

Esprit de Corps!

The Newsletter of the
3rd Enfield (T R Plowman's) Company - The Boys' Brigade Old
Boys Association

Spring 1997

Dear Friends,

It must be about a year since the last newsletter appeared and this has been regrettable. However, it is my intention that from now on the newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis *at least* and I also hope that we will be able to arrange some more Old Boys get-togethers similar to the ones which we enjoyed during our Centenary Year. I am sure you will agree that the events of 1990 were a milestone in the history of our great Company and proved to be a worthy tribute to the memory of those who have gone before us. Sadly, such occasions don't come around that often but it seems a shame to waste the considerable amount of goodwill that exists amongst the Old Boys and friends of the 'Good Old Third' and with that in mind I hope that we will be able to organise something in the not too distant future.

Since the last newsletter appeared we have learned that several Old Boys and friends of the 3rd have passed away. David Plowman, Tom Chopping, Chris Bullock, Jim Piner and Hilda Dye are all sadly no longer with us. Each of us will have memories of these friends and we remember their families in our prayers.



As many of you will know, I am a great collector of anything to do with the Boys' Brigade and especially the 3rd Enfield. Over about fourteen years since I began collecting seriously I have amassed a huge amount of items connected with the Company; letters from Captains, badges, membership cards, lantern slides etc. However, one thing has so far eluded me - a First World War Presentation Bugle. I believe that twelve were awarded between us and the 1st and these were presented to those Boys who had acted as Air Raid Buglers during the Great War. The Boys would sound the 'all clear' after Zeppelin raids. I recently came across one in the collectors shop next to Enfield Town station but the proprietor has refused to sell it simply because he has never seen another one like it. What is irksome about this is that the bugle in question was awarded to a Boy from the 3rd. I believe that his name was Arthur Smith. From what I understand, the gentleman's son or possibly even grandson had been to the shop and sold Mr Smiths' medals and badges, which I bought, and the bugle. It is extremely sad that this has happened as I would have gladly paid the vendor double what he was given at this shop simply to have such an important piece of the Company's history returned to its rightful place. If any of you ever come across such an item, or indeed if you have anything which you would like to pass on to our archives, please let me know. The BB now has a thriving Badge Collectors Club and if any of you would be interested in joining please telephone me for the details.

My sincere thanks to Geoff Smith for his fascinating article contained herein. I am shamed to admit that Geoff sent me this article over two years ago but I think you will agree that it has been worth the wait! Thanks also to Arthur Page for sharing his memories with us and to Robert Wilson for reminding us of the slightly more recent past.

Lastly, if you know of any Old Boys who are not currently known to us, please pass on their names to me.

Yours sincerely,

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CLASH OF THE TITANS!

Local competition after local competition the two great rivals faced each other, both trying to win the day and the title. Although at that time their histories spanned the Victorian era to the Swinging Sixties, the 1st and 3rd Enfield Companies had never faced each other in a final for a London District title. Their presence in the Daily Telegraph Shield finals through the years was second to none, but the two were never to meet in any drill finals at the Royal Albert Hall. They were however destined to meet for the first time in the final of the 'Devonshire Cup' for Bugle bands. This is the story of the 'Clash of the Titans!'.

For two successive years the 3rd had reached the final of the Devonshire Cup and in 1972 won the title with the march 'Royal Albert Hall'. 1973 was to be a special year for the competition. It was the 50th anniversary of the cup being presented and appropriately, the test piece was the march 'Devonshire'; it was also the 90th anniversary of the Boys' Brigade. At that time Peter Williams was the band master for the 1st Enfield and Ted Fairhurst was in command of our band. At the local competition the 3rd won with 147.5 points with the 1st runners up with 141.5 points. The two bands went off to represent Enfield in the Devonshire Cup semi finals held at the London College of Printing on March 10th. What a night for the two companies! Both bands qualified comfortably and for the first time in fifty years, the final would be an all Enfield affair.

The title was to be decided upon on Friday May 11th at the annual Royal Albert Hall display with the Hon. Angus Ogilvy in attendance as guest of honour. Going into the final, the 3rd were favourites. However, only hours before the competition was due to start, the company's Bass Drummer, 16 year old Chris Langhorn had to be excluded because of trouble with a wisdom tooth. Cymbalist John Tovey, 15 years old, took over and 13 year old Simon Pettit stepped in to look after the cymbals. This was a major setback for the band but the Company went into the evening determined to defend their title. The 3rd Enfield, along with the 14th West Kent, provided the guard of honour for the evening. However, it was not destined to be the 3rd's night as the 1st Enfield won the competition with 168 points to the 3rd's 162. The 1st Enfield also completed a great double by winning the Daily Telegraph Shield on the

following day. The 1st Enfield went on to appear in every Devonshire Cup final from 1973 to 1978, winning the title again in 1977.

