

Our Anderston Odyssey

(A journey of friendship through the years)



Argyle Street, Anderston c1910



Meigle, 1966



Meigle, 2019



Argyle Street, Anderston, 2019

(Collated by J.N. Cooper 2021)

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Front Cover Images...

- 1:** The top image depicts how Argyle Street at Cranstonhill looked in the early 1900s, the thoroughfare remained bustling with pedestrians and tramcars until Comprehensive Area Redevelopment in the 1960s changed the face of the area entirely.

The first property on the left is The Savings Bank building which still stands; the other landmark - St Marks Lancefield Church on the right was demolished in 1968. The small panelled cubicle on the right at the Gushet of Argyle Street/Cranston Street is a public toilet.

There were several underground public conveniences spaced at intervals along Argyle Street. Toilets were located west of the Central Station at Blythswood Street, Anderston Cross, the Gushet of Argyle Street/Cranston Street, Minerva Street at Finnieston, and at the Gushet of Argyle Street/Sauchiehall Street. Other such public facilities were spaced around 500 yards apart all the way to Crow Road, Partick.

- 2:** The first of the photos in the middle section includes five of the authors when they were boys in 1966 (photo repeated on page 42). The second photo (2019) features all but one of the authors whose stories make this publication feasible (photo repeated on page 28).
- 3:** The bottom image is taken from a location close to where the top photo was taken around 1910. The Savings Bank on the left which dates from 1900 is one of two surviving properties still standing. Further down the thoroughfare is the “*Two Fat Ladies*” restaurant at 652 Argyle Street; this tenement, built in 1865, is the last remnant of old Anderston.

The Authors



Robert
Henshelwood

Rear: Jim Gilmour, Kenny Anderson, Ian McKail, Ian Duncan, John Wright
Seated: Jim Cairns, John Cooper & Calum Paterson (Meigle, 2019)

Our Anderston Odyssey

Foreword...

'Odyssey' might appear an odd choice of heading for our collection of reminiscences, but that word has several meanings, ranging from a Greek poem to an adventure, or to a journey through life. In this instance our odyssey is our journey of friendship that has survived the passage of time. It is nigh impossible, not to mention unrealistic, to try putting a value on friendships many of which hold special memories.

In an endeavour to reduce the spread of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, the UK government prohibited gatherings of any kind. Throughout those restrictions our group of friends maintained contact via telephone and email – all of which led to this compilation of often overlooked stories that make up an important element of social history. Although the gathered reminiscences all share a similar theme they are told from a personal point of view and this is what makes the stories so unique. The various accounts are a collection of memories from friends who as youngsters sixty ago, unknown to each other, lived and spent their formative years growing up in the working class areas of Anderston, Cranstonhill & Finnieston. By happy coincidence they were brought together and moulded a life-long friendship through membership of a local Boys' Brigade Company.

As youngsters spending time together in the B.B., and in particular at summer camp at Meigle, Perthshire, they forged many magical memories. But the magic doesn't lie in B.B. camp or in Meigle, and while the B.B. in Anderston was the glue that held them together the magic lies in the hearts and minds of the Boys who grew up together while developing various skills and building friendships. Although the comprehensive redevelopment of Anderston in the 1960s scattered the teenage friends across the city and beyond, their bond still remains strong.

Now over 50 years later, nine of the Boys who have since grown to men have come together to share in their own words memorable anecdotes of their adolescent years and beyond. Society has changed beyond all recognition over the past half-century; at one time The Boys' Brigade was a huge organisation in Glasgow - today it is but a pale shadow of what it once was. All the more reason the contributors are now sharing the fun and memories of the time they spent growing together. The esteem and affection the writers still retain is reflected in their stories.

J. N. Cooper, March, 2021



Gushet of Argyle Street / St. Vincent Street, 1959

The building on the Gushet is Anderston St. Peter's Church

Our Anderston Odyssey The Authors Then & Now



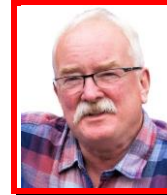
Jim Cairns - 1965 & 2019
71 Elliot Street, Cranstonhill
Larkhall, South Lanarkshire
(Pages 1-15)



Robert Henshelwood, 1959 & 2018
713 Argyle Street, Cranstonhill
Rothesay, Isle of Bute
(Pages 14-17)



Calum Paterson - 1968 & 2019
957 Argyle Street, Finnieston
Bearsden, Glasgow
(Pages 17-22)



Ian Duncan - 1966 & 2019
845 Argyle Street, Cranstonhill
Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire
(Pages 24-26)



Jim Gilmour - 1966 & 2019
7 Heddle Place, Anderston
Balmore, East Dunbartonshire
(Pages 26-28)



John Wright – 1966 & 2019
54 Cheapside Street, Anderston
Stewarton, East Ayrshire
(Pages 30-34)



Kenny Anderson - 1968 & 2019
11 Little Street, Anderston
Elderpark, Glasgow
(Pages 36-40)



John Cooper - 1958 & 2019
879 Argyle Street, Cranstonhill
Neilston, East Renfrewshire
(Pages 42-47)



Ian McKail - 1961 & 2019
51 Bishop Street, Anderston
Moodiesburn, North Lanarkshire
(Pages 47-56)



MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

Jim Cairns

It's amazing to realise that it's around 60 years since I first became involved with The Boys' Brigade. As an 8 year-old I was aware of The Life Boys in our church, but the big boys in the B.B. weren't on my radar. I can still remember going home quite excited from Sunday School after Miss Hood announced that they were starting a group for those of us too young to join The Life Boys. I'm sure my parents must've been a bit confused when I told them that I wanted to join the Chinese, but I eventually discovered that the new organisation was actually called the "Trainees!"

In those far-off days, and for many years afterwards, pre-Life Boy groups were frowned upon by Glasgow Battalion, so there was no uniform and I believe churches had different names for their group. Our team met on a Wednesday night, before "*The Lifies*",* but most of what went on is lost in the mists of time, otherwise known as my shocking memory. I do remember two important things from that era - how to play 'Port and Starboard,' and linked to that, how painful a *skelf* * in your finger is as a result of obeying the "man overboard" instruction. I'm embarrassed to say, I have no recollection of who took us for our games, I'm assuming that it was some of The Life Boy Leaders, but that's another gap in my memory banks. Nothing changes!

The only time I recall there being any interaction between the Trainees and The Life Boys was the Hallowe'en Party, and I was chuffed to be awarded a prize for going dressed as a character from a new television program. The outfit was quite simple - a handbag, a wrap-around "*pinny*" *, a hairnet and voila...I was 'Ena Sharples!' This was also my first memory of the B.B. Captain, Jimmy McKail, who presented me with my prize, probably some sweets.

I'm sure I only attended the Trainees for one session until was finally old enough to join The Life Boys. I have many vivid memories of my three years in the 32nd Life Boy Team, not least the names and faces of the leaders. The Leader-in-Charge was Betty McCallum, ably assisted by her brother John, who was our resident pianist. There was also Eddie Reid, and a younger officer called George Mitchell. He worked beside my father in the shipyards, but left after my first session to join the Merchant Navy. Eddie always seemed like a mature man, but in reality, he was probably only in his early twenties.

There was of course a uniform, consisting of a sailor style hat, worn tilted to the right, a navy- blue woollen jumper with a collar, a brass badge pinned to the left breast, navy-blue serge short trousers (warm in winter, but oh so rough on the legs in warmer weather), navy-blue knee length socks with two white rings at the top, and black shoes. In those days, all boys of primary school age wore short trousers, so no one felt in any way self conscious. My Life Boy jumper was always purchased from 'The Hosiery Shop', a chain of shops in Glasgow which weirdly seemed to sell mostly woollen garments (or maybe as a young boy I just never noticed all the other stuff).



To digress...My family used specific shops for particular items... The previously mentioned "Hosiery Shop" for any woollens that weren't hand knitted, "Bata" for sandshoes, "Hoey's" in Partick for school uniforms, and a shoe shop in Finnieston that only opened on a Friday and Saturday.

Anyway, back to the uniform. The badge we were issued with had blue enamel surrounding an anchor and highlighting the letters THE LIFE BOYS around the lifebelt on the badge. The badge had to be highly polished, introducing me to the delights of "Brasso." None of that silly "Duraglit" wadding nonsense in our household, we were traditionalists, and I must have gone through gallons of "Brasso" during my B.B. days. I never reached the heady heights of a Group Leader, so I never had the distinction of wearing a white lanyard which was worn around the neck under the collar, and attached to the badge. However, we all got to wear white tops on our hats at Church Parades, and at our Annual Display (more on that later).



The routine on a Wednesday night was, to my mind anyway, exactly the same every week. I've no doubt there were variations depending on the year each boy was in, or the actual season of the year, so maybe I've just simplified it in my head. It began with the Leader-in-Charge inspecting every boy in turn. The formula was - show both hands, palms down, turn hands over, then lift legs (individually of course!) to show clean knees. I believe some Teams also had boys showing their teeth, but that was never part of our inspection. I seem to recall that we sang a hymn at the beginning of the night, but I may be mistaken. There was also a flag raising ceremony performed each week by a different boy.

Assembly, or Fall-in, was followed by Maze Marching, which I always found strangely satisfying. It was really just a matter of keeping in step and following the person in front, but on looking back, it was an exercise in teamwork. John McCallum played the piano to keep the beat. He probably had dozens of songs, but the only one that sticks in my mind is “*Anchors Aweigh*”, and even now, whenever I hear it, I have to stop myself swinging my arms in time. The marching could be quite intricate, involving us forming a spiral, or splitting into two lines, criss-crossing the hall in an X pattern, trying hard to leave enough space so we didn’t bump into each other. We didn’t always succeed.

* *Lifies* - Life Boys : *skelf* – wood splinter : *pinny* – Apron

I may be wrong, but I think the first year boys were spared the marching; instead they were taken into the small hall for Tubular Bells. It was nothing like Mike Oldfield’s version, the boys had short pieces of tubular pipe of different length to give the individual notes; the bells (pipes) were suspended from a triangle of string and the sound came from hitting the ‘bell’ with a little round-headed hammer. Music was written on the back of a piece of wallpaper with a stave drawn on it, and the letter of each note written on the lines and spaces. All each “musician” had to do was remember the letter on his bell, and hit the pipe with the hammer each time his letter was pointed at. It still makes me cry every time I hear ‘*The Bluebells of Scotland*’ - Yes, we were that bad!



Tubular
bells

We then had P.T. (Physical Training), and took off our scratchy jumpers, leaving us in our *semmits** (everyone wore a *semmit*!), we put on our ‘*sannies*’* and were instructed by Mr Reid in the delights of what would now be called Calisthenics. Each exercise was done to a specific rhythm, and included sit-ups, push-ups, star jumps, and one which I thought was called ‘Burnt Peas,’ but was actually “Burpees.” No reflection on my mother’s culinary skills, more on my dodgy hearing again.

We usually played a game at this stage, sometimes it was ‘Crab Football,’ but it was usually the aforementioned ‘Port and Starboard.’ This was basically just a race from one end of the hall to the other (port or starboard), interrupted by the officer shouting “Freeze!”, which is self explanatory, or “Man Overboard!”, requiring us all to hit the deck. Failure to freeze, or last to hit the floor or reach the end of the hall, resulted in instant elimination. The casualty rate was high, bumped heads and bloody noses, not forgetting the almost inevitable splinter from the hall’s old wooden floor, but boy, we did enjoy it.

The other two activities I remember may not have been performed every night or indeed by every boy, but both singing and Scottish Country Dancing loom large in my reminiscing. On reflection, both of these may have only featured during the last part of the session, just before the Annual Display (more on tha...oh yes, I’ve said that). The Country Dancing was a pain. None of us really wanted to do it, but when an adult told you to do something, you did it. We were all little angels who always obeyed our elders mostly without question - this was the very early 1960s and before the advent of stropky kids. John thumped away on the piano playing a tune called “*The White Cockade*” which is etched on my brain forever, while Betty tried hard not to lose her temper with eight boys with two left feet, attempting to master the art of a perfect Pas-de-Basque. I thought she said a ‘Paddy Bar’, which confused me as it was Scottish and not Irish Country Dancing. It’s unbelievable that I’ve only recently had my hearing checked!

The singing was only slightly less of a chore. In order to ensure the best possible performance from everyone, a member of the church choir was always seconded (or press-ganged?) into teaching us the songs. The first one I remember being taught was “*D’ye Ken John Peel?*” listed in Wikipedia as a fine old Cumberland hunting song. Quite what that had to do with a group of working class Anderston “*Lifies*” has always escaped me. But we gave it our best shot.

The other song from my limited career as a singer was more in keeping with our environment. There can’t be many Glaswegians who wouldn’t recognise this melody. “*The Song of the Clyde*” details the river’s meandering from its source, via the city to the Firth, painting a picture of each stage of its journey. To use the vernacular, “*We gave it Laldy!*” * We also had a soloist for the difficult fast middle verse. We needed someone with perfect diction, a sweet and unique singing voice and an inbuilt sense of timing. However, we made do with Johnny Ryan. Seriously, John didn’t miss a beat, and when we sang it at the Display, he thoroughly deserved the thunderous applause at the end (from his mammy!).

The Annual Display (I think I may have mentioned it a couple of times) was always the pinnacle of the Life Boy session, and the culmination of all the hard work from the leaders and boys. No matter how often we had marched around the hall, jumped up and down at PT, and sang our little hearts out, everything felt completely different at the Display. Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that, for a

change, we had an audience. Not just any old audience though. As well as a stage full of dignitaries - well, the minister, a couple of Kirk elders, and a Guest of Honour, usually the local Police Inspector, we also had our families, friends, neighbours and school chums. Each year, we rose to the occasion, and I don't think anyone ever came away from our Display feeling short changed. It seemed to us that there were thousands of people there, but in reality, the hall was always overflowing, and the atmosphere was amazing. Of course we were all immaculate, complete with white tops on our hats. We had the usual inspection of hands and knees, but no parent would have dared to send their boy to a Display without him looking anything else but perfect. The content of the Display was simply all the things we would normally do on a Wednesday night, and because of all the practicing we did, there were very seldom any hiccups.


And then one year, we had 'The Country Dance Rebellion.' We could all do a passable "Paddy Bar" (Pas-de-Basque) by then, and we knew we weren't going to embarrass ourselves. Then they brought out the kilts. We were around 11 years old, but the kilts they had for us would have fitted members of the Scottish Rugby Team, they would have started around our "oxters",* and have tripped us up when we danced. So, in a rare show of pre-adolescent solidarity, we all totally refused to wear them. Much "discussion" followed, but eventually we won the fight, and the kilts were never seen again.

* *Semmit* – vest : *Sannies* – Plimsoles (sandshoes) : *Laldy* – To do your utmost : *Oxters* – armpits:

My final Life Boy Display was an historic event. Not just because I was in it of course, but for a number of reasons. 1963 was a significant year for me; it was my final year at Primary School, my final year in "The Lifies," and crucially, the year my father passed away.

Additionally, The Boys Brigade, in the form it was then, was about to change. There would be no more separate names for each part of the organisation. There would be no more Life Boys, instead they would be renamed The Junior Section, to tie in with the older Company and Senior Sections. Also, from a local perspective, there was to be an amalgamation of the churches in Anderston, along with their B.B. Companies. It was decided that the oldest Company number would be used, so the 32nd and 51st numbers were retired, and I became a member of the 17th Glasgow Company of The Boys Brigade.

My fellow 3rd year pals and I were the last Life Boys to take part in the traditional Transfer Ceremony, carried out as the climax of the Annual Inspection. We then concluded the Display in the same way as we closed each Life Boy meeting, by singing the Life Boy Vesper, which even as I write this, brings a wee tear to my eye.

 *Jesus Tender Shepherd hear us,
Bless our Life Boy Team tonight.
Through the darkness, be Thou near us,
Keep us safe till morning light.*

Looking back over the years, I don't remember any sense of history at the time, but I'm honoured to have been a Life Boy, and as you have just discovered, I have many happy memories of my time there. The intervening decades have of course blurred the edges of my reminiscences, and everything is infused with a rosy glow, but my time in the Trainees and The Life Boys was the beginning of many enjoyable years in The Boys Brigade as a boy, and later as an officer. I hope I've managed to give a snapshot of how life was so long ago, I also hope you enjoy reading this as much as I've enjoyed writing it. Now, where did I leave my hearing aid?

The Goalie...

If I'm being honest, I wasn't the thinnest little boy when I was at Primary School, and as result, I naturally gravitated to being the goalkeeper anytime we played football in the playground. When I joined the 32nd Life Boys, I put my name forward for a place in the Football Team. There was no question of me trying for an outfield position, so I was proud to become the wearer of the yellow goalies jumper. Proud maybe doesn't do my emotions justice, I was totally over the moon that I'd been picked for the team, never mind that maybe no one else wanted to play in goal.

The first thing I had to do before our opening match was to get a pair of football boots, so my mother took me to a shop in the city centre, and I emerged with a pair of brown leather boots, and a tin of some mysterious substance called "Dubbin." These weren't the 'poncy football slippers' popular now, they could have passed for workmen's boots apart from the six studs nailed to the soles. I discovered that the "Dubbin" was rubbed into the leather to keep it supple and also give it a bit of water-proofing. Given our climate, anyone neglecting to apply "Dubbin" soon found out that in the wet their football boots transformed into deep-sea divers boots!



Kelvingrove District Select Football Team, June 1963

Five members of the 32nd were selected for the District Team; top row, me in yellow with Davie Baxter to my extreme right; on Davie's right, is Ian Gault. Bottom row left - Ian McKail, with Malcolm McKinnon, in the middle, and Jamie Mailley to "Malky's" left

Of course, the B.B. Company supplied the football strips, and my first impression of the aforementioned goal-keepers jumper was just how bulky it was. It was made of thick wool, but it had been treated with what felt like lumpy candle wax, giving it a unique aroma and also making it really itchy. It had a deep polo neck, I'm sure it was bought from a fisherman's outfitters. Long black cotton shorts and woollen socks completed the kit. The socks, being made of wool, didn't stay up without the assistance of rubber bands, so as well as the scratchy jumper I had to contend with the circulation in my legs being compromised and the inevitable red weals when I took the socks off. My team mates wore rugby style shirts with a very unbecoming muddy brown and yellow(ish) horizontal stripe.

We met each Saturday outside the church hall, boots hanging round our necks by the laces, and got the bus or tram to wherever we were playing. Our home ground was at Yorkhill, which had two full sized pitches and a very basic changing room - earthen floor and wooden planks for seating; there was no electricity and the wash facility was an outside cold water stand-pipe. The pitches were adjacent to the local Cleansing Depot, which had a furnace for incinerating refuse. Unfortunately, the clinker from the furnaces was used to surface the playing area - I still have scars on my knees where my chubby skin came off second best to the rough ground. I was nine years old, of average height for my age, so I was dwarfed by the height of the adult sized goalposts, but despite that, I didn't make a fool of myself. We had a very successful team, and I don't remember being beaten very often. Or is that just my rose tinted glasses again?

After completing three years in The Life Boys, we were transferred to the B.B. Company Section, and the appearance of our team clicked up a notch. Our old strips were replaced by what at the time was Kilmarnock FC home colours, namely the same rugby style shirt with broad blue and white horizontal stripes, white shorts and red socks. The goalies outfit? - the same kind of waxy jumper, no change for me. Glasgow Battalion in the 1960's, organised the biggest football fixtures of any kind in the world, spread over three different leagues, and further subdivided into Districts. It was someone's job at B.B. Headquarters to make sense of all this, in an era before desk computers and spreadsheets. However, as players, we weren't remotely interested in the intricacies of this mammoth task, we just wanted to turn up and have a match every weekend.

As well as Yorkhill Park, we played at various other locations, including a superb little pitch at Ruchill Park, Victoria Park, Dawsholm Park and Cowlairs Park. The standard of facilities varied greatly, for example, although the pitches at Ruchill were great, the dressing room was a bare Nissen hut, with an earthen floor, no lights and a cold-water tap outside - it was always a rush to get in first and grab a place beside the door.

Having played together since we were nine year-olds, our team became a well oiled winning machine, and we fought at the top end of our league every year. We were 'League D' winners 3 years in a row between 1964 - 1966 and I still have in my possession a commemorative medal presented to us all by our Company in recognition of this fantastic achievement.



The World Cup in 1966 was an eye opener for me. The Russian Team had a very agile and charismatic goalkeeper called Lev Yashin, who wore an all black outfit, and I wanted to be him. I persuaded my mother to knit me a black jumper (eventually replaced by a real goalkeepers top), and I completed the ensemble with black shorts and socks. I had by this time shed my puppy fat, but I never came anywhere close to emulating “*The Black Panther.*” Never mind, I looked the part. I must’ve been competent, because along with a number of my teammates, I was picked to represent Kelvingrove District against other Glasgow B.B. Teams. This broadened our horizons and we played in locations around the city, most notably, Glasgow Green, Caldercuilt and Fifty Pitches in Govan. I don’t think it actually had 50 pitches, but it was an enormous complex until it was covered over by the M8 motorway in the 1970s.

One game I particularly remember was played at a very exposed Dawsholm Park, it was winter and when the rain turned to sleet, I got absolutely frozen and gave up, leaving the team one man short. Looking back, it was an incredibly selfish act on my part, but apart from the cold I got fed up shooing the penguins and polar bears away from my goalmouth. Although my departure had left the team one man down we still won 10 - 0.

Another memorable occasion was when the District Team played at Scotstoun Showgrounds which had an actual stadium, complete with proper changing rooms, showers, goals with nets, flags at the corners, andluxury.....a grass pitch! I can’t remember the score, but I remember feeling very important at the end, having played in front of a real crowd. Of course, this wasn’t the only time we played on grass. Our annual summer camp at Belmont Field, Meigle gave us unlimited access to two football pitches on the field where our tents were pitched.



Although we played other sports there, football was always our default game. My most memorable save happened at Belmont Park, it’s etched on my brain. Unfortunately, it was during a cricket match, when I caught a screaming smash hit from the batsman that almost took my fingers off. Oh for the advent of video cameras, all that remains is an image in my head.

As long-standing visitors to Meigle, challenge matches between various teams took place every year. Dundee Council had a large summer camp for school pupils, and we played them on their park at Belmont Camp. Although they had a pool of dozens of players to pick from, I don’t remember ever being beaten by them, and the same goes for the Meigle village team, although it was always a hard fought match. They always thumped us at cricket, so honours were evenly divided.

Playing the football team from Newtyle, the next village to Meigle was a different story. They seemed to be giants, grown men from farming stock, and very physical. We didn’t disgrace ourselves, as we included some of our officers in our team to try and give us a bit of brawn, but the end result was always the same. However, we always shook hands at the end, it was tough but enjoyable.



Football Team, B.B. Camp, Meigle 1968

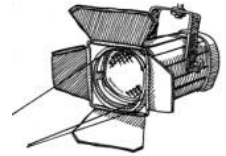
Keble Singh (looking on) David Baxter, Jim Cairns, Robert Geddes, Tam Sargent, John Cooper, Gus McIntyre, Richard Kearney, Robert Craig (standing), Willie Storey, Ian McKail, Jim Gilmour and Ivor McLeod

Playing football was a major part of our lives growing-up in Anderston, and it was inevitable as we got older, that some of us would aspire to greater heights. The first step was playing football in the Juvenile Leagues of the West of Scotland, the next rung being Junior Leagues, then professional teams. As far as I'm aware, only one of our team made the grade as a professional football player. Willie McGrotty went through the ranks and ultimately signed for Blackpool FC, but his career was short lived, as the transition to intense training and strict discipline was apparently a step too far for him.

