

Heritage

Newsletter of The Boys' Brigade Archives

Vol.5 No.3

10th May 2025

News from the Archives

We have devoted a number of pages to this newsletter, to a very significant event in the history of The Boys' Brigade. It has been 111 years since the death of Sir William Alexander Smith, at a Brigade Executive meeting in London, and we have explored this story in detail with a new page on the Virtual Museum. We have also included some unique, seldom seen before Sir William Smith artifacts held in the BB archive collection, including Sir Williams diary showing the Brigade Executive meeting in London during which he was taken ill, together with a letter from Douglas Pearse Smith to his Aunt Judy detailing the events, and his fathers death. These can be found on page 2 and 3 of this newsletter and also in the Virtual Museum by **clicking on the links** provided.

We have also been adding other content to the Virtual Museum, including a page on Royal Badges. These Royal themed pages can be found by following the **links on the right**. The BB has enjoyed Royal Patronage from its earliest beginnings, and Dr Chris Spackman has written about this in the Virtual Museum. We have many pages in the virtual museum telling the story of Royal events and reviews, including the 1994 Royal Review at Windsor.

The presentation card and bronze badge shown below, were presented to key members of the Royal Review 1994. The standard issue gold and silver badges can be found on the Royal badges page of the Virtual Museum.



archive@boys-brigade.org.uk

Royal Patronage

Royal badges



Sir W A Smith - from the archives



Marshall Wane
53, G. WESTERN ROAD
GLASGOW.



Sir W A Smith

The Boys' Brigade Gazette June 1914. "One of the most profitable servants of his own generation and of the generations that are to follow", was the tribute paid to the Founder of The Boys' Brigade by Principal George Adam Smith. It is an entirely just tribute. The Boys' Brigade will ever remain an enduring monument to Sir William Smith, a tangible realisation of uncommon power of vision combined with extraordinary practical capacity. It is an agency of worldwide scope, the model of many similar organisations, and has inspired generations of Boys with a high ideal of service. Its influence on the life of the community can scarcely be estimated.

One hundred and eleven years after the death of Sir William Alexander Smith we can truly appreciate and understand the words written here. We can also, after the passage of time, see clearly the foundations that were laid and the effect the movement has had on so many Boys' throughout the United Kingdom and beyond. The generations that have followed have all been part of the success story and are testament to how well Sir William guided The Boys' Brigade in those early years.



Sir W A Smith - from the archives



THE BOYS' BRIGADE.
(Founded 1883.)
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.

Patron: HIS MAJESTY THE KING.
Vice-Patrons. THEIR GRACES THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND YORK.
Honorary President. THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ABERDEEN.

ROGER S. PEACOCK,
London Secretary.

TELEPHONE
No. 994 CENTRAL.

PATERNOSTER HOUSE,
34, PATERNOSTER ROW,
LONDON, E.C. 10.
10th May 1914.

Sunday,

My dearest Judy.

As you would learn by our telegram this morning dear father passed away peacefully at 6.30 in the morning. He never regained consciousness in the slightest from the time he was taken ill in the office. One of the ~~Director~~ Executive, D^r Morrison attended to him ~~at the~~ from the moment he complained of feeling his head, and shortly after that he lost consciousness. St Bartholomew's Hospital is just ~~on there~~.

Sir W A Smith 1914



Letter Douglas Pearce Smith to his Aunt Judy on the day of the death of Sir William Alexander Smith, and the diary of Sir William A Smith 1914 pocket diary showing the Brigade Executive meeting on the 8th and 9th May 1914.

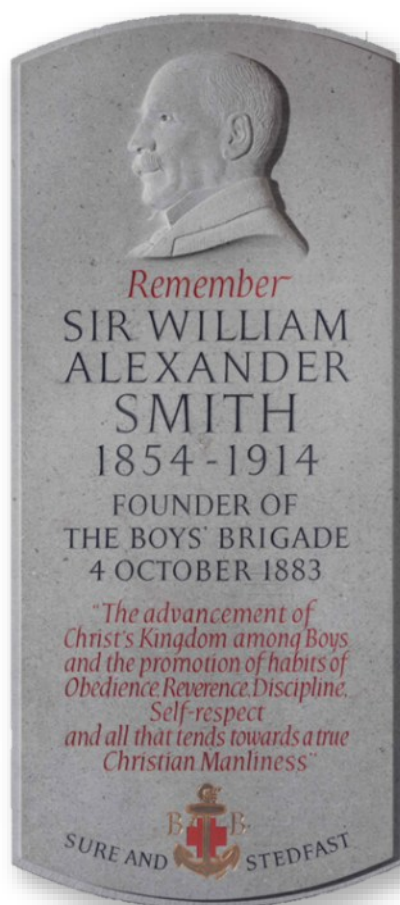
Sir W A Smith - St Pauls memorial

BB Gazette Vol.94 No.2 - December 1985

In 1982 the Brigade Executive decided that a memorial to the Founder be erected in London to mark our Centenary. At about the same time requests for such recognition had also been received from past and present members of the Brigade. Accordingly, an approach was first made to Westminster Abbey but the authorities were unable to accede to our request.