The 1978 competition was an all Enfield affair once again, the two Companies meeting in the final held on May 12th. This time the 1st were defending champions and favourites to retain the cup. This night however was to be the 3rd's with the march 'Thames Valley' as the test piece. The Company won by 188.5 points to the 1st's 185.5. Sgt's Michael Over and Trevor Fairhurst received the cup on behalf of the Company.

Winning the Devonshire Cup was a fitting end to the career of bandmaster Ted Fairhurst who had announced his retirement after 17 years with the band. On the following day the 3rd's band gave an excellent display but people will always remember drummer Dominic Beech who tripped on some loose carpet and somersaulted over his side drum. In true 3rd Enfield style he just picked himself up and carried on.

With the Royal Albert Hall Displays now passing into the pages of history, the score for the 1st and 3rd will always remain one a piece.

Robert Wilson



The Band performing at the Royal Albert Hall in 1978. On Bass Drum, Andrew Mason, Side Drums Chris Sanders and Tim Langhorn. On Bugles, Jonathan Hayes and Trevor Fairhurst

A Page of Memories

I was eight years old and had one year to go before I could join the Boy Reserves. I couldn't wait to follow my brothers Jim and George in the 3rd. I shall always remember a particular church parade one Sunday morning. The Company were marching along Chase Side towards Lancaster Road with the band playing. At the age of eight it was a sight to behold, a large Company of Boys and officers marching behind a big bugle band with arms swinging. I was so excited that I marched on the pavement, keeping in line with the drummers. With my head turned to the left I walked proudly along. Then, all of a sudden there was a bump. I had walked into a large wooden telegraph pole. My ardour was dampened for a time, but not my spirit. My right ear was sore for several days.

Another memory was when I was about 14 or 15 years old. I was outside left in the Company Football Team. We were playing the 7th Enfield at Pymmes Park, Edmonton. Running along the left wing during the second half, I tripped over a large tuft of grass, resulting in a badly sprained ankle. I managed to get back home by bus as far as the Holy Bush public house on the corner of Lancaster Road and Chase Side. It took me 25 minutes to hobble home from there, normal time being 5 minutes. To keep my perfect attendance at Bible Class held in the C.A.W.G. Hut in Parsonage Lane, my brother Jim put me on the saddle of Dads bicycle and wheeled me there and back for two Sundays.

My other two memories are of the War when my B.B. training helped me a lot.

I volunteered for, and joined the Armed Forces on November 3rd 1939. On arriving at Warley barracks we were put into platoons. Our first drill parade was in our civilian clothes. Our platoon sergeant was Sgt. Harry Platt, an excellent instructor, besides being a decent chap. We stood on the parade ground waiting for our first lesson in drill. Sgt. Platt then called out, "Hands up any man who has been in the Boys' Brigade, Church Lads Brigade, Scouts or any other youth organisation". About ten of us raised our hands. Then Sgt. Platt said, "You ten will be in the front row when we fall in. The other two rows will watch your movements and try to do the same. The Army is all about discipline and you ten already know a bit about it". The sergeant then asked us if we could show the others some of the elementary drill movements for a few evenings in the barrack room which we did and for this he was grateful.

The other time was when I was a P.O.W. for three years. There were several times when I went without food and water for a week at a time. Sometimes I went longer. That was the real testing time of my B.B. training.

Arthur Page

If I had a Time Machine.....

Is time travel possible? Not as far as we in the last few years of the 20th century know, but that is not to say that by the time the 3rd Enfield celebrates its bicentenary that someone somewhere will not have perfected the art of molecular restructuring and instead of a trip to Alton Towers, mum, dad and nippers might be able to pick a time and a destination and witness first hand events which shaped the worlds history. All for a modest fee of course.....

Now, just suppose that this facility were available today and you were given the chance to 'go for a ride'. Where would you like to go? What would you like to see? My *first* choice would probably be to see the Beatles at the Cavern before they sacked Pete Best, but being as keen as I am on the history of the Company I have made a Top Ten of major 3rd Enfield occasions which I would love to see unfolding before my eyes. Straight in at Number One is.....

