



THE BOYS' BRIGADE
70th LONDON COMPANY
ANNUAL DISPLAY
2nd MAY 1998.

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME
To commemorate the company's 90th year.



NINETY YEARS OF THE 70th LONDON

INTRODUCTION:

As the Company enters its 90th year, it is the opportunity to reflect on what the company has meant to its past members. I am grateful for all of the old boys who have taken the time to write in with their thoughts and thank you's which are recorded in the following pages.

Fred Thomas (1914-mid 1920's)-article reprinted from 1988 display Programme

When, as probably the oldest surviving member of the 70th, I was asked to write about the early days, I found that as soon as I put to paper so many memories came flooding back. Greatest among them camp at Stubbington, where I found my greatest friend The Lord Jesus Christ.

The Company had been in existence only six years when in 1914 I joined. In those days you had to be 12 to join: There was no Junior Section and you were "On probation" for the first three months. Discipline was strict and uniform consisted of pillbox hat haversack and belt -which had to be perfect. The braid on the hat had to be blanched, the haversack lily white (good old mum) and its brass runners shining like the buckle on the belt.

One always wore uniform coming to and going from parade and we carried Carbine Rifles- Dummies of course. Parade was at Sellincourt Road School, once a week during the winter: Band Practice was at Franciscan Road School and Sunday morning Bible Class at 10.00am sharp, was in the old tin building which few will remember. Seats were in rows, one for each squad, with the Nco at one end. Officers sat at the front and Singing was from the BB hymnal.

Going back to band-Mr Adair, from the Scots Guards Band, taught drummers and buglers and one can see him now, all 6ft 2in of him, marching up and down the hall encouraging us, Mr Stockwell taught us First Aid, using his son Robert as a patient. From the start the 70th had camped at Goring -by -Sea, with the 37th, and was able to do so again in 1914, just before war broke out. During Wartime we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves doing 'exercises' with the local defence force. We would go to Tooting Bec Common, climb trees and keep our eyes open on the supposed invading army.

Camping was 'off' during the war, but in 1919 we went to Lee on Solent. Camps at Stubbington; Whitecliff Bay followed. All were run very efficiently and one remembers most the last night in Camp, made memorable by Captain John Godfrey of the 37th playing 'the bells', as darkness fell. As a boy, securely rolled in blankets, you would see a group of officers gather by the Flagstaff, some holding an ancient sheet of music. Others shone torches while John swung his concertina to give us one of the greatest thrills of Camp. Many senior boys were called up for war service and some never returned-One being our chaplain, the Rev Albert Veryard and another our Lieutenant, Clifford Blazdell.

Mr William Cotsell was held in great respect. On parade or at Bible Class he was the Captain, but off-duty he was a great friend, helper, advisor. He had a library of books, which he allowed us to borrow, and on Saturdays, after football, he would have small groups of us to tea. We sat on the floor listening to records on the gramophone and many of us got our first taste of good books and lovely music from those evenings.

In those days, if you wished to go anywhere you walked, or rode a bike, so many a Saturday found us away to Box Hill, Leith Hill, Ranmore Common, or Wimbledon Common and on to Richmond Park. On most occasions we finished up at Mrs Becketts's general store in Ewell, where in the yard was a bath of cold water for us to have a sluice before going in to tea. Everything was 'ad lib'. Watercress, bread, butter, jam, and cut cake as much as you could eat, washed down by cups of tea and all for ninepence old money! Then we would remount and cycle home.

We thought of nothing to marching for a battalion parade to Stockwell, Clapham or Balham and back to Longley Rd – and loved it the Bugle Band led the way. The few that are left say thank you lord for leading us to Longley rd and the good old 70th.
Fred Thomas died in 1995.

Jack Mayhew (1926-1941)

My remembrances of the 70th go back to when I was eight years old. I had under parent pressure tried the parish choir so when a school friend introduced me in the tin hut to Alan Wakeford in charge of the 70th's Boy Reserves and I found him to be a kindly man I joined. It was great fun and I have been a member ever since. Vic Hopkins and Leslie Owens were my heroes and unknowingly pointed me in the right direction as too did Harold Barratt my squad Commander and George Alderman. CO Cotsett, the confirmed bachelor in his quiet unassuming way was the spearhead of all our varied endeavours.