Quite a few of us made the move to Juvenile football, with varying degrees of success, but as I got older I realised that I didn't have the skill, stamina or inclination to continue as a goalkeeper, and at the ripe old age of 18, I hung up my boots for good. Another contributing factor was that, as mentioned earlier, I hated playing in bad weather! In line with the ideals of The Boys' Brigade, playing in a football team fostered a tremendous feeling of esprit-de-corps, and 60 years later I'm still in contact with a few of my old (in all senses of the word!) team mates. I wonder if I could still fit into my black goalies jumper...? After all, the next World Cup is just around the corner!

Live on Stage...

Memory is a funny thing. I can hardly remember what I had for lunch today - actually it was 'pate de foie gras, quails eggs in aspic, and white truffles.'* But, I can remember almost every detail of an event that happened in 1962, my final year in the 32nd Life Boy Team. Shortly after the session began, four of our members were selected to sing in a production of 'The Young Brother Show', which was to be staged in the St. Andrew's Halls, in Granville Street. I was under the impression until recently that this show was a one off, but I bow to John Cooper's superior knowledge of all things B.B., and I now understand that it was a regular fixture in the city's B.B. calendar. The four senior Boys selected from our L.B. Team were Ian McKail, John Ryan, George Hughes and me. George was in my class at Finnieston School, but sometime in 1963 he immigrated to the Glasgow district of Garthamlock - never to be seen again.



(* Okay, I lied about my 'pate de foie gras, quails eggs in aspic, and white truffles lunch', it was actually a rather tasty Caesar salad)

Weekly rehearsals were held at Old Garscadden Church, which is now the National Piping Centre near the top of Hope Street. It was quite an adventure for us to take the bus there, with no adult supervision. During the first rehearsal, we discovered we were to be members of a small choir, singing the opening numbers in the show. The gentleman teaching us the songs was a familiar face, namely Jack McDonald, who had been Leader-in-Charge of our Life Boy Team before Betty McCallum took over; Jack was a member of St. Marks Lancefield - the church our Team was attached to. I'm amazed I can remember every single word of the opening song. There was a second solo sung by a rather posh boy from the 193rd Company, but I have absolutely no recollection of the last item. So, here we go...



When The Life Boys are on parade,
We're a happy cavalcade.
Wearing a smile, making life worthwhile,
We're the junior Boy's Brigade.

We're happy and gay and bright,
For The Young Brother Show tonight.
There's music and laughter, and lots to see,
You'll think of us after and all agree.
When the Life Boys are on parade,
We're a happy cavalcade.



Prior to every show, we were subject to the ministrations of some rather severe wardrobe ladies, who roughly applied stage makeup to our faces. Even at the tender age of 10, I felt self-conscious and embarrassed to be wearing "slap," but since everyone else was in the same predicament, I soon got over it. The show ran for three nights, and before each performance, we were closely inspected by Mr. McDonald, to make sure our uniforms were perfect (white tops on our caps of course), and a prize box of fruit gums was awarded to the smartest boy. Predictably, I never won, but George Hughes managed - twice, and none of us got as much as a sniff of a fruit gum from him!

I'd like to say that our performances were greeted by rapturous applause and numerous encores, but the truth is, they were over in a flash, and we were huckled off stage as soon as the curtain went down.

Nevertheless, the experience has stayed with me ever since, and as a postscript, almost a week later St Andrew's Halls was almost destroyed by fire. So, we were the last Life Boys to appear in a 'Young Brother Show' at that venue. Thankfully the facade of the building was saved, and now forms part of the Mitchell Library buildings. Although this was the first time I appeared on stage, it wasn't to be the last. A few years later, Glasgow Battalion Boys' Brigade was asked to supply a brass band for, of all things, 'The Boy Scout Gang Show' in The King's Theatre, and I was fortunate enough to be involved. But that's another story.....

Me, a Life Boy Leader...?

After I had reached the dizzy height of Corporal in the Company I was asked if I would like to help out with "*The Lifies*" (re-named the Junior Section). Below is a photo of us in Elliot Street after a Church Parade. A few years later I moved to the Senior Section; that same year Betty McCallum and Cathy Warner stood down from the Junior Section and John Cooper was appointed Officer-in-Charge. Annette Currie (my future wife) also joined the staff of the Junior Section.



17th Glasgow Junior Section, 1970

The officers are Jim Cairns, Annette Currie and John Cooper (O/C)

Bobby Clark, John McLay, Stephen Beattie, Ian Hannan, Ian Hillan, John Watt, John Somerville, Tommy Cook, George Wilson. Front: Matthew McAuley, John Benson, Edward Wilson, John Wright, William McLay, Bobby Clark,

Memory of the P.T. Class...

I was brought up in Elliot Street, not far from the Clyde pedestrian tunnel, and attended the P.T. Class every Monday night held in Finnieston School. Occasionally the Officer-in-Charge of the class would take us for a run, down Elliot Street, then along Stobcross Street, left into Finnieston Street to the pedestrian tunnel. Once inside the Rotunda we ran down the 138 wooden stairs, and along the dimly-lit wooden floored tunnel before ascending another similar flight of stairs at the other end; once outside we returned the same route back to the school. As a fit teenager, I managed the circuit without any problem, but just thinking about it now makes me exhausted! That was in the mid-1960s before the Kingston Bridge was built, and the character of Anderston changed forever.



Interior of the old pedestrian tunnel

The Rotunda of the tunnel still stands and houses the 'Yen Japanese Restaurant.' Like most people I was surprised to learn the tunnel hasn't been filled-in; it was bad enough travelling through it in the 1960s, it must be a spooky place now!

From memory some of the boys in our P.T. class used to peel-off from the main body of runners and hide behind the huge waste pipes, and wait for the runners to return before joining on at the back of the column. Unfortunately, the "skivers" didn't realise an officer took note of those who had passed him at

the other side of the tunnel; those found not to have completed the run (i.e. those hiding behind the pipes) were required to run the route properly. They forget the officers probably tried the same ploy when they were boys.



The Rotunda of the old pedestrian tunnel as it looks today

Annual Camp...

Apart for all our week night activities we all looked forward to our annual summer camp, held on part of the massive Belmont Estate, Meigle, Perthshire. Our camp was on a huge wide open field complete with a long wooden hut with an old Nissen hut attached to one side, effectively forming a “T” section. Nearby were two smaller wooden huts we used for storage, and behind the two smaller huts was a cold water stand-pipe, where the boys might occasionally wash (?). Should we experience inclement weather (which was most unusual) we used the long hut for dining, canteen and games – (anyone for pik-a-stik?). On good days we moved the tables outside and ate our meals in the fresh air.

Tilley Lamps were used at night to light the hut. Inside the Nissen hut (our cookhouse) were two large sinks fed by a cold water supply, plus a coal-fired range for cooking. A hot water boiler was later installed above the coal-fired range to make camp that bit ‘more civilised.’ Adjacent to the kitchen were two small ante-rooms we used for food storage. We had a “proper canvas camp” that was laid-out in a straight row of boys’ tents to one side, and officers’ tents pitched some 10 yards opposite. Originally there were no toilets on the site, so the Advance Party at each camp had to dig a trench and set-up a communal screened toilet in the forest, just behind the single track road that led on to the field. In later (years c1960) two brick toilets, each with 4 WCs was built. Sadly, the Nissan Hut and the wooden huts, once our “home from home” are now long gone...



Belmont field, Meigle, Perthshire, c1960

The Nissen hut can be seen in the distance

Aside from the camaraderie B.B. Camp holds many fond memories not least of camp sports, puddox, cricket, the Meigle Mile (1½ mile long trek along country roads and through the forest), a climb up Kinpurnie, or swimming in the River Isla, and who could possibly forget the “Boggin Show” - a nonsense show devised and performed by the boys of each tent towards the end of camp. Singing seemed to figure large at camp, and we would all burst into song at the drop of a hat. Amongst our repertoire were such gems as “Sweet Violets”, “On Moonlight Bay” and a particular favourite “The Anderston Midgie Men” to the tune of Colonel Bogey. Although I attended a different school from most of my contemporaries, everyone including me was word perfect singing the Woodside Secondary School song “Fortitudine”, and now that I’ve remembered it, it’ll be stuck in my head for ages!



*Enjoying a riotous sing-along
after the "Boggin' Show", 1966*



Cranstonhill Public Baths & "The Steamie"

Before my family moved to Berkeley Street, as a youngster I lived directly across the street for Cranstonhill Baths and its famous "Steamie". The "Baths" couldn't have been handier for me at this time as this was where the B.B. held their Swimming Club on Thursday nights.

Come to think of it, my home was also handy for the Fire Station on Cranston Street which was on the next block behind our house. The B.B. also visited the Fire Station as part of our Fireman's badge classes.



*The Fire Station
Cranston Street/Port Street*



Time to Face the Music...

The radio was always on in our house, tuned to the BBC Light Programme, which broadcast easy listening songs all day, and I'm convinced that my interest in music came from my mother's side of the family. Unbelievably, although my grandmother's background was by all accounts relatively poverty stricken, someone had gifted them a baby grand piano, which apparently took up half the kitchen space. It also saw service as the dining table and the ironing table, as well as being a surface for the few ornaments owned by the family.

Despite having no formal musical training, my granny became an accomplished pianist, although her opportunities to tinkle the ivories diminished somewhat after she married my grandfather. He in turn was a wizard on the “*moothie*” (mouth organ), a skill that he was happy to pass onto me as a young boy. My party piece at family gatherings was “*Over the Sea to Skye*”, played with gusto on my pride and joy - a Hohner harmonica.

It was inevitable, when I was transferred to the Company Section of The Boys’ Brigade that I volunteered to join the brass band, a very successful and well established part of the Company. The bandmaster was an officer called John Wilson, and it was he who instructed the new recruits on a four week Rudiments of Music course, culminating in a test, which determined the instrument you got to play. In a brass band, it’s the solo cornets that carry the melody, and it’s by far the first choice of most newcomers, but not me. All I wanted to do was get my hands on an E flat Tenor Horn, and so it was with much pleasure that Private Cairns eventually took his place as Second Horn in the band.

The seating arrangements in brass bands seem to be universally accepted as having the cornets to the left of the conductor, the trombones and euphoniums to the right, and the horns and the large bass instruments in the centre. The horns sat in front of the basses, and for the first few months, all I ever saw of bass player Kenny Baxter was his right foot beside my chair, as he tapped out the beat. Knowing Mrs. Baxter very well, she might comment that his feet were by far his best feature!

After grasping the basics of reading music, I was given my first exercise to play, a hymn called “*O God Our Help in Ages Past*”, to the tune St. Anne. I imagine my neighbours grew to hate that melody. Just 27 notes long, I practiced till my lips were raw. The secret of playing a brass instrument is the position of your lips on the mouthpiece, known as embouchure, it takes a while to learn, but once established, it stays with you forever. The size of the mouthpiece obviously depends on the size of the instrument, and I discovered very soon that the tenor horn was a perfect fit for me, and playing any other instrument just didn’t feel “right”.

Band practice was held on a Tuesday night, with a further session as part of Friday night’s Company night. I soon got to know the band’s repertoire, consisting mainly of hymns and marches, a lot of which were composed by musicians associated with the famous colliery bands in the North of England. Our signature march was a piece called “*True and Trusty*”, and it was always played at the beginning of any practice, just to warm us up, since we all knew it perfectly and could perform it with our eyes closed. Other marches such as “*Slaidburn*” and “*Boys of the Old Brigade*” were also played regularly.

Our list of hymns was extensive ranging from Christmas carols (sometimes played outside in the freezing cold at Watch-night Services), to well known favourites such as “*Onward Christian Soldiers*”. We played “*Abide with me*” to conclude most parades and massed band events, always followed by “*Sunset*”, a tune best augmented by bugles, to accompany the lowering of the Colours (flags) at the end of the parade. Hearing “*Sunset*” played by H.M. Forces massed bands on occasions such as the Trooping of the Colour still makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end.

We also performed more informal songs, allowing the band to introduce a bit of humour into our concerts. One notable item was “*Tiger Rag*”, a traditional jazz song composed in 1917. Our version involved some members of the band singing the chorus, “*Hold that Tiger!*”, and the end we borrowed a slogan from the Esso advert of the time, and, waving little tigers tails given out with the petrol as an advertising gimmick, we all shouted “I’ve got a tiger in my tank!” Paulo Nutini, eat your heart out!

Our church put on many concerts over the years, and each one was written produced and delivered in a very structured and professional manner. I’d like to think that the band was up to the task, and we were regular contributors. One which stands out, probably in the mid-1960s, included a segment by the band in which, for some reason, we were all dressed as tramps. I remember John Wilson suggesting to the younger boys that we didn’t wash our faces for a few days, and for the older guys to leave their razors alone. The climax of our set was a song entitled “*Dorothy*”, which was a slow waltz, giving two boys the opportunity to dance around the stage. In order to give everyone a laugh, at the beginning of the song, an enormous red dress was magically dragged from the bell of the Eb bass, and dropped over one of the dancers. Unfortunately, we hadn’t rehearsed this part and instead of a graceful glide around the stage, “Tripping the Light Fantastic” got a whole new meaning.

Eventually, my other tenor horn buddy, Robert Geddes, defected to “The Dark Side” and became a cornet player. This meant promotion for me to become Solo Horn in the band, and I was soon joined by another Robert, Russell, who was also the minister’s son. A lot of the instruments in the band were very old, and a

few months later, my geriatric tenor horn was replaced by a shiny new 'Boosey and Hawkes' instrument complete with a hard case. I could finally retire my trusty pillowcase, which I had used as a cover....or could I? More about the pillowcase later.....

Although, as mentioned previously, some of the cornets played the melody, in a few numbers another instrument was given a "solo spot", and following my promotion to Solo Horn the honour (?) fell to me to play the tenor horn segment. My first experience of this was in The McLellan Galleries in Glasgow, where we participated in yet another B.B. extravaganza. We performed a medley of Scottish songs called "Scottish Gems", and at the appropriate time, I had my "deer in the headlamps" moment when everyone else stopped playing and I'm delighted to say, my rendition of "*Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonny Doon*" was note-perfect. What a buzz!

There were a number of other B.B. Brass Bands in our district as well as in Glasgow Battalion, and we amalgamated with them now and again to play at major events in the city. Our district band was conducted by an officer in the 227th Company, by the name of David Hamilton, he had a completely different style to what I was used to, and I never felt completely comfortable under his seemingly disapproving eye. I always felt much more confident playing under John Wilson, and latterly John Cooper, who took over as bandmaster when Mr. Wilson retired.

In a previous article, I mentioned the Scout Gang Show, and it remains a very significant memory of my time in the band. The Scouting Movement in the West of Scotland did many things, but they didn't have a brass band. The Gang Show was staged every year in the King's Theatre, Glasgow, and was a carbon copy of the event in London. To fill a hole in the programme, Glasgow Battalion was asked to supply musicians to perform in this segment of the show. When we arrived for the first rehearsal, we were horrified to learn that we were to be dressed as Toy Soldiers, complete with white satin uniforms, with lots of gold braid, and silly tall hats. We were taken to one side by our senior officer and told in no uncertain terms that the reputation of the B.B. was at stake, and as a sweetener, he bribed us with a fish supper on the final night. Job done!

We weren't all required to attend every performance, and the wardrobe department just sewed us into whatever uniforms were available each night. I can't remember any of the tunes we played, but I don't remember being stretched musically. I think I played in each of the three week-night shows. The problem was, on the Saturday night, with the thought of a fish supper in our heads, every single member of the band turned up! There weren't enough uniforms for everyone, but somehow the wardrobe ladies worked a miracle pinning bits of satin material around the boys at the back, and no one noticed a thing. The King's Cafe opposite the theatre did a roaring trade that night.

I remained in the brass band till my final year in the Company Section, but by then I had other musical interests, and sad to say, I handed my tenor horn back and left the band.

To rewind a few years, for most of my time as a teenager, it was "The Swinging Sixties", and although I was too young to fully immerse myself in the culture of that era, like lots of young boys, I wanted to be - A Pop Star! It was obvious that there weren't many tenor horn players topping the charts, so I decided that I would emulate my lookalike and become a guitarist like Hank Marvin - he also wore glasses. The first task was to get myself a guitar. I knew what one looked and sounded like, but apart from that I didn't know a Gibson Les Paul from a Gibbon's Nether Regions! Fortunately one of my B.B. friends knew someone who was upgrading and wanted to sell his old guitar for the princely sum of £3. All my close friends were very skeptical, maintaining that it was just another whim, and I would ditch the idea in a few weeks. However, a few of them insisted on accompanying me to a house in Partick to view the instrument, and one bus journey later we were at our destination. I should mention at this point that I had been told it was only the guitar being sold, there was no case. So I thought about what I could use to carry it, and then it struck me...the pillowcase in which I had covered the tenor horn! To be honest, it was probably a different one, but I'm not going to let that get in the way of a bit of continuity!

Once introductions were complete, we were shown into the chap's bedroom, and there on his bed was a shiny red guitar, strings glistening in the light, and I was completely mesmerized. Then he brought out his old guitar, which in comparison to the new one looked like a plank of wood with a wooden box nailed onto the end. Still, it was a guitar, and when he played it, it sounded fine to me. I'm naturally right handed, but for some reason there are a few things I do with my left hand, including playing guitar (I know, very weird), so I had to impatiently wait till the strings were reversed, the money was handed over, and I stuffed my new acquisition into the pillowcase.

I was desperate to get home, but in my excitement, I fell up the stairs on the bus and banged the guitar on the steel step. Obviously, the pillowcase didn't offer much protection, but I was relieved to discover that everything was fine, and my heartbeat returned to normal. When I got home, someone in my still doubting audience asked me when I thought I would be proficient enough to play a song. Stupidly, I informed them all that in two weeks time they could witness my first recital. Learning guitar is hard! The steel strings hurt your fingers and it's not a natural way to sit, but I was determined, and fourteen days later I managed to serenade my friends with a (just) recognisable version of "*Sloop John B*". I think they were impressed.

I decided it would be wise to buy a guitar tutor book, so like a squillion others before me, I purchased a copy of Bert Weedon's "Play in a Day." If ever there was a misnamed title it's this one. 55 years later, I'm still learning! I just couldn't get the hang of this beast though, and I was getting disheartened with my lack of progress. Fortunately, a few weeks later, there was a program on TV called "Hold Down a Chord", and I watched it to see if it would help. The first thing the presenter did was to show everyone how to tune the strings. It was then I discovered that most of mine were well out of key. Remember the fall up the stairs? It must've disturbed the tuning pegs, and it's no wonder Bert Weedon's lessons didn't sound right. From that day on, I've been fastidious about tuning my guitar, and I'm pleased to say that I can play "*Sloop John B*" properly now...and a few other songs beside.

There was a coming together of my guitar playing and The Boys' Brigade a few times. As part of the Annual Displays, I first of all played Matt McGinn's "*Wee Red Yo-Yo*" with a very young Kenny Anderston, and a few years later, when I had progressed to a 12 string guitar, the Senior Section murdered "*Walk Right In*" (I thought my bit was brilliant though!).

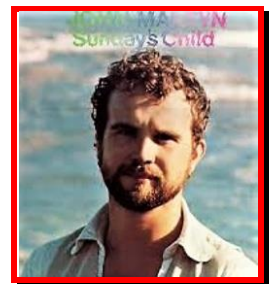
Just a (very) few years ago, my friend and I performed at my wife Annette's 50th birthday dance. We played four songs, and at the end, they practically needed the big hook to drag me off stage. Performing with someone else, and to an audience, is a wonderful feeling, and I still have the dream that someday, Simon Cowell or Louis Walsh will knock on my door. Sydney Devine passed away recently, maybe there's an opening for me..... So, let me practice.... "Tiiiny Bubbels....."

Life outside The Boys' Brigade...

When I left school I was too young to apply for an apprenticeship, but managed to get an office job in Bothwell Street. So, there I was, a spotty shy 15 year-old in my first morning at work in January 1967, wearing my good suit and trying to act grown up. I was shown round, introduced to everyone and told to sit at a desk and wait for Iain, the person I was replacing, to arrive. I was told he more or less pleased himself when he came in, but I got the impression that no one was bothered.

Sure enough, a little while later, the door swung open, and when this apparition made what I can only describe as a grand entrance, the whole office downed pens, typewriters and everything else to greet a certain Mr Iain McGeachy. To say he was popular was an understatement; there was definitely a presence about him, made more prominent by his appearance. He was tall, over 6 ft, but he had a perm which added another few inches. The most noticeable aspect of his appearance however was his long black cloak, which was held together at the neck by a gilt chain with a lion's head either side as a clasp.

He twirled the cloak off and hung it on the coat-rack - I was surprised he wasn't given a round of applause for his blatantly theatrical act. I was also slightly disappointed to discover that under his cloak, he was wearing a normal suit, collar and tie. I'm convinced that if he had been wearing a full jester's outfit, no one would have batted an eyelid. He was leaving to go to London and make his mark as what he referred to as a troubadour - I had not a clue what that was. Of course, he did achieve fame and fortune as a world renowned recording artist, with a massive fan-base and million selling albums. Iain became John, and McGeachy became Martyn, named after his instrument of choice at that time, his Martin, guitar. I'm sorry to say I didn't associate the two names until many years later, by which time I had listened to his music and had decided his slurred delivery wasn't my cup of tea. He had lost part of his leg, and was on a downward spiral. But the day I first met him will be something else forever etched on my brain.



John Martyn

My time in the office lasted 8 months, until I was old enough to begin my apprenticeship with Rolls Royce in Hillington. Times have changed, but back then there were two intakes of 150 apprentices every year, and the factory was full of pink, yes, lads wearing PINK overalls, each of us spending six months in different departments, learning our trade as engineers.

Incidentally, Rolls Royce didn't have a common hooter to designate the start and end of shifts. A bugle sounded over the Tannoy, reminding me of B.B. camp. My time as an apprentice was most enjoyable and laid a firm foundation for the rest of my working life. Not long after I qualified as a time served Mechanical Engineer, I then married and moved away to 'Darkest Lanarkshire', finally closing the chapters of my life in Anderston. However, to misquote a well known saying, "You can take the boy out of Anderston, but you can't prevent him coming back now and again for a wee wander about."

It seems like only yesterday...



17th Glasgow Company Boys Brigade, Camp at Meigle, 1964

Rear: Jimmy McKail, Eddie Read, Bert Warner, John Wilson, John McCallum, Alex. Wilson, John Cooper, Ronnie Johnstone, Donnie McKinnon, Robert Inglis, Drew Hendry & Robert Wilson.

3rd Row: Roy Laing, David Wilson, Alistair McDonald, Jim Halbert, Robert Geddes, Ross Munro,

2nd Front Row: Ian McKail, Jim Gilmour, Robert Warner, Ian Gault, Robert Craig, Jim Cairns, Norman Inglis & George Turner.

Front Row: Willie McGrotty, David Baxter, Ian Wilson, Alex Henry & Ian McDougall.

From the Company Chronicle of 1939...

