



PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE

CENTENARY REVIEW OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN HOLYROOD PARK

As your Patron, I am delighted to be with you today to review The Boys' Brigade in this your Centenary Year. I congratulate you on this remarkable achievement which has been made possible only by the dedication of generations of men and women whose faithful service and quiet example has led boys towards the Christian life.

The Brigade pioneered the idea of a uniformed organisation for boys centred on the Church, and you can rightly claim to be 'First for Boys'. It all began a hundred years ago in a Sunday School hall in Glasgow where your Founder, William Alexander Smith, was inspired to form The Boys' Brigade. I remember being with my father at the Diamond Jubilee parade at Windsor in 1943 when he said: "Your Founder builded better than he knew, for he started not only a great movement but one from which our present widespread youth training was destined to spring". He went on to emphasise that The Boys' Brigade was built upon the twin pillars of religion and discipline—two of the greatest needs of the time. The King was speaking in the middle of the most perilous war our country has ever faced, but today those foundations are as strong as ever and the needs no less great.

Over the years millions of boys have passed through the ranks of The Boys' Brigade, many of them taking their place in the community as Christian men. The Brigade's contribution to the national life and to the Church in its century of service is incalculable.

In this age of advanced technology human needs and the spiritual life are just as important as before. Young people want to feel they are part of an active organisation offering a challenge, which will eventually lead to a sense of achievement. For this they require self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of purpose: but perhaps the greatest need is for love and affection coupled with guidance and leadership.

The Brigade today is well able to make a positive response to these needs. You have an excellent broad-based programme carried out with imagination and flexibility. The laughter and excitement which come from the varied activities are an expression of the fun and enjoyment that are so much a part of the programme. I hope that the Brigade's work and witness will continue to grow and especially to extend in the new housing areas, the old inner cities and the small rural communities.

There will be many who will come forward from your ranks to lead the Brigade into its second century and who, by their sure and steadfast service, will continue faithfully to advance Christ's Kingdom among boys by giving them a spirit of adventure, a sense of satisfaction from physical activity and a practical understanding of service to the community for their own and future generations.

I congratulate you on your smartness and good bearing on parade today and I wish you all great happiness and enjoyment in The Boys' Brigade.

Elizabeth R

2nd July, 1983.