As a senior boy, I too became interested in the G (L) B membership. The Girl's staff at that time were matchmakers-for the right reasons of course. They inveigled certain boys to attend GLB activities including displays. My particular abiding memory was of a club-swinging item, where I was repaid by a disgruntled GLB girl with a sore head- the other girls knew why it happened even if the audience didn't.

I never missed Stubbington farm camp, when at an evening service I was converted. My commitment was cemented by the "concertina" hymns played by Capt. John Godfrey of the 37th, when we were tucked up in our blankets and bell tents. He could never know what message he transmitted by this means to us. Especially the last nights when swinging his concertina to play the bells.

I moved through the ranks. The 70th didn't need staff but the new 2nd St Helier did. This venture taught me a lot about boys and life, something that was to serve me in good stead. I was approached to rejoin the 70th in 1938 as part of a new officer team in charge of a group of boys well trained in BB tradition most knowing more than the officers about the BB. The new officer team were committed to the object and wanting to learn and serve they bought many talents and gifts to the task. The senior boys were a devoted group and were to prove to be the backbone of the company, especially for its future when war caused the officers to be scattered afar.

At the same time as I returned to the 70th, I was asked to form a Life Boy team –now the Junior Section. Stanley Blake, Tom Godfrey, Marjorie Harding were enrolled as leaders. Ivy Clark initially as Pianist. With the assistance of Percy Sore, company members Billy Stiles and Leslie Wright we visited local schools and in a few weeks we had a membership of some twenty-five energetic boys. My moving to Farnham resulted in the 1st Farnham being formed. A very strong bond was forged between the 70th and the 1st. Visiting each other for weekends, outdoor pursuits and bands playing together for church parades.

Arthur Bowbeer –1936-1961

Memories of the 70th

As a boy: The sense of good order appealed to me. Officers did not throw their weight about, but spoke with authority nevertheless. What they said was going to happen did happen, when they said it would. They were reliable worth listening to. Later I realised that the companies founder, William Cotsett was a one off, for I took part in the opening day of the new Sunday school building (now the church and halls) when the 70th did a longish sketch poking gentle fun at the new rules for use of the halls. Whether or not the deacons were amused or not was clear.

On return from World War 2, as an officer and later as Captain, I often wondered if my Christian witness was as strong to the boys of the 1950's and 60's as those earlier officers had been to me. So we taught at Bible Class, using the scriptures as faithfully as we knew how, and prayed much about each boy who came. We could do no more for I knew by then that no man can 'argue' a boy into the Kingdom of God- only the Holy Spirit can bring about this wonderful change.

Funny Bits: Camp, at Charmouth, only 10 miles from where I live now. Officer Supper, after lights out: Lots of laughter as we relaxed together: flap of marquee suddenly opened by pyjama clad Ralph price

(no1 Tent Commander): "Mr B., can the officers please be quiet...the boys can't get to sleep." The subtleties of that request will be lost on anyone who has not been to camp.

And the nice ending...One of the epic Display titles was "the BB goes a cruising". In a scene on a desert island (Or was it a South Sea Island perhaps?), the missionaries arrived, dressed in ex RAF khaki drill shorts and bush shirt, and addressed the 70th boys camping there. I'm fairly sure that among those taking part was one Owen Clark, now approaching retirement after over 30 years in Congo / Zaire with the Baptist Missionary Society. Owen was by no means the only one called to Christian Service and we give thanks for every one. Those who left the Company with no sign of having accepted Christ as their Saviour were

Just as valuable as those who did, for as another Company Captain said during a visit to the 70th's Bible Class, "When you came through that door to join the 70th London, it was part of God's plan for your life...you will never be the same again."

Peter Knights (1941-1980)

It all started when I paid my first visit to Young Peoples Fellowship one Sunday in September 1941. I was introduced to several of the boys and two in particular, Les Wright and Ken Marsh immediately urged me to join the 70th with a chance of playing football for the company the following Saturday. I agreed to join and there began an association with the BB and the many friends, which has continued in one capacity or another for over 56 years.