The following article featured in the December 1939 edition of the 32nd Glasgow's attempts to assure Boys (and parents) of their intention to "Carry on" as normal throughout the period of uncertainty. All the more absorbing when it is realised the Company's HQ, Stobcross House, was located approximately 600 yards from Clydeside shipping. The article reads:-

"The question as to whether B.B. work should be carried on during wartime has aroused some controversy in different circles. That may have been the reason why so many Companies were late in making a start this year. But in the majority of cases it was just momentary pause after the declaration of war, and then a rush to restart. And this attitude commends itself to all people with the welfare of the organisation at heart. Some Companies of course are quite willing to start but have no place to hold parade and are therefore forced to remain inactive. Others hesitate because of difficulties which may crop up due to an air raid, and one must acknowledge this difficulty.

In Stobcross House we are fortunate in having premises, which meet every requirement. In the lower hall, which is almost entirely below street level, we have room to accommodate the whole Company with reasonable protection against air raid. No protection of course is of any use in a gas attack unless you have a gas mask with you. It is a mistake to come to any parade of the Company without your mask. If every member brings his mask on every occasion then we are as safe in the hall as anywhere in the city. To further the aims of safety the Company may introduce gas mask drill, which will ensure that every Boy will be familiar with the procedure in an emergency. Drill of this sort must never be treated as a joke, the joke might be on you one day.

Youth organisations today have a most important job to do. The present generation of Boys may well be the men who will bring the Country out of the difficult years which follow war. Years of discontentment and gloom. Years of patient plodding to renew faith in individuals as well as Nations. The transition between war and peace will be depressing unless men of true calibre are ready to meet it. Youth organisations can and will prove their worth in this respect. Mental, Spiritual, and Physical education, along with discipline, will produce the proper man. This is the work all B.B. Companies will be doing during the difficult years of war."

W.R. Farmer, Captain

REFLECTIONS OF MY YOUTH

Robert Henshelwood

Until I was fourteen years of age my parents lived in a first floor tenement flat at 713 Argyle Street next door to St. Mark's Lancefield Church, which everyone called the church "St Mark's." Living in such close proximity to the church I was taken to the nursery held there at the time, and I have an abiding memory of being spoon-fed malt mixed with orange juice and cod liver oil - Egh! I was sent to Sunday School, and at the age of nine I joined 32nd Glasgow Life Boy Team before later moving on to The Boys' Brigade. I think it was around 1963 the 32nd amalgamated with the 17th, and it was around this time I joined the Church Youth Fellowship.

One other association I remember was the Church Puppet Club, where we made hand-puppets of 'Punch & Judy', and other puppets all under the supervision of Mr John Orr. Once the puppets were finished we presented a Puppet Show acted out by the members.



Argyle Street, my tenement block & St. Mark's Lancefield Church

I attended Finnieston Primary School (I wish I still had the school badge), before moving on to the then Woodside Senior Secondary on Woodlands Road. Because I lived virtually next door to the church I could watch out for weddings from my bedroom window, and money gathered from 'Wedding scrambles' gave me my Saturday pocket money. Me and my pals also offered to "watch" cars parked outside "The Buttery" on Argyle Street for pennies.



Finnieston School badge

I recall that my main sport was badminton, my pal George Turner and I played in St. Marks on Mondays and Saturdays and in two other clubs during the week. I later joined Hyndland F.P. Rugby Club and played for them for about ten years. When I later immigrated to England I joined a Rugby Club there.

I have many happy memories of my time in the B.B., in particular playing euphonium in the B.B. Brass Band. Being a member of the band ensured we visited various places. One vivid memory I have is of Christmas Eve one year, we were standing between the pillars of Wellington Church on University Avenue playing Christmas Carols the snow was lying and gently falling as we played Silent Night - it felt really emotional. Even now as I write this I am aware of that sensation.

The band was asked to perform in many of Glasgow Battalions' biennial shows - "B.B. Fanfare", held in the Kings Theatre, Bath Street. On those occasions school excused us homework for a whole week - utter bliss! I also recall a memorable "Royal Event" at Ibrox Stadium when Glasgow Battalion was presented with a new Set of Colours, by Princess Margaret. On that occasion our band was part of a massed Brass Band. On the evening prior to the main event, a dress rehearsal was held in glorious sunshine at the Football Stadium. Unfortunately, the following evening was typical 'Glesga' weather - "dreich" wi' rain - and lots o' it!! We were told the Boys of the 1st Glasgow, the original Company would not be wearing raincoats, and as Ceremonial Bandsmen we were instructed to do likewise. The arrival of Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong Jones was greeted by a Royal Salute, its funny the things you remember - the Royal couple were very suntanned, they must have just returned from sunnier climes.

On that occasion the Battalion Brass Band led the Battalion's 12,000 boys into the stadium, and as the successive Companies peeled-off they filled the terraces. Witnessing the entire Battalion parading was something to behold - it took over half-an hour for the parade to pass the saluting base. Then as the Old Colours entered the stadium, the Pipe and Brass Bands combined to play a Slow Troop followed by a Quick Troop, after which the Old Colours were marched off for the last time to the brass band playing "Auld Lang Syne." One difficulty brass band players had to overcome was slow marching while playing General Salute in quick time - synchronising feet to tempo was something of a mental and physical challenge! One particular recollection literally soaked into my memory is the amount of rain that fell that night - down it poured; it found its way into our instruments while we were standing at attention; the rain fell down the bell of each instrument, and when the band began to play, as well music the euphonium and bass sections gurgled with rain water. It was indeed a memorable occasion - and we were thoroughly "drookit!"

Another occasion I recall was the time the band was playing outside the City Chamber in George Square. At that time our music repertoire included the cha-cha tune “*Yellow Bird*” and the Glen Miller version of “*St Louis Blues*.” We were supposed to remain at attention, but I remember when we played “*Yellow Bird*,” John Wilson our bandmaster gave me a bollocking for swaying as I played!



17th Glasgow Boys' Brigade Band, 1969

Here I am with the band, wearing a light grey coat. The windows of my home are immediately above our heads. Those that can be seen in the photo include John Cooper (Trombone), Kenny Baxter (Eb Bass), Ronnie Johnstone (Euphonium), Robert Russell with Robert Geddes at the rear. The mace bearer is from another Company.

Camp...

I guess B.B. Camp gave us many memorable moments. Spending time at camp was something completely different from our normal existence. It was great to be able to spend carefree times with our pals. The older boys used to send the first time campers to the village store to buy ‘sky hooks.’ In our tents at night we would tell the first time campers stories of Bella Duff the camp ghost, all the while trying our best to scare them and keep them awake. The camp’s toilet block was about 300 yards away for the tents and whenever one the new campers went to the toilet in the pitch dark we would follow them, wait until they were inside and throw stones onto the tin roof and wail like banshees, the boys invariably ran back to their tent with their trousers around their ankles tripping them up as they went.



Tent Inspection B.B. Camp, Meigle Camp 1966

Robert Craig, Robert Henshelwood, Ian McKail, Richard Kearney & Drew Laidlaw

We didn't just try pranks on the boys whenever we saw the opportunity we also attempted pranks against the officers. One time all the boys lifted and carried Roy Laing's car and carried it about 200 yards all the way to the goal. We then left the car between the goalposts leaving only a couple of inches at either end, impossible to drive out. Roy took it all in good humour - we did recover the car.

On Sunday's we weren't permitted to play football, so we either went for a climb up Kinpurnie, or had a swim in the River Isla - boy was that cold! We then had to walk two miles there and back - still, it kept us fit. Every year we challenged the village team to a game of football and thrashed them every time. However cricket was a different matter, they always hammered us at cricket. Then there was a game 'puddox,' I am convinced it must be the basis of modern day baseball. Just like football and cricket, puddox was part of our Tent Sports competitions with each tent vying against the other.

It could be my imagination, but I seem to recall that while we were at camp it was always sunny. At one camp Robert Wilson was sitting relaxing under the shade of a tree when he fell asleep, of course, the sun moves round and he ended-up spending a few days in the cottage hospital with sunburn. Speaking of falling asleep, reminds me of John McCallum who, even when we were having a camp party he would fall asleep dead on 9pm. John talked in his sleep, so we used to ask where he kept his sweets or if he wanted to buy a battleship. Sometimes we would ask where he kept his wallet, the following morning he could never figure out why his wallet wasn't under his pillow! Occasionally we lifted him fast asleep and carried him into the sports tent - when he awoke the next morning he couldn't figure how he got there.

Meals at camp were pretty good and varied, but it seemed we were forever peeling potatoes. We had a cook, a Mr Bunting who, to my mind, never seemed the most hygienic. Sometimes after lifting coal and putting it on the fire he would cut up blocks of cheese - leaving it covered in sooty finger-prints.

I remember the time I set-off from camp with George Turner to do the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award but cannot remember the details. I remember George continued on to the Gold Award but I was busy doing other things. However, I did accompany him on another 'hike' somewhere around Loch Lomond - it rained solid the three days we were in the wilderness, absolutely terrible!

When I reached the age of sixteen, I along with others moved from the B.B. Company into what was called the B.B. Senior Section. This was a more relaxed and advanced part of the B.B. We had classes on musical appreciation, discussions on a range of topics and photography including developing photos - we even had a class on car mechanics.



The Senior Section, 1969

*Jim Gilmour, Ian McKail, Robert Henshelwood. Robert Warner, Robert Craig
Jim Cairns & David Baxter*

Earning a living...

As result of area redevelopment our family moved to Knightswood, and on leaving school I got a job as an engineering apprentice at Alexander Stephens' shipyard in Linthouse, before moving on to John Browns (Clydebank) as a Marine Engineering Draughtsman, then later still to Barclay Curle. The timing of my Marine Engineering career was poor - the Clyde shipyards were in decline and most of us ended up redundant.

I then went into sales and worked for Olivetti, before working for over thirty years as Scottish Sales Manager for a mechanical handling company - most of my work was in England, but I had to regularly travel to Germany. When the company moved me to the North of England I chose to live near York. Later still when I was appointed National Sales Manager for a German Machine tool company, I remarried and moved to Leeds, then to Harrogate travelling around the UK extensively including one week a month in Northern Ireland during 'The Troubles' - I experienced a few worrying moments there, but that is another story.

My wife Lynn was director of an Architectural practice but had always wanted to work with food, so she left and opened a delicatessen in York - the shop still bears our name. About 15 years ago my wife and I decided upon a simpler life (how wrong we were!). I retired two years ago and moved to the Isle of Bute and bought a small flat in Rothesay Town Centre. We opened a small manufacturing unit making chutneys, mustards, jams and pickles. We won a lot of awards and medals but didn't make much money. My wife Lynn and I gave up our salaries in 2020 and as Lynn's hobby is cooking, I eat well. I also paint and enjoy a walk every day!

My family still live in Glasgow - my mum is 99. Lynn and I have three children and four grandchildren living in Newcastle, York and Harrogate - the eldest is 17. Our hobbies include visiting the children and going somewhere warm on holiday.



GONE – A PART OF THE ANDERSTON WE KNEW



The part of Argyle Street where I lived in its final days



Two images of Argyle Street

The view on the left features St. Mark's Lancefield Church at 725 Argyle Street and the Prince of Wales Bar at 3 Cranston Street (1958), while the view on the right is from the still under construction approach ramp to the Kingston Bridge (1968). The only tenement property remaining today is the former 'Shandon Bells /Buttery' (Two Fat Ladies) at 652 Argyle Street (on the extreme right).

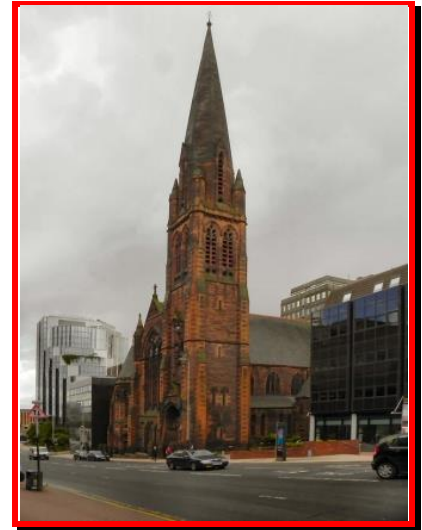
MEMORIES OF YOUTH

Calum Paterson

I made my arrival in Glasgow on the 28th June 1952 at Stobhill Hospital to proud parents Angus and Margaret Paterson. My parents had previously moved from a crofting community on South Uist in the Outer Hebrides to be married in Glasgow in 1952. The employment situation in the Outer Islands was limited at the end of the Second World War, so my parents had chosen to move to Glasgow to start their new life together, of which I was now to be very much a part.

At first we lived in a flat in Exeter Drive in the Thornwood District of Glasgow, but moved to 957 Argyle Street, Finnieston in 1955. We occupied the top floor flat of the tenement building whose close entrance was next door to the famous “Skibo Cafe”, and just across the road was the equally famous “Rex Bar!”

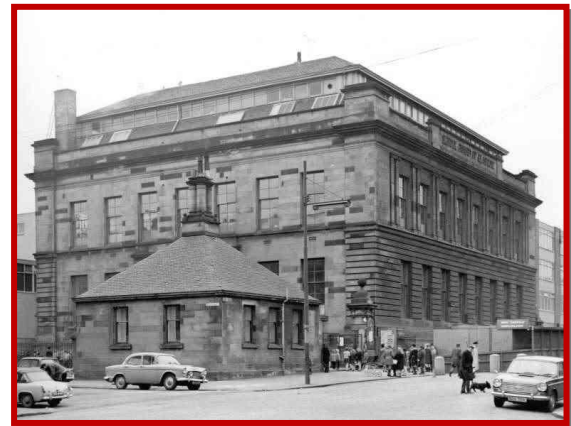
A large Highland Community had also settled in the area after the war and my parents had many relations and friends close-by which helped them settle into the new city environment which, at that time, was alien to them. My parents attended St. Columba Church on St. Vincent Street, as this one of the few churches in Glasgow that held services in Gaelic! The church is often referred to as the “Highland Cathedral.” I attended Sunday School there which was thankfully held in English.



St. Columba (Gaelic) Church

I was by this time attending Kent Road Primary School and remember my first day as if it were yesterday! My parents had nothing but the best intentions for their son when they presented me for my first day into formal education to be as suitably attired as possible. I arrived at the School gates resplendent in School cap, collar and tie, blazer complete with school badge, grey flannel shorts, white socks and shiny black shoes! To say that I stood out would be a massive understatement! Unfortunately, similar boys in my class were not as lucky as I was with their uniform attire - they turned up wearing “wellies” and woolly jumpers! This was of no fault of their own, but down to their family circumstances, that an unbeknown to me was an issue of the poverty and unemployment that existed in the surrounding areas at the time.

My parents continued to promote my Highland upbringing by sending me on my final day at summer in “kilt, sporran and tweed jacket”! It must be said that I did experience some bullying but a quick sense of humour and fast running skills saw me safely through to Secondary School.



Kent Road School

My recollections of this time are vague due to the passing of time but I remember that in the early 1960s we merged with the 17th Glasgow B.B. at Anderston St. Peters Church. The church was located at the Gushet of St. Vincent and Argyle Street but has since been demolished. The Life Boy Team was run by Mrs. Warner whose kindness and enthusiasm I still remember and cherish to this day. Another merger took place in 1963 when the 17th merged with 32nd B.B who met in St. Marks Lancefield Church on Argyle Street in Anderston; we always knew this church simply as ‘St. Marks.’ The united B.B. Company retained the 17th number but this new arrangement was about to make a major contribution to my future development.





Anderston St. Peters Church
Gushet of Argyle St./ St. Vincent St.
Meeting place of the 17th Glasgow
until 1963

Up until this time I rarely moved out of the Finnieston area where there was little for young boys growing up to keep themselves entertained - except being chased by the “Parky” in Kelvingrove Park! Either that or Sunday cultural visits to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum or, if you were really lucky, a once a year visit, via tramcar, to Glasgow Zoo!

It was with some trepidation that my B.B. Company moved from Finnieston “over the ‘county line” to what we had been told by my mischievous chums was the “wild lands of Anderston!” I will always remember my first Friday night at the Company. We could not have been made more welcome by the Company leader, Captain “Jimmy” McKail. I remember that within no time and certainly by the end of that first evening, being involved in a game of crab football with my soon to be life-long friends! My weekly timetable had been pretty uneventful until then, but it was all about to change big time!

Monday evenings were P.T. nights run by the B.B. in Finnieston Primary School. Sometimes the class included a run through the old, dimly lit, pedestrian Clyde Tunnel! The evening ended with us all adjourning to the ‘Skibo Café’ for the best ice cream drinks in Glasgow, it was also handy, as previously stated, I lived up the next close!

Tuesday, if my memory serves me right, was Band Practice Night, led by the amazing Lt. John “*Big Coop*” Cooper. I never participated in the band, although I seem to remember a failed attempt with the bugle! This lack of involvement puzzles me even now as I have always had a lifelong love of music and played drums in various rock bands in my late teens and early 20s. The Company was very proud of its brass band, which was well respected for its playing ability throughout Glasgow. We were all very proud to march behind the band as it led us on various Church Parades.

Wednesday night was the B.B. First Aid Class held in Kent Road School’s downstairs gym. The class and instructed by the memorable Ronnie “*China*” Johnstone. I’m not sure why he was called “*China*” as he was definitely not Chinese!

Thursday, night was the B.B. Swimming Club at Cranstonhill Baths, followed by an extremely hot cup of soup from the vending machines.



Me aged 12 in my B.B. uniform



Our favourite haunt, the Skibo Café



Friday was Company Parade Night, where numerous activities were on offer, all of which led to us achieving proficiency badges and advance awards. Along with the others I took full advantage and achieved an armful of nickel badges including an Expedition badge, The Duke of Edinburgh Award and the B.B. Queen's Badge. I was later given the privilege of promotion through the ranks to the role of Staff Sergeant and given charge my own squad.



The Queen's Badge,
The highest award in the
B.B.



On the hills high above Gare Loch, 1968
Calum Paterson, Robert Warner, Ivor McLeod,
David Baxter, Ian McKail & Jim Cairns

Sunday morning was Bible Class at 10.00am prompt! Either that or we were on a B.B. Battalion Church Service elsewhere in the City.



Saturday was match day; the Football Team was led by Lt. Ronnie Campbell and latterly by Robert Geddes. Our team's home park was Yorkhill, just south of Yorkhill Children's Hospital; the park was about a mile away from where our B.B. Company met.

As well as Yorkhill, our team played on the various black-ash parks dotted throughout the Northern District, such as Temple (Knightswood), Ruchill, Victoria Park (Whiteinch) and Cowlairs (red ash!) - I still carry the scars! Our B.B. team strip was blue with white hoops and a collar, the strip was complimented by white shorts and red socks - we looked very smart. The Company at that time was blessed with a number of extremely good players, but I stood out from the rest - I can explain. I had by this time moved from Kent Road Primary and was now attending Woodside Secondary School to the north of Kelvingrove Park. I was also playing football for the school team who played in the school's colour of Maroon. Unfortunately, one week I put my school strip into the weekly wash which unbeknown to me included my B.B. strip. The end result was that from that day forth I turned out playing left back in a very fetching blue with Salmon Pink hooped top! To say that I stood out on the park would be an understatement!

One Saturday after playing football at Victoria Park, is firmly etched in my memory. The team usually travelled by bus to and from away matches. However, on this particular Saturday, after another glorious victory, myself and fellow team mate, Ivor MacLeod decided it would be a good idea to walk back home to Finnieston as practice for our forthcoming Expedition Badge. As we were about to leave the park, Ivor suggested it would be a great idea to hire a rowing boat and enjoy a trip round the boating pond. We set out manfully showing great seamanship in our rowing co-ordination. Unfortunately, in our enthusiasm to see how fast we could go, we forgot all about the island at the end of the pond. There were a pair of swans nesting on the island and as we approached at speed, the male swan took umbrage and stormed towards our boat. I immediately cried out for reverse engines! But Ivor had a different plan of action - he leapt out the boat and made for land. His act of bravery caused the boat to capsize and left us both in the water scrambling for the safety of the shore. It was a sorry site to witness two rather soggy boys squelching their way home to Finnieston. As it turned out it was good preparation for our Expedition Badge as we ended up walking in soaking clothes then as well!

On another occasion at Temple Park, weather conditions played their part. Our “Goalie” was the famous “Man in Black” - Jim Cairns. He was famous for his athletic leaps and all-round goalkeeping skills (or so he tells me!). Anyway, on this winters morning, the wind was howling and the rain was horizontal. By the time half-time beckoned we were 2 - 0 up. A very ‘blue’ (not black!), Jim declared that he had had enough and left the field of play for the shacks that were called the “changing rooms.” Our solid centre half, Gus McIntyre (also an excellent trombone player, but not at the same time!), took his place in goal and we won 8 - 0 with 10 men! Jim will always be our “Man in Black.” Our football team was fortunate in that we had very good players and we were very successful in winning the league on numerous occasions. This achievement resulted in several of the team being selected to represent Glasgow Battalion for games against other Battalions in a number of various competitions.

Summer Camp...

Another fantastic opportunity the B.B. afforded us was the legendary B.B. Camp which was held at Meigle, Perthshire every Glasgow Fair fortnight. I usually returned to South Uist for the school holidays to stay with various relatives, but on occasion when this was not possible, I attended B.B. summer camp.

If you were lucky you could be selected for the Advance Party and travel up to Meigle the day before the Company arrived, pitch the tents and prepare the site - it gave us an extra night at camp! The field our B.B. Company used was part of the huge Belmont Estate, and some thought the site with its wooden hut had been an old army camp. Whatever, the field had been used for in the past, we pitched our huge canvas tents in straight lines. The boys’ tents were pitched about 10 yards opposite the officers’ tents. The boys divided into tent squads and every morning there would be tent and kit inspection with a silver cup being awarded to the best tent at the end of camp.

Camp meals were prepared in the old Nissen hut which had a kitchen with a coal fired stove; the meals were served in the long wooden hut, which was also used for indoor activities if the weather was wet. The hut also housed a “Tuck Shop” at the rear. The last night of camp was special for the senior boys in the Company, as we were invited to join the Captain and his fellow officers for a special dinner without the younger boys. It somehow made you feel grown up. Those were memorable happy days! A separate book would be required to describe the times and adventures we all enjoyed at this fabulous camp.



The Nissen hut just prior to demolition

Every day was filled with a variety of sporting activities competing against each tent as well as playing against teams from the local village or teams from the near-by school camp. There was always free time to spend relaxing around camp or taking the twenty-minute walk to the village shop. On certain days we had the option of a swim in the River Isla or a long country walk to the top of the highest hill in the surrounding countryside - Kinpurnie.



View from the top, Kinpurnie, 1966

Left: *Ian McPherson, John Cooper, Robert Warner & Calum Paterson*
 Right: *John Cooper, Calum Paterson, Robert Warner & John McCallum*

The long climb up Kinpurnie could be exhausting and any time we began to tire we were told the summit was just over the next hill - we were (encouraged?) with the old same story every time we went out on expedition.



Historic events...

As the years passed I was given the privilege of being promoted through the ranks to that of Sergeant, until finally, I was given the honour of promotion to Staff Sergeant and given charge of my own squad. It is said you can remember what you were doing when an historic event took place. For me it was the assassination of President Jack Kennedy in November 1963. I was polishing my B.B. belt buckle and shoes in preparation for the Company meeting that night, when I heard the news on the radio. I still remember discussing it with my friend Robert Warner on our way down Argyle Street to St. Marks Church.

