the Enrolment of the Company.)

Annual Company Contribution to Brigade Head-Quarters Fund, } £ 10 : 0

(Cheque or Postal Order enclosed herewith. See Article 6 of Constitution and page 18 of Manual).

PROPOSED OFFICERS.

RANK.	FULL NAME AND ADDRESS.	AGE.	State Branch of Christian Work engaged in, past or present (if any), other than Boys' Brigade.	State Military Service or Drill experience, past or present (if any), with Rank and Regiment.
Captain.	William Mason	43	Minister	
Chaplain	Rev.			
1st Lieut.				
2nd Lieut.				
3rd Lieut.				

Handwritten note across the table: "Full details sent last week."

APPENDIX 4

Form No. 16.



The Boys' Brigade.

FORM OF DECLARATION BY PROPOSED OFFICER IN 1st Johannesburg COMPANY.

THE EXECUTIVE of The Boys' Brigade have approved of the undernoted FORM OF DECLARATION, to be signed by all Gentlemen who are proposed as Officers of The Boys' Brigade.

By order of the Executive,

W. A. SMITH,
Brigade Secretary.

Head-Quarters Office,
30 George Square,
Glasgow.

PARTICULARS REGARDING THE PROPOSED OFFICER.

(To be correctly filled in by the Officer himself).

PROPOSED RANK.	FULL NAME AND ADDRESS.	AGE.	State Branch of Christian Work engaged in, past or present, (if any), other than Boys' Brigade.	State Military Service or Drill Experience, past or present (if any), with Rank and Regiment.
4th Lieut.	George William Crowe 14 Bruce St Johannesburg	40	Juniata Lodge, Free Gardens	12 months 1st Cameron Highlanders in charge of first line transport Boer War

"It is of vital importance that all the Officers should be men of Christian character, who will set a high example before the Boys of the Company, and keep the distinctly Christian aims of the movement continually in view."—Boys' Brigade Manual.

FORM OF DECLARATION.

Having read the Constitution of The Boys' Brigade, and fully approving of its Object, and recognising the responsibility of the duties involved, I desire to become an Officer in the 1st Johannesburg Company of The Boys' Brigade, and undertake to act in accordance with the Constitution and Regulations of the Brigade.

Date

27/3/1921

(Signature),

George W. Crowe

This Form of Declaration is to be signed by the proposed Officer, and handed by him to the Officer Commanding the Company or other Office-Bearer, who will forward it to the Brigade Secretary or Battalion Secretary, as the case may be, attached to the corresponding Official Application Form (No. 1, 2, 9, or 10).

APPENDIX 5



HON. SECRETARY:
A. SPENCER.

P.O. BOX 34.

The Boys' Brigade,

CAPE BATTALION.

OBJECT

"The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys, and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends to a true Christian Manliness."

Extract from the Constitution.

Cape Town, 15 July 1908

signation.	Connection.	No of Officers.	No of Staff Serjts. (if Bandmaster).	No of Boys.	Average Attendance Drill. Bible Class.		Captain.	Address.
Rondebosch.	St Paul's Angli- can Church	3	2 (Bandmaster).	29	23	4	Milfrid C. Alton	44 Alma Rd Rosebank.
Kenilworth.	Wesleyan Church	3	-	20	10	6	Arnold Smith	Belper Rd. Wynberg.
Howbray	Baptist Church	1	-	23	14	no class	G. White.	Klein Rd. Howbray
Cape Town.	Trinity Angli- can Church	2	1	18	11	6	R. Stewart	of B Lawrence St Cape Town
Woodstock	Dutch Reformed Church Mission	2	1	20	just enrolled.		Rev. J. P. de Villiers	51 Roodelooen Rd. Woodstock
Salt River	Bevil Road Wesley- an Mission	2	-	25	19	12	A. C. Reed.	Vaarsche Drift Observatory
Diep River	Wesleyan Church	1	1	40	32	32	G. B. Johnson	Fern Gully Farm. Plumstead
West London.	Howbray Wesleyan Church Mission	1	- (Bandmaster)	42	32	32	Rev Sainsbury	Howbray.
		15	5	217	141	94		

The very low average attendance at Bible Class is due to the fact that owing to the scattered nature of the population here, many Boys attend a Sunday School nearer their homes than the Company Class.