Through the years of my boy membership many different memories come to mind the most poignant being the close friendship of the more senior members and officers and church members who through their witness, example and teaching brought me to that point in time when I came to Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord.

Other particular memories of these early years come to mind. Winning the Best Drilled Private Medal, which was presented, to me by Douglas Pearson Smith, the younger son of the Founder.

Visits to Farnham to the 1st Farnham Company and the Open Air Displays on Gostree Meadow. The drum, bugle and Fife Band marching around the locality before the monthly church parade service. First aid and Drill competitions and winning the "Barnsley Colour". Then of course the weekly football matches on Tooting Bec Common, the matches against the 88th, were always special. To think we actually played against Jimmy Hill.

Through all ranks to Sergeant gaining the Kings Badge were all highlights of my boy service prior to that call to National Service in 1946.

Upon my return I was invited to become a Warrant Officer and assist with the training of drummers in the bugle band, to become Band Officer when Tom Godfrey moved away. After Officer Basic Training I was Commissioned as a Lieutenant and served in the company in every aspect of Company work. I guess the highlight was 1951 when our band was part of the massed band that led the Parade into Buckingham Palace at the end of the Festival of Britain run. Brian Rance was the drum Major who led the Parade march past before the late King George VI. My were we proud that day. More good years followed until 1956, when I took a four year break whilst studying for my ONC and HNC in engineering.

Returning back into Company life and Work again, with a nearly new set of boys was quite a challenge and shortly after Arthur Bowbeer who was Captain announced that he was to retire through Business and I was invited to become the fourth Company Captain of the 70th.

To be Captain of what I consider to have been the finest Company has proven to be a very real privilege and honour. Through the years of service in this office I experienced many changes. Changes in staff, uniform, changes of school requirements for boys, changes of activity interests, but through all of these changes, memories come flooding back of the Company Camps with the 3rd Mid Surrey from Cheam. The occasions when we planned prepared and presented items of First Aid, Ball games and Camp at the Royal Albert Hall Display.

It was in 1980 that I retired from the Company. Today I look back on the memories and the folk who were there to influence and guide. Roly Clark, Bert Porter, Percy Sore, Arthur Bowbeer, Bill Webb,

and many others not forgetting Neil Pheasant who continued to guide and lead the Company Forward into the ever changing and developing days ahead, for both church, company and members.

Brian Rance (boy) 1949-51, Instructor 1953-65

As a very late joiner I had to suffer the indignities of recruit drill at the age of 16. But it was worth it to enjoy the many friendships and experiences of the two following years- especially as my brothers Gerald and Alan, also joined the company and were members for many years.

Two of the highlights for me were taking part I, with the band in 1951, in both the Royal Albert Hall Display and heading the BB parade to Buckingham Palace where the batons and Messages of the BB Festival of Britain relay run were presented to His Majesty George VI.

It was also the era of Captain Bert Porter's Themed display's. The BB was "on trial", "toured London", went "cruising" etc.

My time as an Instructor was very rewarding. I was very lucky. There were such a variety of special talents amongst the boys-physical and intellectual, coupled with great enthusiasm -that they had many successes in Athletics and First Aid. Some of them were among the First to gain the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold award after its introduction. I will not name any names -there were so many over the period - but I am sure that those of them that read these notes will remember that period with pleasure and pride-as I do.

John Ward 1952-58

When asked if I would write about my time in the 70th. I was happy to agree, particularly as I have spent most of my working life as a practising historian. Perhaps I should have remembered my training for memory unaided is a fallible tool. I found that while I could recall incidents and events, placing them into context or chronology was a different matter.

I joined the Bb from the lifeboys in 1952. I soon discovered that jolly games conducted under the benign eye of Ivy Clark were of dubious value as preparation for life in the 70th London. I am not a naturally tidy person, nor am I blessed with elegant posture and movement. . My feet are liable to point in unusual directions and my arms often seem to take on a life of there own .I very much doubt if I was seen as a great asset by the Company, and particularly by my first squad commander, Cpl George Parsons. There was also mysteries knew to ponder. How was it that the inspecting officer always knew that I had cleaned my belt with disgusting "duraglit" rather than beautiful "Bluebell" and what did the officers get up to in that little room between the halls whilst we were being drilled?