Events changed quite dramatically for me in January 1968. A fierce gale swept up the Clyde Valley causing devastation along its path. The chimney stack of our tenement building came crashing down through my bedroom ceiling, narrowly missing me lying in bed, before it passed through the floor down to the house below. Thankfully, no-one was injured, but the building was condemned, (later to be demolished and replaced by a Police Station). We moved for a short time to live with relatives in Maryhill, until my family was finally rehoused in a new block of flats in Kirkton Avenue, in the Knightswood area.



**View of the tenement I lived in
from Finnieston Street**

This was the beginning of the end of my journey with the B.B. but I still travelled to the meetings on Friday evenings for a short time after moving to Knightswood, but both the distance and me joining the University of Glasgow Veterinary School to begin my future career meant, regrettably that our paths had to part.

As part of my studies at the Veterinary School, I was required on occasion to travel to the now demolished Glasgow Meat Market in Bellgrove Street for Public Health and Meat Inspection Lectures and Demonstrations. This was quite an experience as at the time I was a “long haired student hippie”, which as you can imagine caused some earthy “banter” from the men on the production line as I passed by with my colleagues who had similar hair styles!

Anyway, getting back to the point of this reminisce, on our journey to the meat market in the University minibus we sometimes had to stop by the University of Glasgow’s Transport Department to fill up with petrol. It was here that my B.B. past came back to meet me! None other than John Cooper and John McCallum who were both mechanics in the garage! (I have missed out their ranks on purpose!)

I was to remain a close friend with John Cooper. Throughout our long relationship with the University, we both progressed within our various careers and our paths would frequently cross in our roles in Senior Management. Indeed, I was privileged to attend his retirement presentation in the Senate Meeting Rooms at the University where both his diligence of duty and service was recognised. Like John, I myself, was fortunate to be similarly recognised by the Veterinary Faculty for 42 years of service.

My brief recollections of my time with the 17th B.B. does not do justice to the amount of time, effort, guidance and friendship that I was shown by the Captain and the various officers too numerous to mention individually by name. They will always have my gratitude and their influence has stayed with me throughout my adult life and has helped form the person I am today.

In conclusion, I am glad that over the past few years, I have been able to meet up with a number of my B.B. pals for the first time in nearly 40 years for a reunion. It was as though we had never parted, we simply picked up from where we last met, and we even returned to visit our campsite in Meigle! I think this speaks volumes for what the 17th B.B. means to all of us. Still ‘Sure and Stedfast’...

As a postscript, my reflections have been written during the time of the Coronavirus pandemic that started in February 2020. This epidemic has caused major suffering and loss of life globally. Never before in my lifetime, no matter our religious beliefs, or political ideals has there been a more pressing need for society to move on as one for the sake of future generations.

**Car wash day on Argyle Street,
1967**

*David Baxter, Robert Warner,
Calum Paterson, Ivor McLeod,
Robert Russell & Gus McIntyre*



B.B. Camp Day visit to Arbroath, 1966

*Eddie Read, Ronnie Johnstone, John Cooper, Robert Inglis, Jim Halbert, Ian McPherson & Drew Henry
Jim Gilmour, Norman Inglis, Robert Wilson, Jimmy McKail (Captain) Robert Geddes & Calum Paterson
Richard Kearney, Gus McIntyre, Alex. Henry, Ian McKail, Robert Craig, Ian Wilson,
David Baxter & Jim Cairns*



**Here we are again on Belmont Field –
but where are our tents?**

(August 2019)

Front: *Calum Paterson, Jim Gilmour,
Ian McKail & Jim Cairns*
Rear: *Ian Duncan, John Wright &
Kenny Anderson*

(John Cooper took the photo)



SCHOOL, THE B.B. AND MY FIRST JOB

Ian Duncan

I lived with my mum, dad and older sisters Isobel and Morag in a top floor flat at 845 Argyle Street, the close next to the Post Office. Isobel was the eldest and she was friends with Eddie Read (one of the younger B.B. Officers). My sister Morag is six years older than me. When I was five years of age I attended Finnieston Primary School for my primary education, the school was a short walk up Houldsworth Street then down Elliot Street. When “*Finnie*” closed I was moved to Kent Road School before moving on to Woodside for Secondary Education - and had to trek in all weathers through Kelvingrove Park to Woodside!



Above: *St. John's Episcopal Church, Houldsworth Street. I think the church must have closed - I don't ever remember seeing it open. Opposite:* is the Argyle Street tenement block in which I lived. The entrance to my close is where the Post Office van is pulling away from the pavement.

My early memories are pretty much blank, but I remember that after school we used to play twenty-a-side football in Finnieston School playground or in Kelvingrove Park. But most of the time I played football and cricket in the backcourt with my pals, even though our backcourt was on a slope! And of course, we used to play chases and jump over the dykes separating the backcourts - you had to be an expert climber in those days to get anywhere fast. I guess for me that was pretty much the normal routine, because going to school and going out to play was just a way of life - we didn't know anything different.

I remember I wanted to join The Life Boys because some pals were joining, Drew Laidlaw joined at the same time. My mother took me to join The Life Boys in St. Mark's Lancefield Church, which was just a short walk along Argyle Street. Thinking back, although I didn't know it at the time “*The Lifies*” was well run, with fun and games and instilling discipline in me. I recognised a couple of boys from school but wasn't sure what to expect. From memory, one of the leaders spoke to me and placed me in a group with other boys who were all wearing a uniform - a blue jersey with a brass badge, and what looked like a sailor's hat. The evening began when one of the boys went up to the flag pole and raised the flag - this was followed by a short Opening Service. We then did a routine called ‘Maze Marching’ that involved us trying to avoid bumping into each other as we crossed paths while making all sorts of manoeuvres. The hardest part was trying not to get dizzy while doing a spiral. We enjoyed all sorts of games from team relays to the popular “Port and Starboard.” This game involved all the boys charging from one end of the hall to the other when the leader called out either ‘Port or Starboard.’ And when the command ‘Man overboard’ was called, we all crashed to the floor - the last one to do so was out, the same applied when ‘Freeze’ was called, first to “unfreeze” (move) was out. The winner was the last boy standing, or should that be lying on the floor?

I had my first real game of football playing for The Life Boy Team. We mostly played our games on the cinder parks at Yorkhill or the better park at Ruchill. It didn't bother us where we played, we were just proud to have been selected to play for “*The Lifie*” team; I sometimes played in goal and think we won most games but can't be sure.





17th Glasgow Life Boy Football Team, 1966

Me and my team mates - I am in the front row extreme right

When I reached the age of twelve I was transferred to join the big boys in the B.B. Company. This was very different from The Life Boys who only met on Wednesday nights; the B.B. met every night of the week. I remember attending the Signalling and P.T. Classes, and in particular the First Aid Class which was run by Ronnie Johnstone, who for some unknown reason had the nickname "China." I got a certificate for First Aid, but can't think of any time I used the knowledge I acquired.

The Company had a separate night for table tennis as well as a swimming club on Thursday nights. Among the many things I learned in the B.B. was how to clean a brass belt buckle - very useful in later life (??)



For me one of the highlights of the year was the annual B.B. Camp at Meigle, those were my first holidays outside Glasgow without my family. I think most of the boys attended camp, and it was great spending time with the other guys playing games and generally having a great time. Brilliant times right enough!!



Ready for Tent Inspection, 1966

George Turner, John Ryan, Jim Cairns, Ian Wilson & Ian Duncan

When I think back I can't believe how I packed so much into my early years, I was up at 4am to deliver milk for Tina's Dairy just across from my home, then off to school through Kelvingrove Park. After school I went to Smith's Dairy on Argyle Street, near Elderslie Street, to deliver huge egg boxes full of groceries around the various tenements - I guess I must have been the first Deliveroo! Once the deliveries were complete I got ready to go off to the B.B. for a night of fun and action. Those were happy days packed with activity!

I remember getting my first real job at the age of sixteen with Bilsland's Bakery in Hydepark Street. Which reminds me of another B.B. link, my mother told me to go to Bilsland's shop in Elderslie Street and speak with the manageress. We had a chat and she told me she would try and arrange an interview for me, and if I did get an interview I was to mention The Boys' Brigade as Mr. Bilsland was great supporter. Well, I got an interview, and within a few minutes Mr. Bilsland asked if I had any hobbies. I quickly replied, "I'm in The Boys Brigade." "Excellent" he said, "Start on Monday."

Victory Park, Meigle, might not be in the same league as 'Lords Cricket Ground' but it holds many memories of the times our younger selves played cricket and football there...



Calum Paterson and Ian Duncan, 2019



**Enjoying a sentimental stroll
over Belmont Field**

*Jim Gilmour, Calum Paterson,
John Cooper, Kenny Anderson,
Ian McKail & John Wright,
(August 2019)*



Argyle Street, winter 1970

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

Jim Gilmour

Life today is very different from the one I had growing up; my family lived in a tenement in Heddle Place, right in the very heart of Anderston. I attended Washington Street School and most nights I hung around with my pals playing football in the school playground and trying not to get into trouble. I joined the 51st B.B. who at that time met in the halls of Anderston Old Church, but other than that I spent time with my pals who were not in the B.B. Thinking back I reckon my life would have been very different if it wasn't for the B.B. and area redevelopment. When Anderston Old Church closed the B.B. also closed.



Heddle Place c1960

I can't remember why I went up Argyle Street to join the 17th B.B. Company at St. Marks Lancefield but I did recognise some of the guys from "Washy" (Washington Street School). I wasn't too sure I would fit into the 17th, but guess it was the football that attracted me, the B.B. had a good team at that time, and football was my passion. As it turned out, I stayed with the 17th and soon found I was enjoying the various activities especially camp at Meigle. After all, what teenager couldn't enjoy spending days on end with your pals playing football and other sports? The only downside to B.B. camp was morning 'tent and kit inspection' and the occasional stint of orderly duty, but everything else was great! I think I was about fifteen when our family had to leave Anderston as result of redevelopment, we moved to Woodhouse Street, Knightswood.

While at camp we got up to all sorts of things from swimming in the freezing River Isla to playing football, puddox, cricket and volley-ball on the wide field. Inside the large wooden hut at Meigle we played table tennis and board games, while outdoors we had wide a variety of sports, not to mention the fabled 'Meigle Mile' and climbing up Kinpurnie, the highest hill in the area. Believe it or not, sometimes the weather was too hot - so we had water fights. We always had a bus trip to Arbroath and while there we were free to wander around, buy presents, visit the carnival or go for a swim in the freezing outdoor pool - and all time we were with our pals.

We played Meigle village team at football and beat them every time, but at cricket we didn't stand a chance, even their youngest boys were fantastic at bowling and batting! We played football against other local teams, some were made up of gigantic farmer's boys - those games were really hard, but I think we won most of the games. We also played the various school camps, sometimes those teams were made up of international students - again we were able to beat them.



Not quite ready for Inspection, 1966

*Ian McKail, Keble Singh, Angus McIntyre, Robert Craig, John Ryan,
Richard Kearney, Jim Gilmour, David Baxter & Jim Cairns*

I left school at the age of fifteen and got a job working for John Laing, the largest construction company in the U.K. Their training programme was second to none in all aspects of the industry. I earned a good wage and my employers sent me to college and funded my training for eight years. I was eventually promoted to Contracts Manager, and after while I left 'Laing's' to start-up my own business - at one point I was employing 327 staff in various trades.

When away from work along with the rest of my B.B. mates I attend the Young Peoples Fellowship in Anderston Church where we were able to continue the friendship we had enjoyed in the B.B. - an added attraction was there were girls in the YPF! I later met Laura, who is now my wife and in time we bought a farm at Balmore near Torrance. We now have two grown up daughters and two grandchildren. Life has been good, if only my mum could see me now!

Around 2017 a number of the former B.B. members arranged a reunion get-together and since then our numbers have steadily grown. We enjoyed telling and listening to stories of days gone by and even arranged a nostalgic trip to our old campsite at Meigle where we wandered about recounting happy stories of our days as boys at camp - those were great days and that visit brought back very many happy memories. I consider myself lucky to have joined a good B.B. Company at a crucial time in my life, and it was there I made some great life-long friends. Were it not for the B.B. my life would have been very different, some of the guys I had earlier hung around with ended up in jail - it could just as easily have been me but for the B.B. and the pals I made. Looking back over my life, I believe it was 'John Laing' that made me the qualified builder, and it was The Boys' Brigade that built me into the man I am today.

Editors note...

Jim was extremely reluctant to tell of his achievements as he didn't want people to think he was 'blowing his own trumpet', I assured him that this was highly unlikely as he was never a member of the band! Nonetheless, Jim was disinclined to tell of his humble background and his Heddle Place roots. However, with the able assistance of his wife Laura, Jim was "persuaded" to share something of his achievements. Coupled to what Jim said earlier he still tries to pay back the values he learned in the B.B. So, there is another side to him worth hearing...

"During my working life I was elected Scottish President of the largest trade organisation in the U.K. - The Federation of Master Builders. I was later elected President of the largest trade organisation in U.K. and inducted in Stirling Castle. I was also Director of C.I.T.B. (Construction Industry Training Board) for apprenticeships in the U.K. and a Board Member of The Building & Civil Engineering Trustees U.K. I served as Chairman of The Lennoxtown Initiative formed to regenerate Lennoxtown following closure of the area's largest employer - Lennox Castle Hospital. I am also an Elder in Baldernock Parish Church."

In some ways Jim's story is not too dissimilar to some of the other boys who grew up Anderston and for whom the B.B. helped shape their lives for the better. Jim is grateful to the B.B. and believes his life would have been very different was it not for the influence of his early B.B. training and the friends he made, plus his works training and the faithful encouragement of Laura.



Return to Meigle 5th August, 2019 – We've not changed that much – Have we?
*Jim Gilmour, Ian Duncan, Ian McKail, Jim Cairns, Kenny Anderson, Calum Paterson,
 John Wright & John Cooper*

SENIORS WEEKEND
27th – 30th September, 1968
Reporter: I McKail

The Senior Section returned to Meigle most September Weekends and during our stay which was run on an informal basis, the Staff organised the Saturday and Monday activities, while the Seniors ran the Sunday activities. So, after Church in the morning we arranged a game of football with the village team. The following is our report on the game.

The match started evenly but after a while it was evident the 17th were making more challenges than Meigle. Jim Gilmour had at least three opportunities which he missed, while Ian McKail had an even better chance that he squandered. Meigle had only one real chance in first half when Alan Laurie miss-timed a header that ran along our goal line past Jim Cairns, but it was finally cleared. Half-time 0 – 0



Early in the second half, Gilmour found himself on the right-wing just outside the Meigle penalty area and, hearing McKail's call, passed the ball inside to McKail who just failed to connect, but there was J. Cooper following up to make it 1- 0 to the 17th. Five minutes later it was 2-0 when A. Laurie sent over a high-cross which again found J. Cooper who somehow got the ball past the keeper and into the goal. From then on the village team pressed our goal very hard, but we were in no real danger even though our goalie Jim Cairns was pushed and kicked. It took a penalty goal after Laurie had handled for Meigle to score. A really hard exciting game, we played out the time to make the final score Meigle 1- 17th 2.

Team: J. Cairns, A. Laurie, Mr R Wilson. Mr J. Cooper, Mr R. Gededes, I McKail, D Baxter, G Turner, R. Craig and J. Gilmour. (7 Seniors and 3 Staff)

17th Glasgow Senior Brigade Weekend, Meigle, 1968



Standing: *Jim Cairns,
John Cooper, Ian McKail,
Robert Geddes,*

Kneeling: *George Turner,
Robert Craig, David Baxter,
Robert Wilson, Jim Gilmour
& Alan Laurie*

*David Baxter, Ian McKail,
Jim Cairns, Alan Laurie,
George Turner, Robert
Craig, Robert Wilson, Jim
Gilmour & John Cooper*



MY ANDERSTON ROOTS

John C. Wright

For the first three years of my life I lived with my parents in Port Street until they heard some streets were to be demolished to make way for a new road. The rumour was that Clydeferry Street to Cheapside Street would be among the first properties to be cleared. So, when a ground floor flat became available at 54 Cheapside Street they moved there hoping they would be offered a new house in Scotstoun or Knightswood. Unfortunately for them demolition work stopped on the opposite side of the street, and we continued living in Cheapside Street for the next 25 years! Much to their dismay Port Street was also demolished to make way for the Clyde Expressway.

I grew up in an ever changing world. Streets disappeared, friends moved away never to be heard of again. My Primary School, Washington Street (“*Washie*”) closed during my last year and I spent my last couple of months of primary at Kent Road School. I lost so many friends during these years. I didn’t realise at the time I was witnessing a community being ripped apart, and what I had experienced had happened to hundreds of other people.

My parents were members of St. Marks Lancefield Church on Argyle Street, so in 1968 at the age of nine, I became a member of the 17th Glasgow Life Boy Team attached to the church. Not long after I joined, the church closed and the 17th moved to the newly built Anderston Parish Church. Betty McCallum was Leader-in-Charge when I joined. I remember John McCallum, one of the officers, taught us how to polish our shoes, even the underside between the sole and heel. This lesson had a lasting impact, even today I find myself looking at the soles of people’s shoes as they walk along the road. Being a member of the 17th allowed me to meet boys from the other side of Stobcross Street. Over the years they moved away as the advancement of progress meant the tenements between Stobcross Street and St. Vincent Street were demolished. I still wonder what became of Eddie Wilson, Johnny Benson and Matthew MacAuley? Cheapside Street for some reason continued to survive this slaughter.

John Cooper took over as Leader-in-Charge during my second year in “*The Lifies*.” It might have been around that time The Life Boys name changed to the Junior Section. I really enjoyed the varied programme of activities “*The Lifies*” offered. I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the games, especially ‘Port and Starboard’, and making Plaster of Paris models of a ‘Life Boy.’ One thing I hated was the Halloween Parties - I was always dressed in my dad’s butcher’s apron. Not surprisingly, I never won a prize! I was never a great swimmer, so ‘dooking’ for apples was a worry! But I was relieved when I was given a fork to grip between my teeth and release it into a tin bath to spear an apple. I think it was while in the Junior Section I was one of many boys who performed traditional Scottish songs in the Kelvin Hall Arena as part of the B.B. District Show - ‘Enterprise Partick’. Over the years I participated in a few shows in that Arena - The Glasgow Battalion show ‘Drumbeat’, and the Partick District show, ‘Enterprise Partick’.



17th Glasgow Junior Section, Kelvingrove Park, c1967

Leaders: *Cathy Warner, Betty McCallum (Leader-in-Charge), John Cooper, Cpl. Jim Cairns*
I am standing on the far right

By the time I joined the Company Section the uniform hat had changed. Although I didn't get the opportunity to wear the 'pill-box' I don't remember being too disappointed, although I did like the idea of rolling up your belt and storing it in your hat. I recall one night, during drill, the Boys were chatting when Lt. Ian McKail, our Drill Officer, referred to us as budgies. I suspect he regretted making that comment as for the remainder of that evening, at every opportunity, we kept calling "*Pretty Ian - Pretty Ian.*" During drill theory class Lt. McKail used two bars of chocolate to explain Company Drill - I really enjoyed eating 'number one section'! Ian was a great officer I remember him taking us canoeing, and I think it was him who introduced us to Volleyball. I am sure he took the "*Pretty Ian*" in good humour. I think he had us perform as a skiffle group at one of the Displays. Sandy Russell was another officer who gave up his time to teach me First Aid. Sandy was the minister's son and I used to go to the manse in Royal Terrace once a week for extra First Aid lessons which I needed to get my 3rd stage First Aid badge. It's a skill I have used during my working life. One of the many skills the B.B. taught me as a boy without me realising how useful they would be in later life.

Now that I was mingling with the older and bigger members of the Company I remember the mixture of fear and pride during my first few weeks as a recruit particularly when attending the Company P.T. Class at Finnieston School. I can't say I enjoyed the run through the old Clyde Tunnel, however I persevered. The following year the P.T. Class was transferred to Kelvinhaugh School. After class we would stop at the "*Chippy*" in Argyle Street on our way home. I remember Big George (McVey) asking me to hold his bag. When I realised he wanted me to carry it while he ate his chips I popped it down on the pavement. A hundred yards or so further on I told him – he didn't find it very funny.

By now I was attending Woodside Senior Secondary School and meeting people from outside Anderston. Woodside also took pupils from Maryhill, Kelvinhaugh, Hillhead and Woodlands. I met boys from other B.B. Companies, the 1st, 49th, 93rd and the 227th. John Cooper and Bill Menzies introduced brass band instruments to boys in 17th so, in my first music class at Woodside I shot up my hand when asked if anyone played a musical instrument. "Cornet", I said. I was told to report to music rooms at 2:30 pm the following Friday where I joined the school brass section. Another opportunity had opened for me thanks to the B.B.

When I think back to my childhood, my playground was literally a building site. It included a de-consecrated graveyard, a mile of motorway foundations, the remains of the Cheapside Street whisky bond, the unfinished Kingston Bridge, numerous derelict buildings and the empty dock sheds along the Broomielaw. I could have got into so much trouble back then. Fortunately the 17th amalgamated with the 41st at Kent Road in 1974 and we began doing a lot more activities. I joined the Bugle Band as a bugler. The 41st staged an annual show called "*Guys 'n' Guise*", the officers wrote the scripts and the boys made the scenery, those concerts were great fun! I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the "*Guys 'n' Guise*" concerts. I remember a group of us sitting in Big Coop's (John Cooper) front room in West Princes Street eating hamburgers while rehearsing our "lines." Sketches I remember included "The Hameless Wans", and Laurel & Hardy singing the "Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia." Our curtain raiser was our own song "Guys 'n' Guise" - Brilliant times! I also recall going with the other senior boys to the café on the corner of Elderslie Street and Kent Road after Bible Class, for coffee and rolls accompanied by the Captain, Andy Montgomery.

One downside to the 41st was the church hall where the Company met. The hall of Kent Road-St. Vincent Church was beneath the sanctuary and thanks to the numerous supporting pillars a game of football could, at best, be a pretty hazardous activity. However, dodging around the pillars undoubtedly helped improve our ball control skills. One of my proudest moments was when I was promoted to Sergeant in the 41st. The 17th didn't go in for a lot of badge-work so, I missed the opportunity of achieving the Queen's Badge, but I feel sure it wouldn't have been a much better feeling than being presented with those three sergeants stripes. Later, as an officer in the 1st Stewarton Company I would tell the sergeants that it was a great honour and they should be proud the staff felt they were worthy of promotion.

Meigle...

B.B. Summer Camp was held at Meigle, Perthshire, during the Glasgow Fair. These were great times, sleeping under canvas, morning tent inspection, peeling hundreds of potatoes and washing piles of dishes. I didn't find Orderly Duty a chore - the camaraderie made it all good fun. We even managed a laugh when on "Bog Patrol!"