APPENDIX 6

SOME EARLY BOYS' BRIGADE COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA 1889-1923: (ex-overseas Register)

DATE OF REGISTRATION	COMPANY	CHURCH
1.02.1889	1st Pietermaritzburg	--
1.02.1889	1st Durban	--
9.08.1890	1st Cape Town	ChristianMission
1890	1st Pretoria	Presbyterian
1890	2nd Pretoria	Presbyterian
1890	3rd Pretoria	Presbyterian
1890	4th Pretoria	Presbyterian
27.08.1891	1st Umsinga	Gordon Memorial
1.11.1892	1st Cape Town	Barrack St. Mission
	2nd Cape Town	Congregational
	1st Ficksburg	Wesleyan Methodist
	1st Durban	Presbyterian-Berea
	2nd Durban	Presbyterian-Addington
	3rd Durban	Wesleyan-Greyville
	4th Durban	Congregational
	5th Durban	Wesleyan-Aliwal
	2nd Cape Town	Presbyterian
	3rd Cape Town	Presbyterian
	4th Cape Town	--
	5th Cape Town	--
	6th Cape Town	Wesleyan-Wynberg
	7th Cape Town	? Woodstock
	8th Cape Town	Congregational
	9th Cape Town	? Observatory
	10th Cape Town	? Observatory

	11th Cape Town	? Plein Street
	12th Cape Town	? Woodstock
	13th Cape Town	? Mowbray
26.06.1896	1st Johannesburg	Presbyterian
15.03.1897	1st Port Elizabeth	Presbyterian
10.06.1897	2nd Port Elizabeth	Congregational
	3rd Port Elizabeth	Wesleyan-North End
	4th Port Elizabeth	Wesleyan- South End
	5th Port Elizabeth	Roman Catholic
	6th Port Elizabeth	Wesleyan Russell Rd.
	7th Port Elizabeth	Baptist
	8th Port Elizabeth	Baptist South End
1898-99	1st Johannesburg	Congregational
	2nd Johannesburg	Wesleyan (Jeppes)
	3rd Johannesburg	Presbyterian
	4th Johannesburg	Wesleyan-Central
	5th Johannesburg	Ch. of England
	6th Johannesburg	Presbyterian
	7th Johannesburg	? Krugersdorp
	8th Johannesburg	? Boksburg
11.08.1899	1st Harrismith	Presbyterian
16.1.1901	1st Dundee	? Dundee
17.05.1904	1st Bloemfontein	Presbyterian
19.09.1904	1st Ladybrand	Numerous
	1st Cape Town (Rondebosch)	St. Pauls
	2nd Cape Town (Kenilworth)	Wesleyan
	3rd Cape Town	Baptist Mowbray
	4th Cape Town	Holy Trinity
	5th Cape Town	Wesleyan Wynberg

	6th Cape Town (Sea Point)	Baptist Mission
	7th Cape Town (Salt River)	Wesleyan
	8th Cape Town (Diep River)	Wesleyan
	9th Cape Town (West London)	Baptist
	10th Cape Town (West London)	Wesleyan
	1st De Aar	Wesleyan
22.07.1908	5th Cape Town (Woodstock)	Dutch Reformed
7.12.1910	3rd Cape Town (Woodstock)	Wesleyan
29.07.1912	3rd Cape Town (Somerset Strand)	Wesleyan Methodist
7.04.1921	1st Johannesburg	Ebenezer Cong.
--.09.1923	4th Cape Town	Wesleyan

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(Assisted by Stewart Mc Cullough, former World Conference Secretary)

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SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL:

Minutes: 1950s-1990s

Local reports: 1950s-1990s

STATISTICS:

1921-1974 (ex annual reports to U.K.)

Latest statistics locally held

ENROLMENTS:

-ex files at World Conference Offices - Belfast (1889-1970s)

RESPONSES TO REQUEST FOR RESEARCH MATERIAL:

Argus 10 March 1993

INTERVIEWS (ex B.B.s):

L. Adonis; L. le Roux; H. Wessels; P Petersen; R. Gordon

MISCELLANEOUS:

Photographs; Programmes of events

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