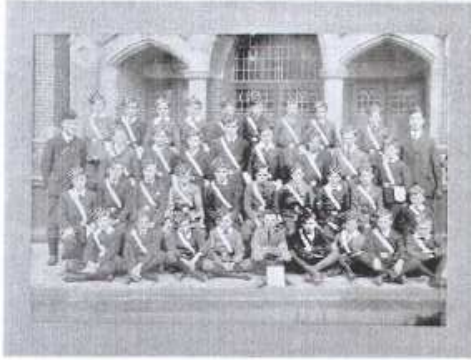
My wayward limbs meant that drill was a particular trial and I was puzzled about its objectives. However, for whatever purpose, I eventually learned the subtle differences of Standing at ease and standing easy and forming line and forming squad. I have no doubt today that if the right commands were barked today my legs would automatically move in the right sequence for forming fours.

I joined the first aid class early in my BB career and was lucky to be placed in the charge of a new Warrant Officer, Brian Rance. Brian had the happy knack of combining enthusiasm with immense patience, and I stayed with First Aid until I left the Company. I can still recite the mnemonics Brian Taught us for the circulation of the blood and signs and symptoms of a fracture. Brian was also responsible for athletics. Amongst my most vivid recollections as an athlete are of the London cross-country Championships on Epsom Downs with over 200 runners taking part.

The key BB event for me was football. I first made the 2nd team because the captain, Dave Richardson, could find nobody else. I remember his doubtful look when I volunteered. Nevertheless, in the first game I played, I ran about Tooting Bec Common like a madman and kicked everything that moved, including occasionally the ball. I must have impressed somebody because I became a regular and then made the 1st XI. What pride when I first took home that yellow shirt with the Pegasus badge on the pocket.

The Company in Pictures 1910-1950

Earliest Company Photograph 1910



Inspection & Display 1940's



Company Football team -1948/49



Festival of Britain 1951



CAMP 1910's



My first Camp was at Dover. We travelled down with our kitbags rattling around in the back of a furniture van. No silly worries about seat belts and the like in those days. I believe that I had the princely sum of fifteen shillings (75p) pocket money to last me all week. My chief recollection of Dover is that you had to walk forever to reach the sea. That, and a boy's natural aversion to water, meant that one swimming parade was enough for me. Later Camps were at Charmouth, where the sea and wonderful beaches were much closer. Curiously, it is the sounds of Camp I remember most; sounds that still haunt me. Bugles playing the retreat at Sundown, the hiss of the Lamps and the harmonium at evening prayers, the last post at Lights out.

I reached the giddy heights of Lance corporal before being discharged from the 70th on reaching the age of 18 in 1958. I had made many friends and learned more about motivation, leadership and teamwork than I have ever learned on several expensive management courses since. It was a disappointment; however, to discover that all that went on in that little room between the halls was gossip and weak tea.

Roy Norris 1956-1968

I showed my wife the letter asking for a contribution about the time spent in the BB and she commented that "Suddenly everybody wants to know about the old folk and suddenly you find that you're one of the old folk".

In one of those curious coincidences I discovered the envelope holding various certificates a few years ago. We have moved seven times since I left Avon Rd in 1968 and now live near Newtown in Powys. According to these certificates I transferred to the Company from "The Life Boys" after three sessions, and was in the Boys' Brigade from 16th September 1959 to 31st August 1966. I stayed on for just over a year as a PT and Duke of Edinburgh award instructor and as a helper at Camp until moving to Brighton in 1968.

What to say about the quality of the time rather than its duration? Much more difficult, I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't spent that time in the BB. In 1970, a few months married, I was receiving treatment for cancer. Peter Knights wrote to say that I was being remembered in prayers in the company and in the church. The letter came to the hospital one morning and I still remember the shock. I read his letter and felt something similar to what I imagine is an electric power surge! But what of my time in the BB Certificates and Membership cards, badges and books are physical things. Memories of friends, of growing mental and physical capacity, beating our instructors at First Aid in competition, camps, trudging over Dartmoor and other designated "Wild Places". These experiences are now part of my fabric. They have been there so long that I can't easily unpack them from my personality and say how they have affected and effected my life.