Part of Camp Sports included a handicap-race called the 'Meigle Mile', which meant running out of camp and along a track in the surrounding woodland, past the school camp then back along the road. The last section of the race was uphill - that part was a real killer! The fun started even before the race got underway, everyone had his own opinion about the handicaps that ranged between a thirty second to two minute start. No one was exempt from participating in the race - if you feigned injury you simply walked or limped round the course, "*Aye, the 41st certainly made men out of Boys!*" Seriously though, everyone enjoyed taking part in the 'Meigle Mile.' I could never quite understand why the race was called the 'Meigle Mile' - it was nearly two miles long! I suspect the officers either had a warped sense of humour or they were simply using some form of psychology!

* *The Meigle Mile was a timed one-and-a half-mile handicap race along country roads then through the forest before finishing back at camp. The winner was awarded a prize while the slowest was awarded a beautifully inscribed wooden spoon, which they kept as a souvenir.*



As well as chess and other board games we played table tennis, football, cricket, tennis, volleyball and puddox. Is it true the rules of puddox changed every year, or was it that the officers simply forgot the rules? As a young officer I enjoyed sitting in the cookhouse with the other members of staff after Lights-out. We played a card game called 'switch' while discussing the events of that day, planning the next day, joking and drinking gallons of tea well into the wee sma' hours.

I cannot recall it raining very much during camp although I do remember one year, when I was Sports Officer, I sent everyone out to play cricket in the pouring rain. "*Rain stopped play? - Not in the 41st it didn't.*" It poured all that afternoon and when the score sheet was finally returned, the ink had run all over the page. It was impossible to determine the real score - "Coop" who was umpire said the winning team was the one with the most ink-runs! There is a rumour that one evening one of the boys offered to walk the one-hour trek to the next village for a bag of chips. Half a dozen boys gave him money and off he went; by the time he returned he had eaten the lot! They'd literally had had their chips that night!

Sundays at camp were much quieter than week days. After church and lunch, we were offered the option of either a two-mile walk to the River Isla where we could swim in the freezing cold river, or a three-mile hike to Newtyle, followed by a forty-minute climb to the ancient watchtower on top of Kinpurnie, the highest hill in the area.

A camp concert was held on the last night of camp. Every tent had to prepare and perform a routine - including the officers. The concert usually concluded with a riotous singsong. One year George McVey and I introduced the "Birdie Dance" to camp. It was usually during this that the Captain donned his wig (a mop head) and suddenly 'Camp Court' was in session. One officer acted as prosecution and another as defence - defence was usually non-existent and blatant bribery was not uncommon, in fact it was openly encouraged during the trial! Numerous boys were called as witnesses against the accused. What a picture on the face of each boy attending his first camp as he was called to account on some trumped up charges. No one was ever found innocent. Those found 'guilty' by the jury were sentenced to sing a song, tell a joke, or carryout some other fitting "punishment." The evening ended with the judge and senior officers retiring in procession from the 'Court'. After a short break, came supper followed by Camp Prayers. I think most of us felt quite sad at the realisation that this was our last night in camp.

That's Entertainment...

The Company Brass Band provides another source of happy memories. The year after the 17th united with the 41st a Brass Band was formed under the tuition of John Cooper. I played cornet and within a short period of time we were ready to perform in public. Our first engagement was for a Housing Association who invited us to play at the opening of newly landscaped backcourts. The area included a refurbished 'refuse area', we referred to this event as "*The opening of the middens.*" The bandmaster philosophically informed us that "*After this event there was only one way we could only go - up!*" And up we went a year or so later, in 1976 we played at the Scotland v England International at Hampden (Scotland won 2-1).





Scotland v England International, Hampden Park, 1976

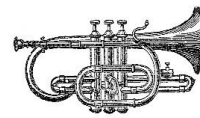
By the time of the B.B. Centenary in 1983, church unions meant that the 41st number had changed to that of the 32nd Glasgow. I recall the thrill of Beating Retreat on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle, performing at a Holyrood Palace Garden Party, playing at a Royal Film Premier attended by Prince Charles, going into a recording studio to record an LP record, playing at the Brigade's Centenary Church Service in Ibrox Stadium, as well as marching over the Bridges and up the Royal Mile to St. Giles Cathedral with the Edinburgh Battalion Pipe Band. We performed at a Stars Celebrity Gala Dinner in Edinburgh attended by Prince Phillip. We also performed on a New Year show for BBC Radio Scotland. The band played at numerous gala days around the country, the most regular being Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire, where were treated to either a sit down lunch or a visit to the chip shop.

Throughout my working life in Crosshouse Hospital, Ayrshire, I would often meet people from Sanquhar who remembered our B.B. band playing at the Riding of the Marches.

It still brings a smile whenever I think of George McVey managing to put the World Champion Pipe Band out of step with his new drum solo as we paraded alongside them to George Square. B.B. Centenary year in 1983 was a year packed with great memories. Thanks to John Cooper for giving us all the experiences!



Above: *Our band leading the World Pipe Band Champions down North Hanover Street to George Square*



Below: *The band in George Square*





32nd Glasgow Company Band, Anderston Parish Church, 1983

Front row: Iain Macpherson, Kenny Anderson, John Wright, John Cooper, Kenny Baxter & Bobby Walker

During Brigade Centenary year the 1st Stewarton Company (Ayrshire) invited the 32nd Company Band to play at their Church Parade. Little did I realise that six years later I would be living in Stewarton and would be an officer in that Company. One Anderston connection I was pleased to come across was Bill Heron, a former officer in the 115th and 32nd Glasgow Companies. Bill was Honorary Captain of the 1st Stewarton and a pillar of society. He was very well respected throughout the community. Mr. Heron regularly visited the 1st Stewarton and spoke to the Boys showing them his King's Badge and telling them of the 'old days.' The boys were always engrossed by Mr Heron's presentation. I am pleased to record that the 32nd Glasgow, until recently, still had a connection with Stewarton through me and our two sons Cameron and Fraser. Both Cameron and Fraser gained their Queen's Badge and Cameron went on to complete his KGVII Training at Carronvale.



Central Band, performing at Dumfries Community Weekend, 1988

Thinking back, I cannot decide whether it was great officers we had or a great bunch of boys – whatever the reason the 41st was a fantastic B.B. Company! I cannot imagine what my boyhood would have been like without the B.B. I will be eternally grateful to my dad Eddie Wright (a former member of the 41st) for introducing me to The Life Boys, and to all the officers who through their commitment made the B.B. something I looked forward to each week. If my parents had moved from Cheapside Street in the early 1960s I would have missed out of joining the 17th Life Boys, the 41st and later the 32nd Glasgow B.B.

Companies. I am truly grateful for the many opportunities I was offered as a boy in the B.B. and believe they all helped make me the person I am today. I hope through my service as a B.B. Officer I too was able to pass on something of the values, training and enjoyment I received in the 17th, 41st and 32nd Glasgow Companies.

Some of the officers I remember when I was a boy include the Captain. Jimmy MacKail, Bill Menzies, John MacCallum, Betty MacCallum, John Cooper, Jim Cairns, Annette Currie, Ian MacKail, Sandy Russell, Andy Montgomery and Donnie MacKinnon. I am grateful to every one of them.

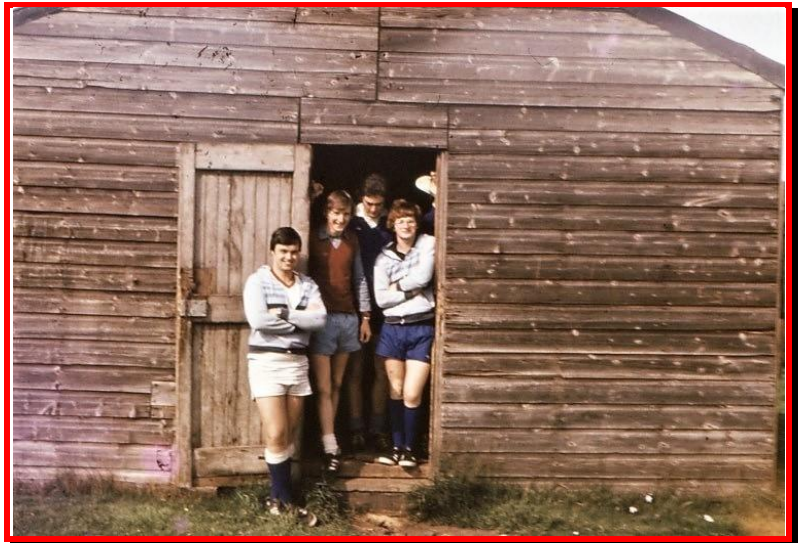


**FIFTY YEARS OF
HAPPY MEMORIES**

**Life Boy tour of Glasgow
Airport, 1968**

*I am in the back row, third boy
from the left*

**'Back door of the Camp
Canteen,' Meigle, 1978**
*John Wright, Willie Gorman,
Martin Campbell & Bobby
Walker*



**Outside the gates of
Victory Memorial Park, Meigle,
August 2019**
*Kenny Anderson, John Wright
& Jim Gilmour*



PUDDOX

As defined by John N. Cooper

A number of our contributors have mentioned the game of 'Puddox'; as far as I am aware the game was unique to the 32nd; it was then passed down to the 17th following the amalgamation of the two Companies at the start of session 1963-64. Following a later union in 1974, the game was again passed on, this time to the 41st. The game came full circle when the 41st and 227th united in 1980 to bring about the revival of the 32nd number.

Whenever the game of 'Puddox' is mentioned the rules always raise amusement - on occasion (mostly) the rules were open to interpretation. Having been active in all the aforementioned B.B. Companies, I offer the following version of the rules.

Rules of Puddox Explained...

Our game of 'Puddox' was something of a cross between cricket and baseball with a few other (varying) rules flung in for good measure! Two bases were set about six yards apart, the batsmen stood in front of three wickets (as in cricket); the bowler bowled from a single wicket around 18 feet opposite. Play was confined inside a 'V' shaped angle of about 180 degrees, with the line of the 'V' continuing to infinity. To halt a run, a fielder need only put the ball 'out of play' either by throwing, or kicking it, outside the 'V' - thereby halting the run, or 'take-out' the running wicket with the ball.

The batsman used a baseball bat and the bowler a baseball. In order to score a run the batsman had to keep the ball within the 'V', then run to the bowler's wicket and back to his own base - this earned a single run. The wickets were not a target for the bowler, thus the batsman did not have to defend them, however if the batsman was in the process of running between the two set of wickets, it was possible for a fielder to 'knock-out' the running wicket (not the player!); if the fielder was successful a new batsman took up position. Due to the layout of the field the batsman always played from the same wicket.

Each player was allowed an agreed number of bowls, usually ten. If the batsman was not 'put out' after ten bowls he retired to the back of his team to await another innings. Players who managed to score twenty-runs or more, earned a 'big hit'; this allowed the batsman to hit the ball anywhere, even outside the playing 'V' (e.g. behind him) thus he could increase his total number of runs. After the 'big hit' the batsman retired to the back of his team until the opportunity came round for him to bat again. The batting team continued playing until either they declared their innings, or any batsman was caught out (the ball not touching the ground) in which case the entire team was declared out. The game could be played to a set time or an agreed number of bowls. So, there you have it - my definitive version of 'Puddox' Rules - quite simple really (?)



Drew Laidlaw enjoying a relaxing game of puddox

MY STORY

Kenny Anderson

When I was seven years of age I joined the ‘Shipmates’ attached to the 22nd Glasgow B.B. Company that met in Anderson Street, Partick. Two years later, in 1967, our family left Partick and were re-housed in newly built flats in Little Street, Anderston; this is when I first came into contact with the 17th Glasgow Life Boy Team. The 17th was part of St. Mark’s Lancefield Church at that time, and the Leader-in-Charge was Miss Betty McCallum. When Miss McCallum stood down the following year John Cooper took over as Leader-in-Charge.

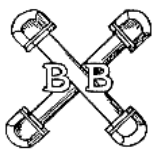
I thoroughly enjoyed my time in The Life Boys and particularly looked forward to playing games and singing. Each year as Christmas approached we were taken to visit the Kelvin Hall Carnival and Circus. After the circus performance we were allowed one hour to spend at the Carnival with the clear instruction to “Meet under the big clock above the main entrance no later than 9.30pm.” After the Roll was called and everyone confirmed present we began our mile long walk along Argyle Street to the church, dropping boys off as they passed their close.

Other than getting a white top for my hat and occasionally ringing the big bell we had to Fall-in the Team, and raising and lowering the flag I don’t remember too much about the Life Boy Annual Displays that marked the end of the session. However, I do recall being part of a huge choir for a Battalion Show called Drumbeat held in Kelvin Hall. When “*The Lifies*” formal season closed we continued to meet for summer activities in the church hall and, if the weather was good, we were taken to Kelvingrove Park where we played games and football. The session was always brought to a close at the end of June with a day trip to Ardrossan on the Clyde coast. Our day at the seaside was full of fun, sandcastle building competitions, putting, races, and of course football.

Now that I think about it, I remember being invited to form part of the Guard of Honour at the wedding of two of our Life Boy leaders - John McCallum and Helen McQuilken. This was one of the last marriages to be held in St. Mark’s Lancefield Church; the church closed shortly afterwards and the B.B. (and congregation) moved two hundred yards up Argyle Street to the new Anderston Parish Church. The facilities in the new church premises were considerably better than the old church, but there were also tighter restrictions!

Getting Involved...

I enrolled in the 17th Glasgow Company Section at the start of session 1968-69 and was issued with my pill-box cap, belt, and haversack. The Captain at that time was Jimmy McKail, assisted by Bert Warner, Bill Menzies, Roy Laing and John Cooper who ran the band. I enrolled in most of the weeknight activities, P.T., Communications, and at weekends playing football or going out on Expedition. I joined the B.B. band and learned to play Tenor Horn; I even managed to gain third place in the Battalion Solo Brass competition one year.



The Company P.T. class was held on Monday evenings in Finnieston School under the supervision of John Cooper. We started each session with everyone involved in a warm-up game of football (well, that’s what we called it – it was more like no holds rugby!). The game was followed by floor exercises, vaulting and apparatus work. Occasionally we would be taken for a run through the old Clyde Tunnel at the foot of Finnieston Street, a round trip of about one and a half miles. At the end of each P.T.

session just about everyone adjourned to the Skibo Café on Argyle Street where we spent an hour or so talking and consuming huge quantities of ice-cream and ice-drinks (ice-cream floating in a soft fizzy drink).

I remember a funny incident at one of my first B.B. Displays. I was part of the vaulting squad and everything was working to plan until Ian McKail, one of the senior boys, executed a “Flying Angel”; he launched himself perfectly from the spring-board up into the air and over the ‘box’, his arms outstretched when - ‘twang’ went the elastic holding up his shorts. As Ian sailed through the air his arms desperately tried to recover his shorts and the expression on Mr. Cooper’s face, waiting to catch him, was priceless! Quite how Ian managed to recover his shorts and get caught safely is beyond my understanding; you can be sure he got an extra special round of applause from the audience and all the team watching! Ian took no chances at the following year’s Display, when he appeared for the vaulting squad he had a pair of clip on braces attached to his shorts!

I also recall there was to be no summer camp the first year I was in the Company, however Bill Menzies and Mr Cooper organised a 'lightweight travelling camp' for those who were interested. About eight of us travelled north in Mr Menzies's car and Mr Cooper's minibus arriving several hours later in Glen Nevis where we planned to spend our first night. Once the tents were pitched we spent the rest of that day playing football and exploring the glen. As darkness began to fall we were taken on a long walk, which was followed by a hot supper; exhausted we were soon ready to settle down for the night. We couldn't believe our eyes when we awoke the following morning to find the entire area covered in snow - and this was the month of July! However, the snow disappeared when the sun came out. We continued our journey north past Loch Ness ever watchful for the monster but I suspect the noise of our singing probably shattered any hopes of ever seeing the creature. We decided to establish camp for the next few days at Beauly, Inverness-shire, we had a fantastic time there. For many of us this was the first time we had been out of Glasgow and our first introduction to the fresh air and peace of the countryside.

Union with the 41st....

I was a Sergeant when the 17th moved from Anderston Parish Church to amalgamate with the 41st at Kent Road. Fitting into the 'new regime' was not a problem as we already knew all the 41st Officers - Andy Montgomery (the Captain), Donnie McKinnon and John Cooper had earlier been involved with the 17th. Union with the 41st offered a wider range of activities. I recall one of the weekend camps at Montrose House, Balmaha, where we spent much of our time playing football or kayaking on Loch Lomond. Twelve of us were selected to kayak from Balmaha to Inchcailloch while the remainder of the group travelled by mail boat over to the island. Our gathering point was a secluded sandy bay to the west side of Inchcailloch, and while the boys kayaked and swam in the shallow warm waters, the officers' set-up a barbeque. The sun was shining and we were with our pals and enjoying life - what more could you ask for?

We visited Montrose House several times every year; I recall one night, after lights-out, 'Big Coop' caught a number of us smoking in our bedroom. He warned us of the fire risk and lectured us on the detrimental effects it would have on our health; after the lecture he ordered all four of us outside and made us run round the football field a couple of times. We were breathless at the end of our punishment exercise. Unfortunately, I didn't heed his advice - I am still a smoker to this day! He also told us count the stars then said, "Count them again as some stars appear to be missing!"



41st Glasgow Company, Kent Road, 1973

Back Row: *Ian McKail, Bill Menzies, Andy Montgomery, Kenny Anderson, John Cooper & Donnie McKinnon*

Forth Row: *Grahame Will, Jim Fingland, George McVey, John Wright & Martin Campbell,*

Third Row: *Ronnie Johnston, Norrie McMillan, Gordon McDonald*

Second Row: *Allan Martin, Ian Martin, Willie Gorman & Bobby Walker*

Front Row: *Sammy Thomson, Michael Gorman, Gordon Walker & Stephen Anderson*

Guys 'n Guise...

Every two years the 41st staged a concert called 'Guys 'n Guise'; the officers wrote the scripts and every member of the Company had some level of involvement in the production. The boys earned their Arts and Crafts badge making and painting scenery and performing in the show. I recall one show in particular when George McVey and Jim Fingland performed a sketch dressed as 'Laurel & Hardy'; they were convincing and even looked the part! Grahame Will did a sketch as a ballet dancer and for the sake of our continuing friendship I don't think I should say any more about that! The concerts were a great success and were always played to a very appreciate audience in the packed hall each night.



Perhaps as result of our concert expertise the 41st was always asked to make props for Battalion Shows (Drumbeat and Arena). As part of our Arts & Crafts Class we made a huge papier-mâché caber for a Highland Games scene, a Noah's Ark for another item, and the biggest challenge of all - a huge scale- model of a Glasgow Tramcar capable of transporting boys.

Band Notes...

At one time the 41st was running two bands, a bugle band and a brass band, and being a member of either band ensured there was plenty to keep you busy. I remember one of the earliest engagements for the brass band was to play for the opening of new "middens" (rubbish depository). An even more curious event was to follow - playing at a fund-raising concert to buy engines to power rickshaws in the Far East!

When I was promoted to Staff Sergeant I was asked to play one of the larger brass band instruments - the 'E Flat Bass.' With the B.B. Centenary approaching (1983), the Company band formed the basis of a Battalion Band. One thing always puzzled me, was the name Kenny some sort of qualification for playing the Eb Bass? At one time there were four Bass players in the band three of whom were called Kenny - so we re-named the fourth member Kenny!

Over the years the band performed at a wide variety of engagements ranging from Gala Days to International Football Matches, and from Church Services to Royal Events. Undoubtedly one of the most picturesque places we were invited to play was at Lochaline, Morven. Our accommodation was in a local hall with a view overlooking the Sound of Mull. The band had been invited by Acharacle and Ardnamurchan Parish Churches to lead the praise at a number of Open Air Services during the May weekend of 1989. We travelled by minibuses stopping for a break at Glen Coe before sailing over Loch Linnhe on the Corran Ferry; we continued our journey over single-track forest roads the final twenty miles to Lochaline. The weather that weekend was fabulous. After rehearsals, part of the day was spent searching for the graves of sailors from the wrecked Spanish Armada. It is likely a brass band had never played in such a remote corner of the Ardgour Peninsula and so, to give the locals a treat the evenings were rounded-off with impromptu brass band concerts on the beach, and for once the Sound of Mull resounded to the sound of music. We all enjoyed that fabulous weekend.

Annual Camp...

Apart from the band one of the activities I eagerly looked forward to was summer camp. Over the years the 32nd had purchased a good supply of top-quality (Birkmire) tents, which helped keep the cost of camp low. Following union with the 17th, the 41st continued the 32nds long tradition of camping at Meigle, Perthshire, during the Glasgow Fair (July). Both Andy Montgomery the Captain, and John Cooper had minibuses, which also helped reduce the cost. From memory, the cost of our ten-day camp during the mid-1970s was just £10 - outstanding value - it was probably the cheapest B.B. Camp in Britain!

The cookhouse at Meigle was an old Nissen hut and all our cooking requirements were carried out on a coal-fired range. One of the first jobs assigned to the Advance Party was to prepare and light the coal fire; this was a real challenge as most of the boys had never seen a coal fire let alone lit one! The range had a huge hotplate on top but, once alight, the real skill was in keeping the oven at a steady temperature. A boiler ensured a plentiful supply of hot water. Andy was camp cook and it was amazing what he could conjure up on the coal-fired range - steak pie, roast chicken with all the trimmings and so on.

One of the challenges for the Orderly Officer was to make sure the fire didn't go out overnight; it was his job to ensure the oven was hot enough for breakfast the following morning. Cooking for upwards of thirty on a coal-range was an art prospective officers had to learn very quickly.

There was no electricity in the hut and another skill that had to be acquired was lighting the Tilley Lamps. The right amount of heat and pressure was important so as not to destroy the gauze mantle. There was something peaceful about the yellow light and the hiss of the Tilley Lamps and the soft shadows they cast across the hut at night.

Camp activities included all the usual sports - football, cricket, volleyball, tennis and puddox. We also had swimming parades, treasure hunts, and long walks to the top of Kinpurnie the highest hill in the surrounding area.



The old Nissen hut in its final days

Within the forest that surrounded the campsite was an assault course jokingly called the 'Trim Trail.' Completing the 'Trim Trail' under normal circumstances was challenging enough but after a heavy meal it was almost impossible!

I have a particular memory of Jim Fingland at camp. Jim was always immaculately turned out - even his socks were pressed! I remember one year, we were given permission to go berry picking, and being a city dweller Jim filled his gleaming white polo shirt with strawberries; unfortunately by the time he returned to camp the front of the shirt was a mass of red from the fruit. His polo shirt never looked quite the same again, but everyone enjoyed the 'fruits of his labour!'



"Flying Angel" - The 41st in Anderston Parish Church-hall, 1980
Ian McKail, Kenny Anderson and the 'Angel' - Sgt. Robert Walker

The 32nd Glasgow...

Following closure of Kent Road-St. Vincent Church in 1977, in order to maintain a B.B. presence in Anderston the 41st relocated to Anderston Parish Church. A few short years later the union of Anderston Church with Kelvingrove Church forced the unnecessary amalgamation of the 41st with the 227th. This union resulted in the revival of the 32nd number and I succeeded Jim Scott (227th) as Captain of the 32nd in 1996. Anderston today is a very difficult area in which to operate a B.B. Company. The community has changed beyond recognition since I was younger. Church membership has fallen and the area is mostly populated by people new to the area, however, I was able to operate a Junior Section and a Company Section. Although our membership was small we tried to offer the boys activities that would keep them interested. We were not in a position to organise a full summer camp; instead we held a number of weekend camps. The Company regularly participated in District and Battalion Competitions, and for three years in a row, the Junior Section won the McKenzie Trophy awarded to the most successful Junior Section in Partick District. They were also winners of the Battalion Bible Knowledge Shield for Session 2004-05. The Company Section were overall junior winners of the Partick District Swimming Gala, and Jordan Prociw, playing cornet, won first place in the Battalion Brass Solo Contest. Without a doubt I owe the B.B. a tremendous debt, which I have tried to repay through my service as an officer. I have enjoyed many memorable and happy years in the B.B. until health issues forced my retirement in 2017.



