

Heritage

Newsletter of The Boys' Brigade Archives

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News from the Archives

On the 9th May 2024 a press release was issued by The Boys brigade UK and ROI - We are delighted to announce that HM King Charles III has become Patron of The Boys' Brigade UK & ROI. The announcement comes a year on from the Coronation and follows a major review of Royal patronages by Buckingham Palace. Jonathan Eales, Chief Executive of The Boys' Brigade, commented: "Having already been a great supporter of our work and more widely of uniformed youth organisations, we are incredibly proud and honoured that The King is our new Patron." We are incredibly thankful for The King's continued support of our work. May we encourage you to remember our new Patron in your prayers.

The announcement confirms His Majesty as the fifth reigning monarch to become our Patron, following Queen Elizabeth II, King George VI, King Edward VIII and King George V. We have prepared some content for our Virtual Museum about Royal Patronage and The Boys' Brigade. Click on the link on the right to learn more about this.



We had a look through the BB photograph archive and found this terrific photograph of the then Prince of Wales, Prince Charles in 1977 with the Greenock Battalion.



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[Royal Patronage](#)

[Office Bearers](#)



Recent archive activities

In preparation for the imminent sale of Felden Lodge by The Boys Brigade, we recently reported that some of our volunteers had been busy with the cataloguing and packing of the collection, whilst there is still a lot of work to do to get the collection completely moved and installed in its new home, we are pleased with the progress made to date.

Robert Crangle travelled over from Bangor to help with the packing of the BB archive collection in March and reports his experiences: I had the pleasure and privilege of spending time at Felden Lodge with fellow BB members in particular those with an interest in BB history. This was my first visit and, due to the pending sale of Felden, probably my last.

Our task was to get the vast BB Archive Collection, including the large and unique personal collection of the late Robin Bolton, ready for transportation to its new home at Carronvale House in Scotland. Although I knew that there would be a large quantity of artefacts, I was totally overwhelmed with the amount of boxes, crates, uniforms, drums, paintings, books, paperwork etc spread throughout the complex.

Before my arrival, some of the team had made a start in sorting the artefacts, but four days of steady work lay ahead to sort, box and label the items. The boxes were then sealed and recorded on a database. Bespoke crates (pictured below) were made for the larger items such as shields, pictures etc. Some of the surplus material found a new home at the Boys' Brigade Heritage Museum at Ganaway and the East Antrim Battalion Heritage Society, both in Northern Ireland. Approximately 600 boxes and crates were finally stacked, ready to be moved.

On a personal note, I was amazed at the extent of the entire Felden facilities, the beautiful buildings and vast grounds. I also had the privilege of not only viewing

and handling some unique BB artefacts, but also meeting up with like minded Boys' Brigade stalwarts, previously only faces on Zoom.

Thank you all for a busy, but unforgettable time.

Robert is involved with the 1st Bangor Company, and Chairman of the Maurice Williamson Heritage Museum, located at Ganaway, the Belfast Battalion Activities centre in County Down..



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Volunteer

Heritage Centre



An Update from Social Media



The picture above is from The Boys' Brigade Marching Band Championship held in Stafford in 1983.

This image of a bass drummer and bell-lyre player has made an appearance on our social media accounts three times since we made our first steps on Facebook in 2021.

The photograph provides a great point of reference to show the growth of our social media accounts in recent years. When it was first posted in March 2023 it received 38 reactions, a few months later receiving 56 reactions in September 2023 and most recently in April this had increased to 1027 reactions. Our followers have increased significantly in the past few months also, so if you are not doing so already, please follow us, and encourage other to do so also.

It has been brilliant to see increased levels of engagement with our social media accounts, bringing the work of The Boys' Brigade Archive Trust to more people around the world.

Join 4,200 other supporters on our Facebook page using the button to the right, and please help grow our presence on X (formerly known as Twitter) to expand the reach of our content on this platform.



Virtual Museum

We have noticed that Life Boys is a frequent search term on the internet, and realising that we have a gap on our virtual museum we are working hard to rectify this, and add a lot of Life boys content. The first of this is the interesting story about the Life Boy membership cards, which includes interactive cards, allowing them to be opened and all the pages viewed. We are please to launch this page on the virtual museum, and below is a brief summary and links to virtual museum pages.

Colin Swinton writes: To ease the transition from The Boy Reserves to the Life Boys, the design of the membership card remained unchanged for a number of years post union, with the exception of the logo and name. These were discontinued in the early 1930's, and in an attempt to make the cards more appealing to boys, the new membership cards featured the artwork of celebrated artist Tom Curr. In 1936 a series of three 'progressive' picture cards, were introduced also featuring the artwork of Tom Curr. Available in three colours, blue, red and green, the image of the first year card represented 'welcome and friendship' the second year card represented 'discipline and activities' and the third year card the culmination of a Boys time in the Life Boys and promotion to The Boys' Brigade. In addition to helping the Boys to value their membership, one of the main purposes of the card was to enable Leaders to have a ready means of checking the attendance of Boys at Sunday School. This concept continued through a series of design changes and subtle print variations.

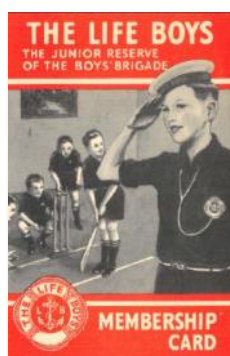
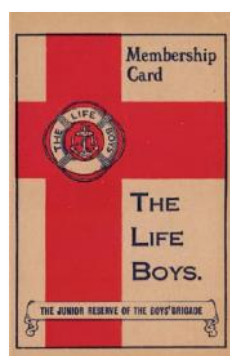
Post 1966, the Junior section use the same membership card design as the Boys Brigade, however some years a special version was produced with the Sunday School attendance record.

Click on the link to read the full story, and view all the membership cards through the interactive 'flip books'.



[LB Membership Cards](#)

[Tom Curr](#)



Virtual Museum

The BB Lives section of our Virtual Museum tell the stories of some very influential and inspirational members of The Boys' Brigade over the past 140 years.

We have recently added to story of Alfred Dornan, who started off as a Boy in the 3rd Ballymena Company in 1934, becoming one of the most recognisable and influential BB leaders in the Pacific. Alfred is pictured at a Pacific Regional Fellowship meeting in Fiji in 1984, and also together with Bruce Young and Arthur Reid, first recipient of the Kings Badge.

Learn more about Alfred by clicking on the link to the right.



[Alfred Dornan](#)

[BB Lives](#)

[Kings Badge](#)

Archive Shop

We are constantly adding new stock to our virtual museum shop. Visit the new section to see what has been recently added.

If you know of Companies or Battalions celebrating anniversaries, or you know of badges and memorabilia being produced, please let us know so that we can source a stock for our online shop.

We are also interested in sourcing items which may have been sitting in storage cupboards for years and which are no longer needed. All funds raised goes towards digitising and preserving the archives of The Boys' Brigade.

Contact us using the links on the right.

[Archive Shop](#)

[Contact Us](#)