I know that my time in the BB is a huge influence in my life; the good and the not so good times, things I do now and the reasons why I do them. As I try to write something about my time in the BB. I begin to realise what a task Stephen Hawking faced writing A Brief History of Time. There is a "physical" time and the passing of time, there is a time past and time to come and the present. The present is a product of our personal past times and of wider past times we have shared with others.

I still count former members of the 70th amongst my friends and we sometimes like to think that we haven't changed since the days of our youth. But we have and I hope we will go on changing, growing and developing. The natural effluxion of time as someone obscurely said! What it boils down to is: I can't have my time again, if I could and the BB wasn't in it, it wouldn't be the same and I doubt that it would be better!

Alan Hemsley (1960's)

Time Blurs the memory an awful lot but there are two parts of like in the 70th I remember; the first is drill parade with Fred Bateman, the second is Battalion Church parades first at Methodist Central Hall and then latterly at the Granada Cinema.

I have recently rejoined the Bb as an officer of the 1st Aldwick Company- Bognor Regis where the Company was reformed after a gap of 22 years. The work is very different now to that of the 60's not least because the boys are so very different. However the object of all our work is just the Same- "The advancement of Christ's Kingdom..." With officers like Ivy Clark, Vera Bowbeer and Will Ward (snr) in the Life Boys and Fred Bateman, Roly Clark, Peter Ellis, Mick Davis and Will Ward (jnr) and Peter

Knights as the Captain. There is no doubt that I have received the best grounding for carrying on that work.

Thank you 70th, for all that you put into me: I only hope that I can now start to give back some of all I received from you all.

Andre Belle- 1968-79(boy), 1989-1998. (Warrant Officer)

I joined the 70th at about 6 or 7 when I joined the blue Imps (The Forerunner or the Anchor boys). My first recollection was when I was in the Junior Section when I was taught how to sew on a button as part of my Purple Badge Achievement scheme. In 1973 I was promoted to the Company Section and I remember that discipline was very much a feature. As part of a squad I was taught how to clean my uniform, which was worn each parade night, various activities were held throughout the week including Badge work like band and First aid. I was not much good at these but I did play football, Table Tennis and Gymnastics.

There was camp in the summer and I remember one year losing a small group of boys in the Devil's Punch Bowl. The 70th's 70th display was held at Eastfield's school. I remember that year because as a Lance Corporal my squad won the squad medal. The last significant thing that I can remember was playing in a National Volleyball match in South East London. Although we lost 3-1, I believe it was the Company's first venture into the national competitions. There were many good times in the 70th as well as bad. Many friendships gained and some lost over the course of time. I was recently asked which teacher influenced me most as a boy and youth; - I replied the 70th and especially Peter Knights the then Captain.

Although I did not find Jesus as my Saviour in the 70th, I did some six months later when I attended the church as part of the 'Young Scene' Youth group.

Carl Osborne 1973-1986

Tooting Junction Baptist Church will always have a warm and deep appreciative place in my heart, for it was there that I was converted at the age of 11 in 1976. My family had moved to Tooting in 1973 and I attended the church till 1986 when I started going to the church where I currently worship -- Trinity Road Chapel.

This piece also gives me the opportunity to thank so many folk who prayed for me, put up with me and ran the various organisations that I went to. In particular, I honour and thank Peter & Daphne Knights, Arthur Bowbeer and Neil Pheasant who did so much to encourage me in the Christian life. I also thank the church for the love and care shown to my late father, Floyd Osborne and to my great aunt, Maye Plenderleith, who has been coming to Tooting Junction since moving to England from Montserrat in 1997.

One of the most vivid memories I have is of my first BB Camp at Ashburnham, Sussex in 1976? The Camp Padre, Arthur Bowbeer asked us two questions: -

1. If you were to die tonight, would you go to heaven or hell?
2. If you were standing before God and He was to say to you, why should I let you into my Heaven? What would you say?