32nd Glasgow at Whithaugh, 2001

*Kenny Anderson (Captain) is first on the left at the rear (wearing a white polo shirt).
The other staff (left to right) Isobel Edwards, Lyn Prociw, Graig Allison,
S/Sgt. Robert Mooney & Anne McKinnon*

A Get Together...

In 2017 a number of our former B.B. members decided to arrange a get together - for most of us it was first time in nearly 50 years since we last met. We arranged a couple of lunches in town and it was interesting to see how easily memories and stories came flooding back. We all had a good laugh at past antics, spoke of camp and what Meigle meant to us, so we agreed a date and all headed-off to visit our old campsite. Jim Cairns made contact with some locals who arranged a reporter from the Dundee Courier to come along and take some photos. Jim also arranged lunch in the Kinloch Arms, the only hotel in Meigle. As boys we were not allowed in there - as alcohol was not permitted at camp. Not only was the meal superb, Jim's wife Annette, had made bags of tablet for each of us. Jim wrote a poem of 'Meigle Memories' and after lunch he read it to us. We then had a leisurely stroll up to the campsite, all the time sharing memories and having a laugh. We then wandered over to have a look at the Old Folks Home, I'm not sure if some of us were thinking of asking for residence. Later we walked back down to the village stopping at Victory Park. That day out brought back so many happy memories for all of us, it certainly cemented our life-long friendship. I am extremely grateful to have been able to spend time with great a bunch of guys enjoying a special friendship and I will always remember "Wir day oot tae Meigle."



Here we are on the site of our B.B. Camp - Belmont Field, August 2019

*John Wright, John Cooper, Ian McKail, Ian Duncan, Jim Gilmour,
Calum Paterson and me - Kenny Anderson (Jim Cairns took the photo)*

MYSTERY SOLVED!

John Cooper

All who attended B.B. Camp at Meigle will, at some time or another, have heard stories regarding the origin of the huts on Belmont Field, so I thought the true story should be told. The story begins just after the Second World War, when a relative, or a contact of David Watson, then Captain of the 32nd Glasgow, suggested that Belmont Field, Meigle, Perthshire would be an ideal site for a B.B. Camp. Captain Watson and a number of his officers visited the site, which comprised the aforementioned wooden huts and spacious open fields surrounded on three sides by forestry; to the east were farmer's fields and a clear view across to the Strathmore hills. The site was indeed ideal, and the first time the Company camped at Meigle was in 1949.

Over the years stories had been circulating regarding the origin of the huts. Most believed that the huts had been built during the First or Second World War to house prisoners of war, that is, until one hot day in July 1980. A French registered vehicle drove onto the field one afternoon and, being Camp Adjutant, I approached the vehicle to ask if the driver required directions. It transpired the driver was Polish, and said that following the German invasion of Poland in 1939 he fled to Britain to join the army and take up the fight against the Nazis. He went on to say that the military unit he was attached to spent a winter camping in two-man tents on Belmont Field. I asked the visitor if he wanted to look inside the long wooden hut, an offer he readily accepted. He pointed out where the stoves were and where the troops dined. The chap also said that he and his fellow soldiers were dressed similar to the boys at camp - short trousers and T-shirts, despite it being winter and snowing! The old soldier had brought his family on a pilgrimage to visit the various places he had been stationed during the war.

A few months after camp that year I was travelling to Edinburgh with Harry Shirley, the once well-known B.B. Secretary for Scotland, to discuss plans for a major Brigade Centenary event. Harry asked if our Company was planning a summer camp. When I replied we were returning to Belmont Field, Meigle the look of astonishment on Harry's face was something to behold. He revealed he had been Commandant of the same military camp the Polish chap had told me of earlier. I don't know who was the more astounded - Harry or me. But that's not the end of the story. While attending an event in the Merchant's House, Glasgow to mark the 130th Anniversary of The Boys' Brigade, in conversation with a B.B. Officer from Aberdeen I enquired if his Company was planning a summer camp. The Aberdonian replied that his Company was camping on Belmont Field, Meigle - the very site where our Company had camped for over 60 years. I was delighted to learn that this terrific location was still being used for B.B. Camps.



Fitba' daft...



Happy Days! Meigle 1966

*Robert Inglis, Ronnie Johnstone, Jim Halbert, George Turner, Robert Henshelwood
Keble Singh, Ian Duncan, Jim Gilmour, Ian McKail, Robert Warner
Ian Wilson, Jim Cairns, Drew Laidlaw & Gus McIntyre*

A WAY OF LIFE

John N. Cooper

Born in February 1946, I was part of the post-war baby boom. As a youngster I remember that food rationing was still in force, not that I was aware of it making much difference to our family; my father died before I was four years of age leaving my mother to raise my older brother and me. There was no life insurance policy and I recall it was extremely difficult for my mother to make ends meet. Clothes and footwear had to last - they were patched! There was no money for luxuries like holidays. My first trip outside Glasgow was with The Life Boys to Dalreoch Park, Dumbarton. If ever a boy benefited from the B.B. it was me! But, first I had to become a member.

Joining the Life Boys...

I can't be clear of the exact date Ronnie Johnstone, one of my pals, invited me to join The Life Boys attached to St. Marks Lancefield at 725 Argyle Street, the church he attended with his parents. Other than being dragged to church for the school Christmas and Easter Services I had little desire to set foot inside any church, far less "St. Mark's." However, that is where I found myself one evening in late October 1954. From memory there were in excess of forty boys gathered in the large hall, and I recall with clarity the sense of expectation of what was about to follow that evening. Moira McIver, one of the leaders, welcomed me, the new recruit, and allocated me a place at the end of a Group. Following the Opening Ceremony the boys were divided into teams in preparation for a full evening of fun and activity. I suspect the programme content was the same as that enjoyed by thousands of other boys across the city - Maze Marching, Physical Training, Country Dancing, Singing, Percussion Band, Tubular Bells, Storytelling and Craftwork; each activity suitably interspersed with a variety of games. My first night at "The Lifies" was great and I eagerly looked forward to the next Wednesday evening meeting. It's strange the odd things that stick in more places than just your memory. Hardly an evening passed without someone getting a "skelf" (wood-splinter) from the wooden floor, stuck in part of his anatomy, the most likely area being either the hand or the backside! However, it was not a problem - we simply learned to live with the likelihood of "skelves."



At primary school a day was set-aside when children who were members of youth organisations were invited to wear the appropriate uniform. Most girls turned out either in their Bluebell (Girls' Guildry) or Brownie uniforms. Of the 80 or so boys of Life Boy age who attended Finnieston Primary School only a few were not members of any organisation, and with the exception of just three who, for some strange reason, elected to be Cub Scouts, the vast majority belonged to one of the local Life Boy Teams. The playground on those occasions was literally a sea of navy blue jerseys and Life Boys wearing their "sailor hats."

Football...

My first appearance on a football park was when, at the age of nine, I was selected for the Life Boy Football Team. Armed with my big brother's football boots, several sizes too big, and rolled-up newspapers for shin-guards, off I went excitedly to play my first game of football on a 'real pitch' at Yorkhill. Actually, the pitch was covered with cinders, but we didn't care, it had proper goal posts! We were issued with 1930s style heavy cotton football strips that draped down to our knees, so we tucked the faded brown and yellow hooped striped jerseys into our 'long-legged shorts. Dressed in our football strips I suspect we resembled a swarm of wasps. Perhaps the 'stripes' had the desired effect - as a football team we were certainly capable of 'stinging' our opponents! It is interesting to note that when I became Leader-in-Charge of the Life Boy Team more than a decade later, those same football strips were still in use. One of my first tasks was to raise money for new strips and pass the old ones into honourable retirement!

The Annual Display...

Our Life Boy leaders put a lot of effort and imagination into preparing us for the end of Session Annual Display. One of the leaders, Andy Montgomery, ran the football team and provided the musical accompaniment on Team meeting nights. Despite the fact Andy didn't read music, he was a very accomplished pianist. I clearly recall 1958, my final year in 'The Lifies,' when three of us were selected to form a Calypso Band and sing at the Display - Andy Winter, John Watt and me. Each week after Sunday School we rehearsed at Andy's parent's home in Anthony Street. We spent an hour or so practising the songs "The Banana Boat Song", "Scarlet Ribbons" and "Island in the Sun". The aforementioned songs

were popular recordings at the time as performed by Harry Belafonte – definitely not us! Following each rehearsal we were treated to copious amounts of home baking and ginger (soft drinks) prepared by Andy’s mum. On the night of The Life Boy Display we were suitably attired in frilly Calypso style shirts and wielding maracas, shakers and drums - our performance went well. I was heart-sorry when the time came to leave “*The Lifies*” and transferred to join the big boys in the B.B. Company.



I have absolutely no doubt we in the 32nd were very fortunate in the calibre of Life Boy leaders we had, were it not for their compassion and encouragement it is likely many of us would never have moved on to join the older lads in the B. B. Company. Jack McDonald, a wonderful example of a Christian gentleman, was Leader-in-Charge of the Life Boy Team and he was ably supported by Betty McCallum, Moira McIver, Tom Nicol and Andy Montgomery. Such was the bond formed between the Life Boy leaders and boys back then that when I became a Staff Sergeant, Betty McCallum, who had succeeded Jack McDonald during my time in “*The Lifies*”, invited me to help out with The Life Boys. An offer I readily accepted.

Word Associations...

The name ‘Belmont’ will probably be of little interest to most, but for me, it conjures up a number of associations and memories. I first became aware of the tune ‘Belmont’ sometime around 1956 while rehearsing for The Life Boy extravaganza ‘The Young Brother Show’ soon to be staged in the Lyric Theatre, Sauchiehall Street. A number of Boys from the 32nd were selected to join with others drawn from Life Boy Teams across Kelvingrove District. Well over fifty boys were present each week at rehearsals held in a church hall in Buccleuch Street. Having being scheduled for Saturday afternoons the rehearsals had to be pretty interesting to ensure a good attendance. The afternoon began with a variety of team games, no doubt, to help deplete our energy levels.

We were taught a selection of songs from the Rogers & Hammerstein musical “The King and I” – “*Getting to know you*” and so on. We knew we were to be part of a show in the Lyric Theatre and assumed we would be singing songs from that musical. It wasn’t until nearer the date of the show we learned we were to sing two hymns – “*The Lord’s my Shepherd*” to the tune Crimond, and “*By cool Siloam’s Shady Rill*” to the tune Belmont. Well, it was bad enough having to sing hymns on a stage, what we didn’t know is how our item was to be attired. At the dress rehearsal we learned we were to be dressed as choirboys, complete with cassock and ruffle collars. I will leave it to your imagination the impression this left on boys from Anderston! However, the show went ahead and apparently our ‘angelic choir’ performed both melodies, complete with descant, expertly.

Thus, at the tender age of ten the tune ‘Belmont’ became lodged in my memory. A few years later, I learned that William Smith, Founder of the B.B. had lived at 13 Belmont Crescent, Glasgow. A little later still, I attended my first B.B. Camp at Belmont Field, Meigle, Perthshire. The coincidence with Belmont doesn’t end there. William Smith was a friend of Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the British Prime Minister during the early 1900s, whose estate just happened to be Belmont, Meigle. It was here the 32nd Glasgow first established their Annual Campsite in 1949. Finally, I met my future wife, Heather, while I was at B.B. Camp on Belmont Field. Heather was part of the Perthshire and Angus schools contingent staying at the nearby National Association of School Camps also called “Belmont Camp” which was situated on the far side of the estate. I often wonder if this Belmont association was all simply coincidence.

Reflecting Back...

Little did I realise the transition that would take place after I was transferred from The Life Boys to the B.B. Other than for football “*The Lifies*” met only once a week - now I could be at the B.B. every night! The Signalling and P.T. Classes met on a Monday; Brass Band practice was held on Tuesday nights; Wednesday was Ambulance Class; on Thursdays we had Swimming and Company Club; Friday was Parade Night; Saturday we played Football, and on Sunday we had Bible Class in the morning and Youth Fellowship in the evening. Other than a collection of one-shilling (5p) on Parade Nights the rest of the weeknight activities were free! The importance of the activities and the quality of instruction offered should not be underestimated. The B.B. offered boys, some from families struggling to make ends meet, an inexpensive and character-building alternative to hanging aimlessly around the streets. Despite everything the Company offered I am aware that during my early teens I did not always make it easy for the officers, and am therefore doubly grateful for their perseverance and patience.

When I reached the upper age limit, I was discharged from the 32nd in May 1963. At the start of session 1963-64 the 32nd amalgamated with the 17th and I was invited to become a Staff Sergeant, not in the ‘32’, but in the now newly united the 17th Glasgow. Those who have experienced amalgamation will appreciate something of the emotions you feel, particularly when you are a teenager. The loss of the “my company

number” came as a blow. To the casual observer personal difficulties over union might appear bewildering; it’s true we are all part of the one great organisation but each Company is different and, accordingly, so are our allegiances.

The need for the 32nd to unite with 17th was a prelude to three local churches uniting. The church closures was a causal effect of the comprehensive redevelopment programme that began in the late 1950s and continued to blight the Anderston area for nigh on thirty years - the community was never the same again. Throughout those difficult years, under the faithful captaincy of Jimmy McKail, the 17th was able to continue offering boys a wide variety of interests and activities.

I took over as Leader-in-Charge of “*The Lifies*” from Betty McCallum in 1968 – now it was my turn to look after the boys and devise an interesting programme that would ensure the success of the Team. That same year ‘The Life Boys’ title was dropped in favour of the unimaginative ‘B.B. Junior Section.’ Andy Montgomery, who had earlier been one of my Life Boy leaders, was trying to revive the 41st Glasgow at nearby Kent Road - St. Vincent Church, 69 Kent Road in 1970. When Andy heard I was no longer active in the 17th Company Section he invited me to assist in resurrecting the 41st. Thus, I continued in the dual-role as Officer-in-Charge of the 17th Glasgow Junior Section as well an officer in the 41st Company Section. The rest as they say is history.

Coming to terms with the amalgamation of 1963 undoubtedly helped ease the further two unions I was to experience during my B.B. service in Anderston, that of the 17th uniting with the 41st in 1974, followed by the merger of the 41st with the 227th in 1980. The staff of the 227th were unwilling to accept the older 41st number so, as a compromise, I suggested we adopt an old Anderston number - that of the 32nd. So, in effect, I began and ended my B.B. career in Anderston with the 32nd Glasgow Company.

Band...

As brass bands became a huge part of my life I thought I should offer a wee insight into how my interest in bands first began. In September 1958, despite having no formal musical training, along with twenty-two other hopeful recruits I applied to join the Company’s brass band. We attended music theory classes each Tuesday evening under the tuition of the bandmaster, John Wilson. A few months later the number of recruits had dwindled to around six – however, there were only four instruments available. A music theory exam decided who would be issued with an instrument. I was given a cornet and instructed how to produce a sound. Looking back, the instrument was in extremely poor condition and must have dated from the early 1900s. I didn’t progress too well on the cornet and eventually asked for a move to tenor trombone. Despite the obvious condition and antiquity of the trombone, at last I found an instrument that suited me!



Enterprise Partick - a regular sold-out District B.B. Show held in Kelvin Hall, 1968

Being a bandsman brought a great deal of privileges, not least, time-off school for major civic events. The band was always on duty to lead the company on monthly Church Parade, and during December we toured the district playing Christmas Carols. We also performed in numerous stage shows, and during the summer Gala Days always ensured a day away and a meal. I remain extremely grateful to the B.B. for giving me the opportunity to learn to read music and play an instrument. My interest and involvement in B.B. bands developed over the years and I was privileged to help in the formation of a number of Company and Battalion Bands. Whilst band highlights will include the many Brigade Centenary events, my greatest pleasure came in spending time with the band members and getting to know them – many of whom became life-long friends. I hope they enjoyed their experiences in the band as much as I did.



Pipes and drums of Edinburgh Battalion and the 41st Glasgow Brass Band performing on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle, 1977



Leading Edinburgh Battalion down the Royal Mile, 1989



Glasgow Battalion Central Band, Anderston Kelvingrove Parish Church, 1985

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme...

One of the most popular activities enjoyed by the older boys of the 17th was the lightweight camping weekends. The arrival of spring heralded teams of boys plodding the hills of Argyllshire and Perthshire. We had two favoured routes. Firstly, we took a ferry from Gourock to Kilcreggan then up and over the hills and on to Garelochhead, we then ascended up into Glen Fruin to camp overnight before finishing the following day in Helensburgh. The second route was Drymen to Callander via the Loch Ard Forrest. Weekend expeditions formed part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and while the weather and terrain could sometimes prove challenging there was never any shortage of boys prepared to face a weekend hike of anywhere between fifteen to twenty miles among the hills and glens. We also held weekend N.C.O. lightweight camps around Loch Lomond and Inversnaid.

Aside from me two of the lads featured in the photograph below went on to serve as B.B. Officers - Ian McKail with the Company Section, and Jim Cairns with both the Junior and Company Sections.



"Do we have far to go..?" "No, it's just over the next hill..."



Embarking on an Expedition Weekend, Gourock Pier

Standing: *George Turner, John Cooper*

Seated: *Calum Paterson, Ian McKail, David Baxter, Jim Cairns & Robert Warner*

Camp Memories...



Tennis and Volley Ball was played on the area outside the Nissen hut, and no, the dog wasn't playing!

It wasn't just the boys who had fun at camp, the officers played their part as demonstrated in the photo below, what the boys made of it is anyone's guess!



B.B. Camp - Senior Staff, Meigle, 1966

Jimmy McKail, John Cooper, John Wilson, Eddie Read & John McCallum

Reunion...

When former members of the Company invited me to meet up and join them for lunch in 2017 that was the beginning of a number of happy reunions. Since that first meeting we have returned to Meigle and shared reminiscences of the old days. Having been one of their officers, I feel truly privileged to have been included within their group and share their special friendship.

Summing up...

People often ask why I continued with the B.B. There are numerous reasons, not least the desire to put something back into the organisation that afforded me the opportunity as a teenager to broaden my horizons and develop untapped talents. As well as the camaraderie and life-long friendships, membership of the B.B. set high standards and gave me a positive sense of purpose and direction. I still retain a strong sense of indebtedness to those officers who supported and encourage me, were it not for them my life would have been very different.

For over forty years I had been privileged to serve as an officer with a number of B.B. Companies as well as fulfilling a variety of local and national roles. Throughout my B.B. service I have tried to remain mindful of the officers who have gone before and who have given of their time, talents and patience for boys like me. There is no doubt in my mind the calibre and commitment of the officers I have known, and later worked alongside, did make a difference to many boys. The B.B. was able to offer interests and an outlet for the energies of developing teenagers. Without the local Company many teenagers would most likely have gone astray - I speak from experience, I would have been one of them were it not for our B.B. Officers. Thank God for The Boys' Brigade



*Performing at one our many
Annual Christmas Band Concerts*



GROWING UP IN ANDERSTON IN THE 1950's

Ian McKail

I was born in Glasgow in the 1950's and spent most of my early teens growing up in Anderston, which was once a quiet little weaving village just outside Glasgow. In the 1950s Anderston was an interesting and vibrant community on the edge of Glasgow's bustling City Centre. The area had an illustrious history once described as the "Cradle of Enterprise" by local historian John Cooper. It includes the likes of Adam Smith the famous Economist, James Watt of Steam fame, Roddy McMillan (best known for Para Handy) and Tony Roper the writer, actor and comedian in its fascinating back story. Billy Connolly was also born in Anderston but moved to "up-market" Partick at an early age.

Anderston was a busy and sometimes chaotic place in which to grow up, with what seemed like a Pub on every corner but also, remarkably, a Church or Religious centre on virtually every corner as well! Families worked in the local docks, which were still thriving in the 1950s, or in the Black & White distillery, Pickford's Removals or the multitude of small business scattered around the area. My own street was a hub of activity during the day with the coming and going of vans, cars and people, but in the evenings, it was a quiet and tranquil place where we used to play football diagonally across the street, using the gas lamp-posts as goalposts. In those days' street football was a 'big thing' with challenges handed out by word of mouth with "10 halftime and 21 the game" being the standard way of completing the game. There was no social media in those days.

Thinking back, if memory serves me correctly, many of the games between streets were organised via the local newspapers with people advertising and inviting street teams to contact them for a game. These were held in school playgrounds and in other open spaces which were common in 1950s Glasgow. We called the open spaces 'brokies' which were gap-sites left over from buildings bombed-out during the war. The ground was generally covered in black-ash, and littered with broken bricks. The bricks made goal posts or outlined cycle speedway tracks - we played for hours on these. In fact, I still bear the scars on my body from these play areas.

Another popular pastime for Anderston kids was building 'bogies' made from a long piece of narrow wood, where the wooden axles were nailed on with flattened tin cans. The wheels were discarded ball bearings that we managed to scrounge from the engineering workshop next door. The bogies were the slimmed down Anderston version of the American Soapbox Derby vehicles popular in the States. They made a terrible racket as we hurtled down any steep pavement we could find, avoiding any unfortunate pedestrians and ensuring we turned a corner before careering onto the road! Bogies made with discarded pram wheels went faster - they were the Rolls Royce version and made much less noise.

My parents lived on the first floor flat of a three-close tenement in Bishop Street which was owned by a Haulage Contractor who, in the nineteen fifties, still had some horses for pulling carts. In fact, his depot on the ground floor beside our close still had stables as well as a fleet of lorries. At the other corner of our building was a Soft Drink distributor where we sometimes managed to get some freebies.



My tenement block, Bishop St.

Across the street was St. Pat's Primary School where the extensive playgrounds became a wonderful place to practise our skills in various activities including football, cricket, tennis, climbing and "Cowboys & Indians." The school playgrounds were the go-to place for a game for many of us in Anderston.



Argyle Street at Anderston Cross c1959

The shops are just round the corner from my home in Bishop Street.

I attended Washington Street Primary School which stood opposite the bottom of our street, but was across the busy Anderston Cross, which was also a terminus for tramcars. Although traffic was a lot lighter than it is today it was still a frightening prospect for pupils crossing to school. However, there was always a traffic policeman at the junction who was a particularly larger than life character of a Highland Sergeant guiding us across taking no 'snash' from any cheeky chappies of which there were many. Unlike school today many of us went home for lunch and he was usually there to safely guide us back across the street. In those days there were still separate entrances for

boys and girls, which now seems strange as we ended up in the same classes, and girls definitely were not involved in the many football games that took place during playtimes which is so different from today.

Unfortunately, by the time I reached the age of playing football for the school, there was no nobody available to take the team, but The Life Boys (later the Junior Section of The Boys' Brigade) gave me that opportunity to play in an organised team with a 'real referee'.