We then asked the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral and they readily agreed to the placing of a memorial to Sir William Smith in the Crypt, thereby continuing the Brigade's long association with the Cathedral.

The Dedication and Unveiling of the memorial took place on Founding Day (4th October) 1985, following Evensong which was sung immaculately by the Cathedral choir in the presence of a representative congregation of BB officers and boys drawn from most parts of the British Isles. The Archdeacon of London (The Venerable Frank Harvey) was well qualified to perform the ceremony for not only is he a member of the Cathedral Chapter, he is also a former Life Boy and BB Boy (in the 53rd Liverpool Company of which his father was Captain) and a BB officer and sometime Captain of the 70th Liverpool. In his address the Archdeacon said that we were commemorating 'young Bill Smith', reminding us that the Founder was a young man of 29 years when he started the 1st Glasgow Company.



Sir William Alexander Smith Memorial Plaque - St Pauls Cathedral



St Pauls Memorial



From the Archives

The union of The Boys' Brigade and The Boys' Life Brigade in 1926, had been preceded by many joint BB and BLB activities and events at National, Battalion and Company level. The Life Brigade Chronicle Vol.02 No.11 of 1904.07 records an interaction between the 1st North Ormesby BLB Company and the 1st Middlesborough BB Company:



Life Brigade Chronicle.

Supplement, July, 1904.

NORTH ORMESBY.—The 1st North Ormesby Company held their first annual camp during Whitsuntide at Great Ayton, in the midst of the Cleveland hills. The camp was under the command of Captain S. H. Morgan, the Chaplain, Rev. H. P. Boase, Lieut. Taylor, and Lieut. Morgan (of Scarborough). The boys paraded at the Company headquarters on Saturday, May 21st, and marched to the camp, a distance of ten miles. The parade marched in the following order:—Cycle corps, buglers, stretcher-bearer section, and the Company. This was the lads' first camp and when, a little over half-way, the tents suddenly came into view, their excitement knew no bounds. They cheered again and again. On Sunday morning the Company paraded, and attended the service in the little Wesleyan church in the village. It was amusing to watch the efforts of the lads to keep awake after spending the traditional "first night." In the evening, a united service with the 1st Middlesborough Company B.B., whose camp was within a few minutes' walk, was held in the large mess tent. A number of visitors and residents also attended the service, which was conducted by the Rev. E. Morgan of Scarborough. Monday was the visitors' day. A large number was entertained to tea, the profits of which went to the camp fund. An impromptu concert was arranged in the evening. On Tuesday a field day was held with the 1st Middlesborough B.B., in which the B.L.B. was to carry relief to the village of Kildale, which was besieged by the B.B. Unfortunately, although the B.L.B. claim to have won, the result was never officially decided. A united torchlight tattoo was held on the village green in the evening. Wednesday was a quiet day, spent chiefly in cricket and football and rambling. On Thursday the tents were struck, and two prizes were awarded for the tents folded and packed the most neatly and quickly. The N.C.O.'s and boys shewed great interest in the daily tent inspection. The winning squad gains a shield, which is hung in the Company drill hall. On Thursday evening a large crowd turned out to welcome the Company as it marched back to North Ormesby. After being dismissed each lad was quickly surrounded by a circle of admirers, and their sunburnt and happy faces contrasted favourably with those of their companions. Altogether the camp was very successful. The discipline was good. The N.C.O.'s are to be especially congratulated on their work.



Company designation renumbering



Re-numbering Companies

The executive and secretary have spent a good deal of time, and trouble in dealing with the question of re-numbering of companies, because in some cases the B.L.B. companies had the same numbers as the others, and it is not desirable to continue adding A to some numbers. The executives have now decided that the battalion should be renumbered in order of enrolment. Some officers are inquiring whether mutually agreed exchanges can be made before the new numbering is registered at headquarters. For instance, the 6th becomes the 9th and vice-versa. If these two companies prefer to retain their old numbers, and can agree between themselves, may they not do so since no one else is affected by this agreement? No doubt this will be considered.

Oldham Chronicle

April 1929.

Following the union of the BLB with the BB in October 1926, the renumber of Companies had proved difficult. Whilst some Battalions found it was easier to add the letter 'A' after the designation number, this was not always deemed acceptable.

In 1929 the Oldham Battalion did a re-number of companies to eliminate the need for the letter A.

We are working hard to create a list of every BLB Company known to have existed, and then try and match them up with their BB designations post union. If anyone has any information about BLB Companies, or BB Companies which were previously BLB Companies, please contact us.

[Contact Us](#)

Virtual Museum

The Virtual Museum, has pages on the many properties and centres the Brigade has owned over the years, or in some cases still owns and is getting regular use by young people and leaders. We have recently added the HQ Appeal Fund 1961 Certificates to the Virtual Museum, as well as added some additional content to some of the other pages. Click on the links to explore further some of the BB properties.

We also have a 25 minute black and white silent film of the HQ appeal run which we would like to get digitised and add to the Virtual Museum. Contact us for further information how you can support this important work in preserving our film archive.



[HQ Appeal 1961](#)

[BB Properties](#)