I was very worried, as I didn't know the answers. It did, however, start a search for faith that resulted in my trusting Christ some months later.

It is difficult to sum up what the Boys Brigade means to me; it was great fun and I made a lot of friends including Philip Charles, Paul Parker and Stephen Ballard.

BB gave me the opportunity to enjoy and experience things and places that I would otherwise not been able to. The 70th certainly strengthened my Christian faith, taught me discipline, responsibility and leadership skills that I utilise in both my 'secular' and 'Christian' work.

The Company in Pictures 1960-90



Old Boys reunion 1988



National five-a-side finals 1993



Athletics 1960



Opening Brigade House 1988



I experienced major events in the life of the BB; the 70th year of the BB in 1977 and the centenary in 1983 where we performed at the Albert Hall and held a march past for The Queen at Holyrood Park, Edinburgh.

In concluding, a final message to the boys' themselves; make the most of your time in the BB, get to as many classes and earn as many badges as you can. Be disciplined and respect your Officers and NCO's. Most of all do listen and take on-board what you are taught about Jesus. Accepting Jesus as your Saviour and Lord is the most important thing you can do.

Vusi Siphika 1985-1992

I went along to the 70th in September 1985, as a new boy I entered the target squad, which gives a good insight and understanding into the workings and operations of the BB. We had to learn the history of the Brigade, the object, motto, drill and a basic understanding of the Christian Faith. Within the target squad it was instilled into us that we had to work hard for our badges. From this healthy competition with the other target squad had occurred where we wanted to have good attendance, clean uniforms and to do well in drill. The squad system ensured new boys formed an integral part of the company. Here we were put under the control of a squad commander, usually a NCO who would keep an eye on us. The NCO's set high standards and gave a positive example, making a new recruit think, "Yes, I want to be like that".

Friday night was the big night with drill parade. Drill could be off-putting for the newcomer with Mr Buss's voice raised to extremes that had the whole of Longley Rd quivering in their boots. A long with Mr pheasant's bad jokes we were onto a winning combination. Drill would be followed by clubroom, which consisted of Snooker, table tennis football and Board Games. The other important meeting was Bible Class on a Sunday morning. To me Bible Class brought a sense of fellowship and brought everything together. If you like a sense of bringing all the fun and good things we did in the brigade and bringing them to God. Furthermore Bible Class provoked and challenged boys to decide which path they should follow. The path with Jesus Christ or the path without.

So what were some of the fun filled action packed sports activities, events and competitions and memorable moments that took place in my time in the 70th. Sport featured heavily with 11 a side football on Tooting Bec Common featuring some close encounters with the likes of the 37th The Battalion under 14 five a side football was won at Spencer Park School. The 70th had much success on the football pitch and as boys left at the age limit others replaced them, the company had some talented individual sportsmen. Who did the Company proud? We enjoyed some success in National Competitions with one Courageous hero in Andrew Johnson who was hospitalised with concussion in one competition but was back the following Friday on drill parade. It was not until I left the Company that the Company gained its first National Competition -The five a side football beating the Scots in Nottingham with cries of "it's a London 'ting"

Other sporting activities included Cricket, athletics, volleyball, swimming and Table tennis. In all these sports apart from Swimming (probably because I was Captain!) the company enjoyed considerable success at London, Battalion and National Level.

In other spheres the company also flourished with a host of activities going on. The Duke of Edinburgh's award saw boys achieving bronze and Silver while various badges credits were earned in Citizenship, first aid fire prevention and expedition to name just a few activities.

Even National fame was bestowed on the company, when we were featured on Songs of Praise. One image the programme left with me was of Wayne Henry locked in a police cell. What did he do wrong? We asked ourselves. Had he attended a citizenship class!

To me the work and events of my life in the 70th can be summed up in the annual camps. Mr Buss organised no expense spared luxury camps in Exotic locations such as Devon, Isle of Wight, Tenby and Swanage. Grass fields, tents cold water washing, The Prof's walks through the bush, and camp sports always made for a memorable camp. In particular I found camps interesting when there were neighbouring camps. The sight of collapsed tents in their fields always bemused me. How could they have got like that? . However the ultimate experience of Camp and the BB is the senses of fellowship and closeness with our Saviour Jesus Christ. An experience that will never change from generation to generation.