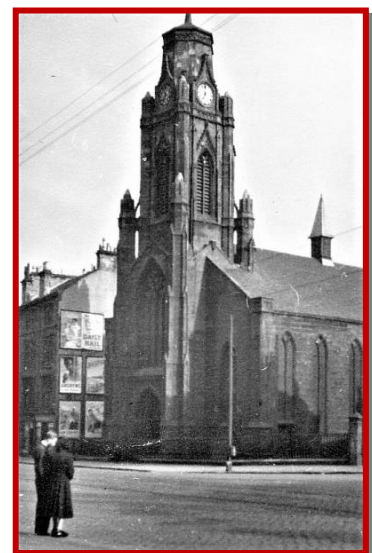
Anderston Cross

A traffic policeman wearing his white coat



Washington Street School, winter 1970

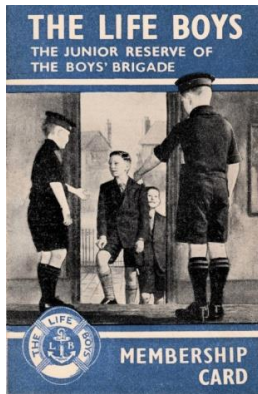
Youth Organisations played a significant role in Anderston at that time, they were run by volunteers from all walks of life demonstrating the excellent community and family spirit which existed in the area at that time. There were no major TV channels or even TV's at that time, and certainly no computers to distract people from being involved in loads of social groups. There were Cubs, Scouts, Boys' Guilds, Brownies, Girl Guides, Girl's Brigades, and close to me and my family's heart The Boys' Brigade. My father was the Captain of the 32nd Glasgow Company based in St. Mark's Lancefield Church, and my two uncles were also keen B.B. men, both involved in the B.B. Brass Band as players and as Bandmaster. My mother was involved in book-keeping for the Company as well as making tablet for fundraising and also catering for the staff meetings which were held in our house. My memory was that staff meetings at that time was a very important occasion as the China Tea Service which I think was a Wedding present was used, and that was an unusual event in our house. In fact, the service is still in my loft!



St. Marks Lancefield Church

Life Boy Memories...

In the early 1960's I joined The Life Boys, which a few years later, became the Junior Section of The Boys Brigade. But I served three years as a Life Boy which at that time was described as the Junior Reserve of The Boys Brigade.



The uniform in those days as can be seen from the Membership Card, was a sailor's style round hat that had a white cover on top for Parades or Displays. The rest of the uniform was a navy-blue woollen jersey, short trousers, and long blue socks with white rings. Nowadays most boys wear long trousers from an early age, but we wore shorts all the way through The Life Boys. In fact, during my first year at Secondary School I had to wear shorts! Many of us still bear the scars from cuts and bruises sustained from our escapades both in The Life Boys, at school, and playing in the backcourts around Anderston.

The Life Boys introduced us to games like 'Crab football' and 'Port and Starboard' but the Church Hall of St. Marks Lancefield, where we met had wooden floors, which were not smooth. "Skelfs" were a common occurrence as both games involved our hands on the floor as we either tried to kick a football or dive to the ground at the shout of "Man Overboard!" We were introduced to the intricacies of Scottish Country Dancing which we rehearsed every meeting night throughout the year and performed at the Display. Every year before our group the boys wore kilts, but we refused as we thought it was a bit sissy! I am sure we all regret that now and probably quite a few of us ended up wearing kilts at weddings and other functions in our adult life.

The Life Boy Football Team introduced us to organised games for the first time, all wearing the same strips and with a referee, albeit one of the leaders. We tended to travel to matches with the team, our boots in a bag and wearing our strips under our jackets. Cold water taps after the game was our opportunity to clean the black ash off our legs and then a trip home on the bus for a proper wash. Despite that we loved it and could not wait for the next game.

One memorable highlight of my time as a Life Boy was performing in the St. Andrews Halls in what I believe was called the 'Young Brother Show' in 1962. This was a show involving Life Boys from all over Glasgow. I sang as part of a choir, but I cannot recall the songs we sang. This was a huge stage show with a large audience which demonstrated the popularity of the B.B. in Glasgow at that time. It turned out we were one of the last to perform at that venue as a few days later it was consumed by fire after a boxing match.



Boys' Brigade Companies in those days had a strong musical tradition, ranging from Brass Bands through to Bugles and Pipe Bands. Church Parades offered an opportunity for the bands to display their musical skills, with each Company competing to play the best music on the day. The music made you proud to be part of the occasion and helped keep you marching in time, despite the varying tempos played by the different types of band.



Final parade of Kelvingrove District, passing St. Marks-Lancefield Church, Argyle St. 1966
 Colour Party: Ian McKail and Robert Warner, followed by 17th Glasgow Company

Football Memories...

Among the favourite memories of my early years in the 17th B.B. Company Section was when we played in Glasgow Battalion's 3rd League Football Competition, which required all players to be under 14 years of age. In those days in the mid-1960s Glasgow Battalion operated the biggest football league of any kind in the world! The Football Competition was made up of three separate leagues in order to accommodate all the age ranges in the B.B.

The 1st League was composed of boys of any age range within the Company Section (12 to 17 years of age).

The 2nd League comprised players of any age group, but the total had to add up to no more than 165 years.

The 3rd League was composed of players of 14 years of age and under.

Our 3rd League Team played in the Kelvingrove District Championship; our black-ash home pitch was at Yorkhill, now the site of nurses' homes and departments for Glasgow Sick Children's Hospital. Our team played in blue and white hooped tops that looked like Rugby tops and in those days the Company was able to renew two or three strips every year. Our goalkeeper wore a distinctive black outfit and he liked to be called the "*Black Cat*", although he sometimes missed a few shots if it meant diving in a puddle!!

Our team was managed by Ronnie Campbell, one of our officers, and for the three years we were eligible to play in the 3rd League we had some really good players, we won the District Championship each year. This meant we qualified for what would be described today as the Glasgow Battalion "Play-offs" which involved the 8 Championship Teams from each of the Battalions Districts. Unfortunately, we failed each time to get past the quarter-final stages despite our best efforts, but the success and enjoyment we had and the football we played remains a good and lasting memory. Later, in my B.B. life I was selected to play for the District Team in a tournament against other Districts, we played at what was then known as Scotstoun Showgrounds. In another twist of fate, I now hold a Glasgow Warrior's season ticket, and they play at what is now called Scotstoun Stadium. I continually remind my friends that I once played on the pitch before it became a modern 3G artificial surface.

As mentioned earlier, there seemed to be a church in every corner when I was growing up and they played a significant part in the life of the community. My family were members of St. Mark's Lancefield Church and like a lot of kids in those days I attended Sunday School before moving on to the B.B. Bible Class, in the 1960s. The church was a hub of activity and as a youngster I loved the Halloween and Christmas parties. In addition, the church organised Variety Shows involving the Sunday School kids and other members of the church. The skill and commitment shown by the people both in the music, make-up, costumes and stagecraft was amazing. The shows were an amazing team effort from committed people. This tradition was handed down from generation to generation before TV took over and people lost those skills which had served the community well.

B.B. Expeditions...

The 1960s introduced another initiative that the B.B. and our Company fully embraced. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (D of E) was started in 1956 and the B.B. managed to integrate the scheme into their award badge structure enabling boys to gain their D of E Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. The most important part of that, in my view, was the B.B. Expedition Badge, which involved a written exam on the various aspects of hiking and camping outdoors, this included compass and map-reading, knowledge of the countryside code, planning general safety aspects of cooking and drawing fresh water etc. But the main highlight was the expedition itself, which involved one or two nights sleeping in small "two man tents" after hiking cross-country and navigating our way to our designated campsite. We carried not only our tents but enough food and provisions, plus a stove for cooking. We also had training days where on one occasion I wrote an article for the Company magazine entitled "Four Seasons in one day!" We encountered rain, snow and lovely sunshine that day; we learned a great deal from the officers accompanying us. I am not sure if 'Crowded House' saw a copy of our B.B. magazine when they released their hit single of the same name in 1992.





Having a rest in Glen Fruin, 1967

*Robert Warner, David Baxter, Jim Cairns, John Cooper,
Tommy Clelland, George Turner, Ian McKail & Ivor McLeod*

We had many amusing incidents during our expeditions, including spending a night on Ben Lomond with the midges deciding it was their place and trying desperately to get rid of us. Also, one of our team tried to ride a horse over a field, resulting in us not being allowed to camp in the Forestry Commission Camp Site that evening. Our normal expedition route took us from Central Station by train to Gourrock where then we boarded the ferry to Kilcreggan. From there we hiked along the top of the peninsula overlooking Loch Long on one side, and Gareloch on the other, before setting up our overnight camp in Glen Fruin which was just past the Faslane Naval Base at Garelochhead. We found a great campsite where two burns met to give us fresh running water - the spot was also well sheltered. The second leg was to hike through Glen Fruin and then climb up over the hill before dropping down into Helensburgh in time to catch the train home. For our Silver D of E trips, we had to spend two nights away, and on those occasions we hiked all the way from Drymen to Aberfoyle with a stop at Cobleland which lay roughly midway between Drymen and Aberfoyle.

Part of our preparation for the expeditions was to treat the soles of our feet with Methylated Spirit to harden our feet, and how to pack our Bergens (Rucksacks) which we obtained from the Army & Navy store where my uncle worked. Much of the equipment like our sleeping bags and dixies all came from the same place, it was old military World War Two equipment, but it was great and hardwearing. My Bergan was grey coloured ex-RAF and is still around today but not much used. Our favourite meal was fish-fingers, mash and peas, sometimes cooked over a "Gaz stove" in the one pot and in the rain! These adventures resulted in lots of bonding among the group and many included games of 'Cheat', a riotous card game taught by a certain officer who shall remain nameless.

Recollections & Thoughts from the 1960's & Beyond...

The "Swinging Sixties" began in my case with me joining The Life Boys and the start of the best part of three decades of involvement with The Boys' Brigade from a young 8-year-old in the 32nd Company to an officer in the 32nd Company. However, during those thirty years the 32nd had morphed into the 17th the 41st and back again to the 32nd, but all throughout that time, despite a few bumps along the way, it still felt the same Company with the same ethos and culture. The following series of excerpts from those three decades is in no chronological order of importance but what came to mind as my memory wandered through a significant stage and part of my life, the effect of which remains with me.

1: B.B. Camp at Meigle...

My first memory of B.B. Camp at Meigle was when I accompanied my mother on the Parent's and Friend's Bus Run to visit the campsite. My father was the Captain of the Company at the time and was already in Meigle. It was up to my mum to organise the day-trip to visit the camp. In those days there were no Motorways, and it took many hours' of travel; leaving at 9am with a stop for lunch in Perth, arriving in camp around 2pm. The bus-runs continued well into my time as a boy at camp.

The Company enjoyed a long relationship with Meigle as a campsite; the local businesses supported us by storing some of our equipment, and in keeping the joke going in the local shops when some first-year boys were sent for a “*left-handed hammer*” or “*a bubble for the spirit level.*” Before Dr. Beeching’s railway cuts the Company travelled by train from Buchanan Street Station (no longer around either) to a place called Alyth Junction where we were met by a local open flat-bed lorry! We all jumped on the back of the lorry alongside our luggage and some equipment before heading off with the wind in our hair for the 3 or 4 mile journey to Meigle. Imagine that happening these days? I am sure Health and Safety rules would have had that binned! But it was an exciting time for us ‘City Slickers’ (None one ever came to harm during those lorry rides).

Meigle seemed like a different world for boys from Anderston with our tenements, backcourts, brokies, smoke from coal fires, and only black-ash football pitches on which to play, along with the associated cuts and bruises we suffered. Suddenly we had this massive grass field to not only play football, but we could run around with freedom and in the fresh air. It was a revelation!! There were “*downs*” as well as “*ups*” to our camp experience but the “*Good Things*” totally outweighed the “*Not So Good Things.*”

The Good’ things...

- 1: Grass Football Pitches: Back home football was played on ‘brokies’ or the black-ash public pitches.
- 2: Football Matches: Sometimes we would play matches against the village team or the local teams made up of Farmers’ boys, as well the School Camps which were nearby.
- 3: Tent Sports: Each tent competed against each other playing lots of different activities including a unique game called puddox, the rules of which used to change on a yearly basis!!
- 4: The Camp Tuck Shop: Where we able to buy soft drinks, crisps and enjoy a chat
- 5: Water fights: The weather always seemed to be good when we were at camp in the 1960s, and one tradition was to have water fights using plastic basins filled with water. This was great fun and nearly always involved some officers being soaked!
- 6: Companionship: Lots of friendships were made and consolidated.
- 7: Day Trip to Arbroath: We always had a day trip to Arbroath during camp which involved a short dip in the outdoor swimming pool which (unsurprisingly) was always freezing, followed by a Fish Supper to supplement our camp diet.
- 8: The ‘Boggin’ Shows: The staff had a tradition of treating us to a variety show (of sorts) which was hilarious.
- 9: Brass Band Concerts: The Band would sometimes treat the residents of the local Eventide Home to a concert which was always well received.

The Not So Good things...

- 1: Orderly Squad: Each tent had a 24-hour stint of duty being responsible for the preparation of the dining area, washing-up after meals and peeling potatoes (spuds) which seemed to be a staple diet at camp, but this changed over the years with pasta becoming the norm. An officer was appointed daily to act as Orderly Officer and supervise the duty squad ensuring they were up and about half an hour before the rest of camp.
- 2: Reveille: This was a bugle call first thing in the morning which was supposed to waken us all up – but did not always do the trick!
- 3: Bog Patrol: See page 56 as it needs more than one line to describe.
- 4: Straw Palliasses: Seems very strange nowadays to say that we had to sleep on straw. A Palliasse was basically a large empty canvas bag we had to fill with straw (this was long before inflatable beds). Not the most comfortable. The officers and staff had camp beds! Seemed unfair at time, but acceptable when I became an officer!!
- 5: Washing in cold water: Now, that was a shock to us all! Basins full of cold water from the one tap certainly wakened us up in the morning. Would that be allowed today??

- 6: Tent Inspection: Every morning we had to clean our tents and prepare our sleeping bags and Palliasses in a particular way wrapped in a towel with a Bible placed on top for Inspection by the Camp Adjutant. (i.e., the enforcer of discipline). There was a Camp Cup awarded to the best tent at the end of camp. The cup had been in the Company's possession for years. Not everyone took to this aspect of camp and there were some interesting conversations that sometimes took place between the tent occupants and the Adjutant!!
- 7: Church Parade: We attended the local village Church on both Sundays during our stay at camp which usually involved a queue at the sweetie shop as we stocked up with boiled sweets to keep us going during the Service. The balcony was our place in the church, and one occasion one of the staff arrived late during the service and proceeded to fall down the stairs creating a loud noise and raucous laughter among the boys (and some of the congregation). The Service was disrupted for a few seconds, but the Minister carried on without comment. I am sure he had a good laugh later.
- 8: Cricket Matches v Locals: We thought of ourselves as the tough boys from Anderston and the big city and the locals were softies from the country who played the sissy game of cricket (it is still a popular game in Perthshire). However, we were soon disavowed of that notion when we ended playing them at their own game. Cricket balls bowled by the locals seem to have a life of their own as it hurtled towards you only missing you as you jumped out of the way. Needless to say, we were lucky to score any runs and even luckier to bowl any of them out.



I am sure the officers and staff were convinced that the earlier recollections were actually the parts which were important to the character-building aspects of the B.B. and followed the principles of the B.B. Object in promoting habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline and Self Respect.



Homeward Bound - B.B. Camp Contingent at Meigle, 1966

Rear: *George Turner, John Cooper, Gus McIntyre, Ronnie Johnstone, Jim Halbert, Jimmy McKail (Captain), Robert Warner, Robert Henshelwood, Robert Wilson, John McCallum*
Middle: *Alan Laurie, Ian Duncan, Richard Kearney, Robert Craig, John Ryan, Ian McKail*
Front: *Ivor McLeod, Keble Singh, David Baxter, Jim Cairns, Jim Gilmour & Ian Wilson*

The time we spent at camp was magical and many of us still talk fondly of our experiences at Meigle and the fun and friendship we enjoyed during those times both as boys and, in my case, as an officer. Even as other B.B. Companies ventured further afield for their annual camp, the Anderston Company kept the Meigle tradition going well into the 1980s and celebrated the Brigade's Centenary Year with a camp at Meigle.

My Nightmare...?

A few days after a visit to Meigle in 2019, re-living our happy past, I woke up suddenly in a cold sweat. It was a nightmare that filled me with a terrible feeling of dread. Had I done something wrong? Was I going to be punished in a frightening way? Or had I made a mistake and volunteered without realising the consequences?

Bog Patrol' – B.B. Camp, Meigle, 1965

Standing: (left to right)

*Drew Henry, Norman Inglis,
Jim Cairns, Jim Gilmour
& David Baxter*

Kneeling: *Robert Craig & Ian
McKail*



It's amazing what a visit to Meigle after all these years does to the senses. I had been awakened by the threat of - wait for it - sentenced to a period of "BOG PATROL!" What was even worse, my nightmare suggested that I had volunteered and was not subject to a word that stuck in my consciousness - "JANKERS." Was this some sort of medieval torture devised to make even the strong-willed decide to follow the rules? But who in their right mind would volunteer? Then I remembered the Bog Patrol Leader, Drew Henry, who appeared to revel in the task. I even Googled "Bog Patrol" and "Jankers" and found no reference to the former but the latter was defined as: "*punishment for those who have committed a military offence.*"

However, if memory serves me well, and at my age, and that is not always certain, some crazy guys volunteered to help Drew (who is sadly missed) in his daily task. Surely, the wholesome camp food could not have been a factor, although maybe avoiding peeling the "TATTIES" might have been at play!! It was however another aspect of our experience of growing up and learning that some things don't come naturally (otherwise *China** would prescribe Syrup of Figs) but we had to work at as part of a team. I am not sure however if many things we experienced at Meigle would have been allowed today, which is a shame for the current youngsters. Health and Safety would have declared that many activities, including our famous game of 'PUDDOX' would have to be played in full protective clothing. Oh well, that's my nightmare explained so, back to bed and a peaceful sleep - apart from a 'Bog break' in the middle of the night!!

- * *China* was the nickname for one of our officers who acted as Medical Officer; the name derived from the once popular TV programme/stage show "Francie & Josie" - who greeted everyone with, "*Hulawrerr Chinas.*"



Serenity - safely tucked up in bed and fast asleep????

Alan Laurie, Gordon Baxter, Ian McKail, John Anderson & Calum Paterson

Organised Mayhem...

I was in my early teens when we left Bishop Street and moved home to Scotstoun, Anderston at that time was subject to redevelopment and to make way for the M8 Inner-Ring Road and the Kingston Bridge. I left School in 1968 and was fortunate enough to be employed as an indentured trainee Civil Engineering Technician with Whatlings the well-respected Scottish Civil Engineering Contractor. In another one of those twists of fate their offices were based in North Claremont Street, overlooking the Kelvingrove Park paddling pool to which my mother took me before I was old enough for Primary School.

Whatlings had an excellent training scheme overseen by a senior manager John Fisher, who ensured that the trainees moved around the company to gain as wide an experience as possible. By yet another strange twist of fate, in August 1969, after a year working in the Site Investigation Department based in Carmyle, I was transferred to work on the controversial Glasgow Inner Ring Road that cut huge swathes through one of Glasgow's well-known landmarks – Charing Cross. For me as an apprentice working in such a high-profile contract and being part of Anderston and Glasgow's renewal was so new and exciting. My office was a temporary building adjacent to Sauchiehall Street which was handy for buying lunch from a variety of shop such as 'Equis', 'Kings Café' and 'The Berkeley'. I am afraid our diet in those days was not very healthy; however we made up for it playing football at lunchtime in Kelvingrove Park or, on the new carriageway as construction work progressed.



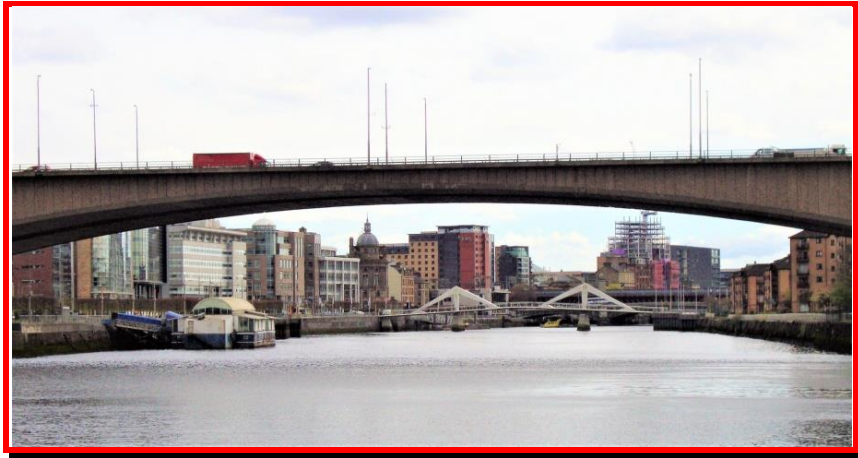
Motorway construction and the St. Vincent Street pedestrian/road bridge

Despite being a trainee, during my first year I was given responsibility for certain aspects of the contract. I was part of a team responsible for the setting-out of the works from Sauchiehall Street to the approaches of the Kingston Bridge beyond St. Vincent Street. Part of my role required me to liaise with the various contract workers who surprised me by the fact they were in many cases extremely skilled, particularly in laying kerbs to within 2mm. This task was a challenge for a young man new to the business as I had to interface with experienced squads of workmen who had been building roads and bridges for years. But it was a great lesson in interpersonal skills and the need for clear concise communication. One of the reasons I have fond memories of the contract was the number of different trades and processes I became involved with.

I remember setting-out the Bath Street 'Bridge Deck Shuttering' in the snow one Christmas Eve with joiners, who were on bonus urging me to go faster as we were all freezing. Another notable incident was the day I was setting up 'profile boards' for excavation work south of Bath Street when inadvertently I stepped the wrong way and fell six-feet down onto the mud. My hard-hat had come off but I was fine until my colleague suggested I put my hand on the back of my head - it was then I discovered it was covered in blood. I had managed to hit a small piece of steel that had been buried in the mud. I was feeling fine, but I required eight stitches in the wound at Stobhill casualty. Anytime I have a new 'victim' in my car when passing that spot, I tell them that my "blood is in the road" - and that includes telling my grandchildren!

Another aspect of my work that surprises people is that when I tell them that during surveys, I often had to work from a rowing-boat in Kingston Dock on the south side of the river. This was the spot where we deposited excavated debris from the contract. The material was carried by a series of trucks travelling through the city and over the river. The dock still had water, and my job was to drop a weighted tape measure into the water every 10m or so, and then calculate the volume of material that had been deposited into the dock, all the while assessing on a regular basis how much more room was available. Nowadays a more sophisticated process would be used, but the technique worked. Another role I had responsibility for was to ensure the services for the Motorway were constructed to specification, and in the right place.

These included the 'High Mast Lighting Columns' and the lighting for signage etc. One of the big risks in that work was the fact the Transatlantic Telephone Cable ran through Charing Cross, which was within our site boundary. If we had damaged that cable the company would most likely have gone broke! But we managed. We have since come a long way thanks to today's Satellite Communication infrastructure.