1. The Company's first parade night - December 3rd 1890, with Norris Toms, founder of the 3rd , and the first intake of Boys. Were they all little urchins?
2. Hayling Island Camp 1898, see the photo elsewhere in this issue. They were all there; Norris Toms, T R Plowman, Chas. Chopping. Possibly even John Collison cooking the 'Skilly', who knows!?
3. Royal Albert Hall 1906. The first Daily Telegraph Shield Competition. T.R. Plowman lifting the shield in the presence of Sir William Smith, WOW!
4. On patrol with the Air raid Buglers during the First World War.
5. Camp at Brean in 1939 - "The day War broke out, I said to my missus..."
6. Any of the camps during the 1920's - with Harold Dye, Alf Winsley, Chas. Chopping et al.
7. One of Ernest Till's 'Christmas Carol' Bible Classes. The fire roaring in the Parlour and Mr Till in full flight - 'Humbug!'
8. 1933 Jubilee review at Hampden Park. The following year saw the greatest number of Boys in the Brigade *ever*.
9. 1943 Review at Windsor Castle, were any of you there?
10. 1957 - Royal Albert Hall, Band On The Beat. The very first time in the history of the Royal Albert Hall Displays that an encore was demanded and given. Ray Barnes was a genius, it just has to be said.

These are just my personal ideas. If anyone has anything to add or would like to share their personal recollections with others, please write in.

C.C.S

Geoff Smith's pot-pourri of Memories

Bill Hutchings was a sergeant when I joined the Company from the Life Boys. For me, his greatest success was to persuade me that the back - straddle over the vaulting box was possible. This I achieved for the first time in the Enfield Grammar School gym on a cold Friday night one November. Exactly how he achieved the breakthrough mystifies me still; rather like the inspirational moment when one gets to do square roots without the aid of logarithms.

One day someone will tell me how John Stearns was nicknamed 'Oscar', an appellation he clearly hated. None more so than in the weeks he walked around aided by a stick suffering from 'water on the knee'. Does one get such a complaint these days?

Boxing Day at North Enfield Rec. in a derby match with the 1st. Ken Blackburn was a goalkeeper who effected saves from the foetal position. One year he was badly injured. 'Nunky' Salter replaced him and played a blinder. He threw himself around the goal area like Greg Louganis seeking Olympic Gold! Arms outstretched with elastic fingertips he was the complete opposite to thunderball Blackburn.

One winter morning, it could have been Lt. Pegrum's funeral, a squad of boys in uniform marched to the cemetery north of Gordon Hill station. In the bright frosty air with no coats, our teeth chattered. My lasting memory is of Collins Jnr. Of Collins & Co., Painters and Undertakers - Lavender Hill, in a black top coat, black trousers...and white painters overalls peering out above his black shoes. Collins & Co. was a multi-tasking enterprise indeed.

The journey on an August Saturday at 06.30 hours from Gordon Hill station via Waterloo to Brading on the Isle of Wight. How did the staff succeed in keeping forty boys together on the Underground? And then the walk form Brading cross-country to Whitecliff Bay. How was it always accomplished in fine, dry weather? The outward and inward journeys were never undertaken in rain.

Sandown sported tobacco shops where I recall Peter Stearns, Denis Stone and I bought long stem pipes and some fiendish tobacco. On the walk back to camp below Culver Cliff we initiated ourselves into the art of smoking; more like one ounce of Erinmore Flake and six boxes of Swan Vestas - and throwing up before reaching camp. On returning to Enfield rushing to catch a 144B to Chase Side for a Company night, just making the bus, grasping the pole in the centre of the rear platform, embracing the pole....and snapping the stem of the pipe in an inside pocket!

The Reverend Towers, newly appointed from the Bunyan Mission, Bedford, stood in the pulpit, eyes glittering with messianic zeal staring at the Company sat in serried array in the pews to the north of the church aisle. Why was the altar at the west end of Christ Church?

Of the Corporals, Ian 'Dizzy' Dixon and 'Seabiscuit' Dennison sitting in the pews. And Cpl. Dennison holding up the collection plate while he took 'change' from half a crown.

A year or so back while visiting my eldest son in Edinburgh, he attended the funeral of a colleague who had been associated with an Edinburgh BB Company which regularly appears at the annual Military Tattoo. On his return he asked if there was a BB hymn. He thought that it might be the 'Anchor Hymn'. I found that I recalled some of the words..."We have an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows roll"....although I have no recollection of hearing the hymn for over 40 years. Bible class must have done some good to the inner man.