The Company Today and tomorrow -Chris Buss Company Captain

When reading and compiling the various old boys' accounts, a number of thoughts crossed my mind. Firstly there were the similarities between the early days and those of today, most commonly was the role of camp in the life of boys whether in the 1910's or much later. Secondly there was the theme of comradeship and friendships which were struck many years ago and still exist, thirdly there was the sense of achievement and development both individually and corporately. These three themes are still alive and flourishing in today's company and help in my mind to show the difference between the BB and other youth work both within and outside the church. The BB is in my mind unique in that it provides a place where the whole boy can be challenged into become a whole man.

The 70th today is in many respects different to the accounts given by our former members. Drill no longer plays a prominent part of the programme. Badge work is more diverse and consists of many small parts, indeed for the 15+ badgework is virtually non-existent unless one wants to become a queensman. These changes make the regulation uniform difficult to wear on a Friday when drill will be interspersed with gym, other physical activity, badgework and sundry other activities. Today the company has many challenges to the mind of the boy particularly the 14+. With this in mind we have to and I believe do give them not only what they want but also what they need. A place where they can find their feet as they grow into adulthood. The Company still has annual Camp, where the boy can find himself doing orderlies, waking at 6.30am to wash and then do tent inspection but with the opportunity to undertake a wide range of off site activities. He also has the opportunity to meet with his Saviour.

The Company still allows its members to forge friendships, which will outlast their time in the Company, and to achieve as a team or as an individual either on the competition floor or through individual effort.

It seems that the past 14 years, is it really that long that I have been Captain, have seen many changes and events in the life of the company including many achievements.

The company has travelled throughout the United Kingdom including a never to be forgotten trip to Northern Ireland in 1992. It's not every night that you get a visit at midnight by two policemen with automatic rifles at the ready wondering what the noise was.

The sense of Satisfaction of winning not one but two National Competitions will always remain with me. The Company appearing on TV and video and performing before Royalty with both gym team and the steel band. Being represented by seven members at the 1994 Royal Review at Windsor. Taking part in both the BB and GB Royal Albert Hall Displays. Camps and displays have come and gone.

Somehow I don't think that I will ever get six boys to reform as the 1st Covent Garden Company complete with coloured tights and Toto. Boys have made commitments to Christ and settled into a variety of churches.

Over the past ten years the Company has been blessed with a stable staff base and I give my thanks to Jim Ballard, Barry Green and Andre Belle for their support, help and willingness to serve.

I would also like to thank the various Old Boys and Friends of the Company who help at Camp and at other times when asked.

The immediate future of the Company is uncertain due to problems outside the Company's control, however whatever the future holds the 70th will remain a place where boys can grow into a full Christian manhood.

Competition Work

Competitions have played a large part in the work of the Company; we have no record of the success or otherwise of the Company in the various battalions Competitions before the 1940's. And from then until today we have only an incomplete record of the company's record. However, the earliest success was the Battalion First Aid and Barnsley Colour Competition, which were won in 1943. Further successes in both Competitions followed in later years. Indeed the 70th were the last winners of the Barnsley Colours Successor the Noon Colour in 1985. Battalion successes occurred in the 1950's, 60's and 70's in Drill, First Aid, Gym and Band. However with the decline in battalion strength since the late 1980's. Competition at this level has been limited to Swimming, Five a side football and athletics in recent years. In the latter event the 70th have maintained the efforts of the 50's and 60's achieving 13 consecutive wins from 1984-1996.

It is however possible to compile a full list of National and London Titles:

National Competitions:

Five a side football: Winners 1993,1997; Runners up 1990, 1995. Finalists 1988, 1991,1992,1994
Volleyball: Finalists 1986,1987, 1988,1989,1990,1991,1992,1993
Table Tennis: Finalists 1988 Badminton: Finalists 1998.