HAPPY CAREFREE DAYS



Father & Son c1962

Ian McKail with his dad (Jimmy) at Meigle



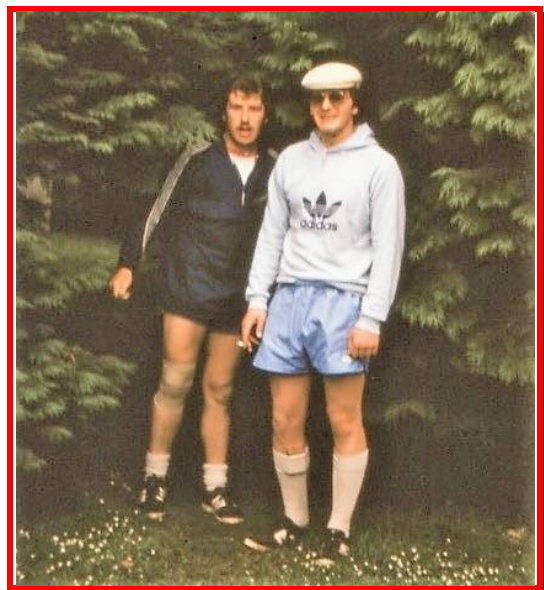
B.B. Camp: Best Tent, Meigle, 1965

*David Baxter, George Turner, Norman Inglis,
Ian McKail & Gus McIntyre*



Junior Staff at B.B. Camp, Meigle, 1966

*Ronnie Johnstone, Robert Inglis,
Drew Henry & John Cooper*



Ian McKail & Kenny Anderson, Meigle, 1983

Hmm, this looks furtive, what are they up to?

RETURN TO MEIGLE

A Very Happy Reunion...

Early in 2017 Jim Cairns contacted a number of former members who were in the B.B. in Anderston and suggested we could perhaps all meet for lunch and have a good old blether. Five of us got together in Wetherspoons pub/restaurant in West George Street - this was the first time some of us had seen each other in over 50 years. Since that first meeting we have met on a number of occasions for lunch, and it was a joy to reminisce and share stories of our boyhood past. Subsequently our numbers have increased and we remain hopeful we can establish contact more of our long-lost pals from yesteryear. Having recounted many happy memories of our time in the B.B. and, in particular, the fun we had at summer camp, it was suggested that our group should return to Meigle for a nostalgic visit. A date was agreed and unbeknown to us Jim arranged lunch in the Kinloch Arms, the local pub which, we as Boys were prohibited from entering. Not only had Jim organised lunch, his wife Annette kindly made bags of tablet for us. That was not our only surprise - via a circuitous route Jim had made contact with the Dundee Courier informing them of our visit - The 'Courier' sent a reporter to cover our story.

After lunch we strolled around the village visiting many of the sites that had been well-known to us in the 1960s. We saw much change, the garage where we bought paraffin for our Tilley Lamps had gone as had George Dicks Hardware Store. During camp Boys attending camp for the first time were sent to Dick's Store for 'a bubble for a spirit level', 'a bucket of steam' and other ridiculous requests. George Dick was well clued up, and sent the Boys back to camp with the message he had left-handed cups on special offer.

Our campsite on Belmont Field is situated about one mile away from the village, and on arriving at the field we were sad, but not surprised, to learn the old huts we had known had been removed. After spending a few hours wandering around laughing and reminiscing, prior to returning home we adjourned to the village café for afternoon tea. By the time we were ready to depart we were still sharing anecdotes of our exploits. There is no doubt about it, the success of our 'time travelling visit' to Meigle left us all a bit misty-eyed.



The road to Dundee through Meigle



"Make sure you keep the lid on the bucket to keep the steam in!"



'Grumpy Old Men'

This photo was published in 'Dundee Courier' (Perth edition - 5 August 2019)



TIME TRAVEL - FACT OR FICTION?

Ian McKail



Time Travel has fascinated people for generations, especially scientists and Sci-Fi enthusiasts who binge on Box Sets of “Doctor Who”, “Planet of the Apes” and the classic “Back to the Future.” Sceptics say that if it can happen, then the future would have visited us already and we would know about it - a logical argument. The believers just think that it may still have to be invented in the future, and when it does - ‘bingo’, we will know about it, or that the future just visits us without interfering.

Well, I was a sceptic until one sunny Saturday in August 2019 when I encountered what I believe was ‘Time Travel.’ Eight guys wandered through a village in Perthshire and were transported back in time for, in some cases, more than half a century. They certainly felt that they were back in time, kicking a football, peeling spuds, cleaning bogs and moaning about having to do kit Inspection. I think they could hear the sounds of the B.B. Camp they had attended on a number of occasions as boys, and could see the people who were their friends and fellow travellers clearly. One even scored a goal which I believe had eluded him in the past!!

Local people who had been part of the camp life were brought back to life, and I am sure they were having a laugh at the stories and memories recounted on that day, including the young ladies who had been part of the social scene. The miracle was they had not aged at all! Did we encounter a Meigle Wormhole maybe? Perhaps it was our imaginations, but on that sunny afternoon things felt very real and that we were travelling back in time to relive very happy memories in great company and friendship which has survived half-a-century. I wonder what the scientists would have made of this “Meigle Phenomenon?”

WELCOME TIME
TRAVELLERS

*“Is this a time warp
or, was our trip just
over the next hill?”*



Our intrepid time travellers have arrived in Meigle, 2019



**A nostalgic return visit to
Victory Park, Meigle, 2019**

MEIGLE MEMORIES
by Jim Cairns (the 'Boy Poet')



Our happy group of “time travellers” relaxing in the centre of Meigle with the Kinloch Arms and what was Dick’s Store in the background

As a teenager Jim Cairns was our revered “Boy Poet”, and a regular contributor to the B.B. Company’s monthly magazine - *The Chronicle*. True to form, Jim composed a poem reflecting our shared memories especially for our ‘trip down memory lane’ to Meigle in August 2019. Jim read his poem aloud immediately after we had enjoyed lunch in the Kinloch Arms.

MEMORIES OF MEIGLE

So, here we are in Meigle,
Having lunch at the Kinloch Arms.
We’ll take a walk down memory lane,
Among all the fields and farms.

Listen when we’re at “our field”,
You’ll hear Eddie Reid and Drew,
“Big Inky”, John Wilson and Jimmy,
Wee Roy, “China” and Donny too.

The staff gave of their time and skills,
To make our camp a hit,
Especially Drew and his “Bog Patrol”,
Keeping the “lavvies” free from... smells!

They taught us how to “braille a tent”,
And slacken the guy-ropes at night,
And how to prime a Tilley lamp,
To give the hut some light.

We brought lots from the village shops,
Like, from “Keelans” - a wee chocolate bar,
From ‘Dick’s’ a penknife or some laces,
And my first can of beer from “The SPAR.”

There were quite a few “firsts” here at Meigle
That I’d never experienced before,
My first game of Puddox, my first “Boggin” Show,
And some others I’ll tactfully ignore.

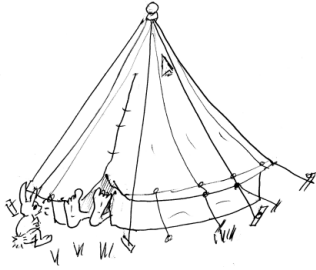
We got on great with the locals,
Playing sports and having a laugh,
And one of us here met the love of his life
She was one of the School Camp staff.

Remember our annual day trip to Arbroath?
The ‘chip shop’ was a place to behold!
But how could it be we were always surprised,
That the open-air pool was so cold?

A lot of us had nicknames,
Some funny, some clever, some grim,
“Popeye”, “Gizzy”, “Frail” and “Big Coop”,
But its ages since I’ve been called “Slim Jim”.

I’ll never forget the great times we had there,
And the friendships just lately renewed.
Our presence today is another milestone,
And with that I’ll finally conclude.

*Here we are on Belmont Field –
But where are our tents???*



*Thinking of reserving
a place in Belmont
Castle Eventide Home*

Camp at Meigle was never like this...

In the early days of B.B. camping, apart from a real pioneering spirit, attention to detail was paramount. To ensure every Boy attending camp knew what was expected of him, the 9th and 32nd Glasgow Companies in 1892 jointly issued a twelve-page booklet of "Standing Orders and Instructions" - here are a few extracts:-

Preliminary Parades Parade for Departure, Friday, 15th July. Breakfast will be served at 5.15am to all ranks. Fall in at 5.45am to march to the Broomielaw to embark on the Royal Mail Steamer "Lord of the Isles."

An extract from Camp Standing Orders of 1892 includes 'Reveille' will sound at 6.30am
'Retreat' at 9.15pm
'Tattoo' at 9.45pm
'Lights Out' at 10.15pm

No detail was left out of Company Orders. The aforementioned publication also contained an interesting section on Saluting. The 'arms' referred to are the dummy rifles, used extensively by most Companies in the days before the First World War.

Saluting...

All Salutes will be made in a smart, soldier-like manner, without bending the head. When walking without arms the Salute is made with the hand furthest from the Officer. When two or more Boys are walking together, the time is taken from the Boy nearest the Officer, and the Salute made together. The eyes should never be turned from the Officer who is being saluted. The hand should be raised first, not the elbow, as is sometimes clumsily done. Boys will always come to attention before Saluting. When carrying a rifle Boys will Salute by bringing the rifle to the shoulder, the left hand across the body, and touch the rifle, dropping the hand immediately. When leaving a Parade, the rifle is carried at the shoulder. A Boy without his cap, or carrying anything that prevents him Saluting properly, will, if standing still, come to "attention" as the Officer passes; if walking, he will turn his head slightly towards the Officer in passing him. If sitting or lying down, he will rise, come to "attention," and if, with cap on, Salute. Boys will always address Officers by the title of their rank and use "Sir." Politeness is always a characteristic of a good Company.

*Wm. Kidston, Jun., Capt.
Commanding the Camp at Strachur, 1st July 1892*

KINPURNIE & BELLA DUFF

Every one of our contributing authors had a story to tell about camp, or the long climb up Kinpurnie, but one tale that seems to have slipped most memories is the story of Bella Duff, our camp ghost. Boys attending B.B. camp for the first time were regaled with spooky stories of Bella Duff who was supposedly buried under a small weed covered mound at the top of our campsite known as “*Belliduff*.” Many years ago Archaeologists investigated the mound and discovered the remains of a stone cist containing ashes. First year campers were told nothing could grow on the mound other than weeds, and that the ghost of Bella Duff wandered the campsite at certain times of the night. With each passing year the fate of Bella Duff became more and more bloodthirsty, even to the point where the cries of her ghost walking through camp at night could be heard. Despite the stories, the question remains, did Bella Duff exist? Where to begin?



We climbed Kinpurnie, 41st Glasgow Company, 1976

*Alan Martin, Ian McKail, Gary Walker, John Cooper
Stephen Sweeny, Gordon Walker, Bobby Walker, Willie Gorman, ?, Bobby Daniels,
Ian Martin & John Walker*

There was in fact a real Annabella Duff who, being suspected of witchcraft, was supposedly locked in Kinpurnie Tower and left to starve where, according to the tale, in desperation she ate her hands. Legend has it her ghost still haunts the surrounding area. However, that story of Bella Duff and witchcraft do not stack-up. The last person accused of witchcraft in Scotland died in 1706. Kinpurnie Tower was built as an observatory by James MacKenzie in 1774, and stands close to an iron-age fort (if you know what to look for). The tower today, with its three foot thick walls, is just an empty shell.



However, our camp story conveniently claims ‘Bella Duff’ was locked in the tower of nearby Belmont Castle, later part of an Eventide Home and this is allegedly where she devoured he hands. Yet again, there is no proof.

A third account concerns MacBeth, Thane of Cawdor, who was born around 1005; his Gaelic name was Mac Bethad mac Findlaíich. Forget Shakespeare story, it was written as English propaganda. The real MacBeth killed King Duncan in battle in 1040 and went on to rule for seventeen prosperous years. Eventually, Duncan’s son, with the help of Edward the Confessor, sought revenge. When the English King’s forces clashed with MacBeth’s troops in hand-to-hand conflict at Dunsinane, Macbeth retreated towards Meigle – and this is the origin of the third story. Not far from Belmont Castle is a small mound known as “*Belliduff*” where, according to tradition, Macbeth was slain in 1056 by Macduff (boys attending camp knew this small mound as Bella Duff’s grave).

However, MacBeth did not die at Meigle he was killed at the Battle of Lumphanan by the future king, Malcolm III (*Malcom Ceann mor*). However, there is a standing stone in the woods surrounding our campsite known as 'MacBeth's Stone.' There is also another stone bearing ancient cup marks - it is more than likely this stone was used by the Picts for some long-forgotten ceremony. So, what is the true story of Bella Duff? Well, that's for you to discover, and if you are successful, you will earn your B.B. Education badge.



Times past - B. B. Annual Camp 1892...

The 9th and 32nd Glasgow Companies were attached to Wellington Church Missions in Anderston. The 9th met in Stobcross House (Stobcross Street) while the 32nd met nearby in Piccadilly Mission, Piccadilly Street. It was not uncommon for one brother serving as an officer in the 9th with the other in 32nd switch Companies. The earliest record of an Anderston B.B. Company at camp dates from 1888 when the 9th and 32nd Companies set off for a week-long camp at Strachur, on the shores of Loch Fyne during the Glasgow Fair. The cost of that camp was Ten Shillings (50p); the site at Strachur remained the favoured location of both Companies until 1898.

It must have been quite an adventure for the majority of Boys who, for the first time, were able to leave the smoke-ridden, heavily polluted city, and head-off into the fresh air of the Argyllshire countryside. While, on the surface, camp discipline appears to have been strict, it was also liberally sprinkled with fun. Aside from games and camp sports, each squad was assigned a rowing boat for the duration of camp, and as a special treat a visit to Inveraray Castle situated on the west side of Loch Fyne was arranged.

Early B.B. Camps were not without their problems. In 1894 the 9th and 32nd had been at Strachur for just a few days when two Boys reported feeling unwell. The two lads were isolated and a doctor summoned. It transpires the Boys were suffering from 'Scarlet Fever,' an infectious disease which, in the days before antibiotics, could prove fatal. To lessen the risk of an epidemic, the camp was brought to a premature close and the two Companies had to pack-up and head home. The fever victims were left in the care of a nurse at Strachur for two weeks. Happily, the two patients showing signs of improvement were later conveyed by horse-drawn carriage to Belvidere Hospital, Glasgow where, it is pleasing to report, both Boys made a full recovery.

**The 9th & 32nd
on their visit to
Inveraray Castle,
1882**



**9th & 32nd Glasgow Companies,
1882...**

The band entertains the crew as the vessel sails from Strachur over Loch Fyne to visit Inveraray.

Early images of the Boys' Brigade from Anderston...

Two scenes from the 9th and 32nd Glasgow's Annual Camp at Strachur, Argyll.



Fishing parade, Strachur, 1892



In the doghouse; Strachur 1892



The 17th Glasgow Company outside their HQ - St. Georges Church, Elderslie Street (1936)

The majority of Boys in this photo failed to return from active service in the Second World War



32nd Glasgow Company, Stobcross House (1936)

Jimmy McKail, a later Captain of the Company, is 8th from left on 2nd row of Boys behind the officers

OUR ETERNAL GRATITUDE

On leaving school Ronnie worked for the Civil Service for a time before entering the University of Glasgow to train for the ministry. His ministerial calling took him to Thurso, where he remained until his death in August 2019.

Most members of our B.B. Company had nicknames; Ronnie was known as “China” - a moniker borrowed from Rikki Fulton & Jack Milroy’s much loved TV characters ‘Francie & Josie’. The actors always greeted their friends with a cheery “Hullawrrerr Chinas!” Ronnie was very well liked and a truly exceptional friend! Sadly, shortly after our visit to Meigle in August 2019 we learned that Ronnie Johnstone, one of our former members, who later became a minister in Thurso had passed away. When news of Ronnie’s passing was announced it generated several emails from within our group...



Ronnie Johnstone

E-MAIL TRIBUTES to RONNIE JOHNSTONE : 31st August 2019

Sorry to report that our ‘old China’ - Ronnie Johnstone died of a heart attack last night. His daughter phoned to relay the news. I’ve known Ronnie since childhood days, in fact it was he who introduced me to The Life Boys. Ronnie taught the Company’s First Aid Class; we were later often paired together as twins in St. Marks Church pantomimes – as they say, the rest is history. I will always value the time my wife and I were able to spend enjoying a meal with Ronnie and Freda during one of their occasional visits to Glasgow the year before his death. Ronnie was a very good friend who will be sadly missed. *(John Cooper)*

Really sorry to read this sad news, we have lost a great guy and friend. *(Calum Paterson)*

Sorry to hear about Ronnie. I remember him applying the make-up for the first aid sketch at a display - a convincing compound fracture. *(John Wright)*

Sad news indeed. Just like young John I also have memories of being a victim of the ‘Injury’ make-up. *(Ian Duncan)*

Sad news indeed. My abiding memories of Ronnie were the times at the Seniors Bible Class when he patiently and convincingly answered the many questions on Christianity that were fired at him from us doubting teenagers. John, please pass on my sincere condolences to his family. *(Jim Cairns)*

Really sad news. Ronnie was another stalwart who looked after us & moulded us into the rounded men that we have become. If only they knew how we respected them especially in later life. *(Jim Gilmour - YJG)*

Really sad news. He was another Role Model we young guys could look up to and was also supportive of us in the YPF when we put on the Christmas Eve service featuring at that time popular music, and not that popular with the older establishment in Anderston Parish. He will be missed - I had hoped he might have made an appearance at one of our “get-togethers.” *(Ian McKail)*

The Ambulance Class (First Aid)...

The first B.B. proficiency award, the Ambulance Badge, owes its origin to William Kidston, Captain of the 9th Glasgow who, with the invaluable support of Dr. J. MacGregor Robertson, commenced an ‘Ambulance Class’ under the heading of ‘First Aid to the Injured,’ to the older Boys in his Company at the start Session 1886-87. The first ‘Ambulance Classes’ were held in the hall of Wellington Church. News of Kidston’s ‘Ambulance Class,’ quickly spread and at the Meeting of Glasgow Battalion held, 24th September 1887, Council unanimously resolved to follow the ‘9ths’ example and encourage the development of First Aid work in the Battalion. To oversee expansion of this new interest, Council appointed Captain Kidston as Convener of a newly formed ‘Ambulance Committee.’ Interest in ‘First Aid’ within the Battalion grew steadily and, based on the theory that competition is good for raising standards, an ‘Ambulance Competition’ was introduced and the standard of entry proved quite exceptional.



*An original
Ambulance Badge*

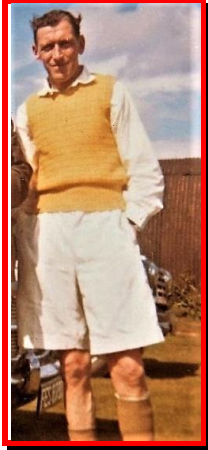
LOST FRIENDS SADLY MISSED



Ronnie Johnstone's passing evoked many happy memories of other B.B. Officers and Junior Staff who are sadly no longer with us. Many of our memories emanate from B.B. Camp at Meigle. In remembrance of their friendship here are a few images of our old friends (apologies for the impaired quality, they have been 'adapted' from the only photos we have available).



Our inspirational friends may no longer with us – but they are certainly not forgotten...



Jimmy McKail
He will always will be the 'Skipper!'



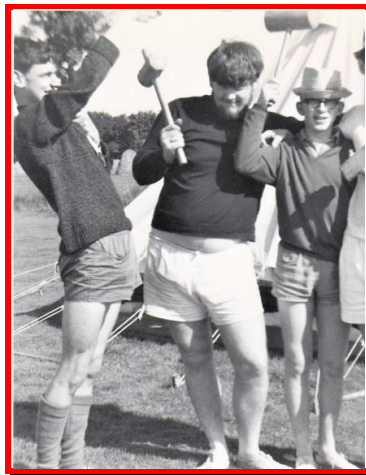
Roy Laing at Alyth Junction c1956
Roy may have been small in stature but he had a big heart!



Bill Menzies
A true gentleman. Bill taught our Signalling Class and later assisted with the Brass Band



Donnie McKinnon
A popular officer who managed our football team



**Ronnie Johnstone (China),
Robert Inglis (Inky) &
Drew Henry (simply – Drew)**



Ian McPherson
Always ready with a corny joke!



Andy Montgomery
Captain of the 41st Glasgow - a great cook and a very accomplished pianist



**Eddie Read our Camp Quartermaster
with Ronnie Johnstone our Medical Officer**



Drew Henry
Ready for Bog Patrol

IMAGES OF THE ANDERSTON WE KNEW



Cranston Street, 1959



Savings Bank, winter, 1969



Argyle St./Elliot St., 1960



Argyle Street, looking west, 1968



The Authors, 2019

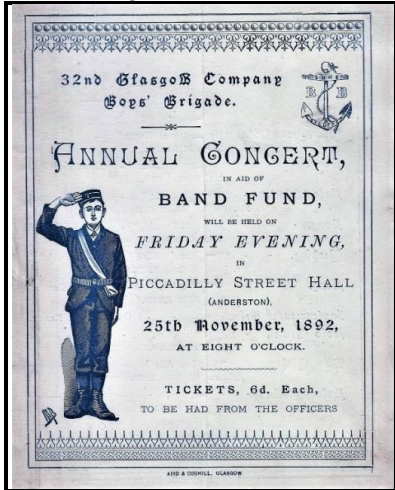
*John Cooper, Jim Gilmour, Calum Paterson, Ian Duncan
Kenny Anderson, John Wright, Ian McKail & Jim Cairns*



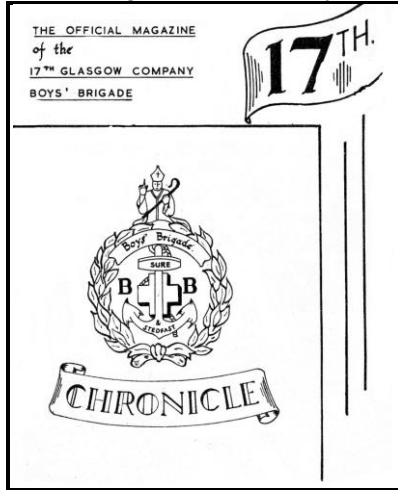
*Robert
Henshelwood*

Our Anderston Odyssey

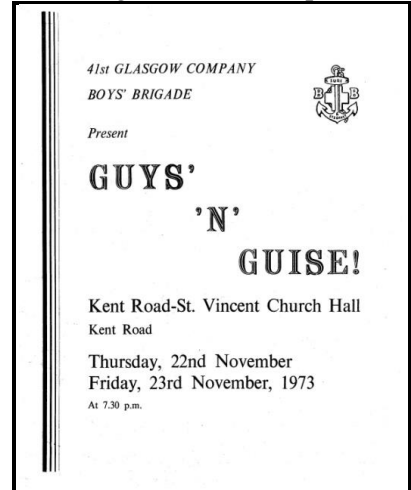
17th Glasgow enrolled Feb. 1886: 32nd Glasgow enrolled May 1886: 41st Glasgow enrolled Sept. 1886



Company Concert, 1892



Company Newsletter, 1966



Company Concert, 1973

Notes

Our Anderston Odyssey

(March 2021)



Still going strong

Cooper/ history - privately funded non-profit publication
March 2021