One Bible Class was addressed by a zealous born-again Christian tradesman. He spoke fervently about virtues to be attained by every boy. He invited us to consider the words of the great Greek philosophers. His entreaties were starting to impact until he started naming these ancient Athenians. His message was forfeited when he came to Socrates. Unfortunately he chose to pronounce it 'So-crates'. His audience heard him out in disbelief. He closed to barely suppressed sniggers, officers and boys alike.

I only *heard* of Derek Dunsden's 103 at North Enfield Rec. My lasting cricket memory is captaining the Company against another Company (11th) at Ponders End Rec. We played on a matting wicket laid over a concrete strip. I put myself on to bowl. My father, a schoolmaster, stood as umpire at my end. Wearing spikes and wishing to avoid falling top over tail, I bowled from the ground parallel to the matting wicket-only to be called for no-balling. I repeated the delivery, again being no-balled. Being as belligerent as one can to a schoolmaster father, I asked why I had been no-balled. I was told that I had bowled from beyond the 'popping crease'. I had no choice but to step gingerly onto the matting to preserve balance. The next six balls were received gleefully by the opposition. My recollection is that that over was costly enough to lose us the match. It is much easier to score Test cricket for the Jamaican Broadcasting Corporation than it is to play BB cricket!

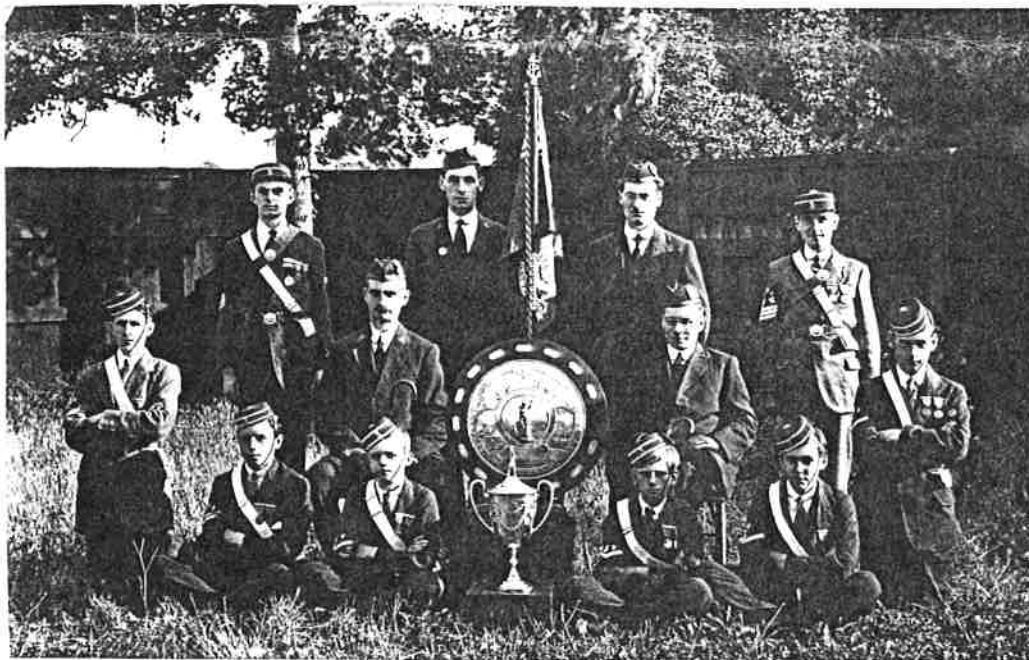
At the Centenary re-union in 1990 I met many from the past. I was left puzzled. Many greeted me with...."you haven't changed a bit". Was I a wrinkly in my teens?

Geoff Smith

3rd Enfield Picture Gallery



The company at camp in 1919. The Sergeant (top left) is Harold Dye and the Private (bottom left) is Arthur Warren. Can you identify the others?



The Company in 1917 with the 'Daily Telegraph Shield' and Battalion Gymnastics Trophy. Lt Winsley holding the Battalion Colour next to Lt. Tucker (?). The Sergeant (top left) is Ronald Sleath and (top right) Bert Halford. Seated with the shield are Capt. Chas. Chopping and Lt. Ernest Till. L/Cpl Harold Dye is kneeling (far right). The other Boys are unknown.