London Competitions:

Eleven a side cricket: 1986,1989,1990,1991,1992,1993,1994,1997
Six a side cricket: 1987,1989,1991,1995,1997
First Aid: 1964,1965,1966,1967
Vaulting & Groundwork: 1967
Gymnastics: 1965,1966,1967
Vaulting: 1997,1998
Groundwork: 1992,1998
Parallel Bars: 1987,1988,1989,1992
Physical Recreation: 1986,1988,1989,1992,1993,1996
Under 14 Cross-Country: 1995,1996
Over 14 five a side football: 1992,1993,1994,1995,1996,1997,1998.
Under 14 five a side football: 1987,1990,1994,1995,1997.
Junior Section 11 a side football :1998.

Camp

From the various old boys accounts it can be seen that summer camp is a pivotal part of the life of the Company . From the photographic records it can be seen that many of the routines remain unchanged. While over time facilities have changed with Tilley lamps and Lat. pits now being consigned to the past . However, the atmosphere and purpose of Camp remains the same. The Menu's and programme have also changed . I'm not to sure what the Camp's of 80 years ago would have thought of Chinese style stir fry with Spare Ribs or Rice and peas and Chicken Caribbean Style. But other items like Plum Duff and porridge (not together!) remain. The Company has camped both on its own and with a number of other Companies over the past 90 years. Main Camping Partners have included the 37th London and the 3rd Mid Surrey but other Company's we have shared with include the 118th London, 2nd Herne Bay and the 47th London. In early years Camp was possibly the one holiday the boy might have and therefore the same site has often been returned to. More recently Camp Sites have varied to give the boy more variety in, site, scenery and Activity. The Complete list of Company Camp sites is as Follows:

1910-1914- Goring -Sussex, 1919-1939- Stubbington-Hants, 1942- Chinnor, Oxfordshire 1945-1950, Ferring-by-Sea, Sussex, 1951-55 Church Hougham , Kent. 1956-1959 Charmouth , Dorset, 1960 Pett Level Kent, 1961-1962 Whitecliff Bay , IOW. 1963- Exmouth Devon, 1964 -Teignmouth, Devon , 1965-66 Swanage , Dorset 1967 -Kingston-Devon , 1968-1970 - Sidmouth-Devon , 1971- Whitecliff Bay. IOW , 1972 Pangbourne-Berkshire, 1973 Balcombe-Sussex, 1974-1975 Udimore-Sussex , 1976 - Ashburnham ,Sussex . 1977-Udimore-Sussex, 1978 Light weight Camp tour, 1980 PenMaen Mawr-Gwynedd, 1981-1983 -Sidmouth -Devon , 1984 -Porlock -Somerset, 1985 -Lee(nr Ilfracombe) Devon, 1986-Sidmouth -Devon , 1987- Salcombe -Devon , 1988-89-Whitecliff Bay IOW, 1990-Swanage, Dorset , 1991-Tenby Pembrokeshire , 1992 Swanage -Dorset, 1993 -Whitecliff Bay IOW , 1994- Teignmouth -Devon 1995 Dartmouth -Devon , 1996 Whitecliff Bay , IOW, 1997 Swanage-Dorset

CAMP 1998- DARTMOUTH 1st -8th August.

Programme

Musical introduction

The steel band starts this evening with a mix of tunes old and new.

The Final of the best drilled private Competition

This year's final of the Company's oldest competition

Watch out it's the dustbin men

The junior section pass the bins in record time

Tales of Camp: The Advance Guard

The advance guard an essential part of camp

A tale of non collected rent

The parable of the vineyard retold

O'grady's on parade

Target squad drill with a difference

Presentation of awards -1

The Good Skinhead

The Good Samaritan updated

Tales of Camp: the cook

A visit to the cook house

Old time Physical activities

Exercises from the 20's , 30's or 40's

Presentation of Awards -2

Mats on the floor

The London Matwork Champions show there stuff

Safety first

Safety in the home

Presentation of awards-3

Forgive others as you would like to be forgiven

The story of the unforgiving servant

Over the box

London Gym Champions show what they can do.

Presentation of awards -4

Tales of Camp-Evening prayers

Fall in

Presentation of Awards-5

Closing Service