

Old boys, friends, and acquaintances of this Company will quickly recognise in those lists the names of many who, by reason of their genial personality, their talents, their good fellowship or exceptional enthusiasm, became exceedingly popular members of the Company, and typical examples of the sensible and cheery lads who, throughout its long history, have served with distinction in its ranks, and of whom the Company is deservedly proud.

It may well be - for so had it proved in years that had passed - that the great personality of Mr. Jenkins had much to do with the fine spirit and keen enthusiasm which prevailed in those times, for it has to be recorded that - as has constantly been the case when the Company has been in need - "J" stepped in and filled the breach, serving as Acting-Captain until such time as conditions returned to something more normal and favourable.

On the Sports and Athletic fields the Company continued to distinguish itself, and during the period covered by the four seasons 1915-16 to 1918-19, the Football and Swimming Shields, Sports and Gym Cups, all, at some time or other, found their way to Bush Hill Park. Indeed, the Company even succeeded in breaking fresh ground when, in the summer of the season 1918-19, they proved themselves the best of the Company teams of the Enfield Battalion, and so brought yet another trophy - the handsome Cricket Shield - home to the Avenue Hall.

But, more welcome than any Trophy, more sought after than any distinction, and more coveted than any honour, there came, in the course of that season..... Peace!

And, oh! how grateful were we for it!

#### Chapter Four.

-----

It seems fitting that, at this stage, we choose to start a fresh chapter, for was it not, that with the coming of Peace, there appeared to be presented a glorious opportunity for the taking of a fresh lease on life? The fact that - as we now know, and may it be to our profit - the appearances belied themselves is one to be deplored, and there is little need for us to dwell on the grievous difficulties, trials, and tribulations which, alas, effected so many of our number before the wheel of general prosperity began to slowly turn. Yet it is strange, and not a little remarkable, that the first full "Peacetime" season of this Company - 1919/20 - was one of outstanding merit, and exceptional in its prosperity. The record of the Company's successes during that season is indeed impressive: the Battalion Football League Shield was won again - this victory making the 11th standing to the credit of this Company: The Distin Cup - a trophy competed for at football between B.B. and C.L.B. Companies and Scout Troops of Enfield and district - was won for the 6th occasion and the 6th in succession. The Swimming Shield was, once again, and for the 10th time, awarded to this Company, while the previous seasons success in the Cricket competition was repeated. The Gym Cup - for the 5th time - and the Sports Cup - victory Number 7 - came, yet again, to Bush Hill Park. Nor do we stop there! for a new Battalion Trophy had appeared

in that season, one which had been presented to commemorate Peace and Victory, and to which had been assigned the appropriate title of the "Victory" Cup. This elegant trophy was put up for award to the Company of the Enfield Battalion which proved - from its showing and the manner of its successes in the many and varied competitions sponsored by the Battalion - to be the most generally efficient. That this trophy - the award of which, in itself, is proof positive of the high standard of efficiency existing throughout a Company - should come, and on its initial appearance, to this, the 2nd Enfield Company, was just the right sort of event to set the seal on a truly great and successful season, perhaps the greatest - there is one debatable exception - in the whole of the Company's fine history.

But in addition to the glowing success which came at that time there is yet another feature which is of outstanding importance.

There had been one occasion in the past, as you will have read, when one, who, as a lad, had served in the ranks of the Company had attained to the high and unique position of its Captaincy. It was - if we may be excused a brief re-introduction of the fact - in those few months preceding the war of 1914 when Mr. Percy Burford had succeeded to that position of responsibility and honour, and when the many friends of the Company had watched with keen and anticipatory interest to see how favourable would be the results of this splendid succession. But, as we now know, they had watched and waited in vain, for war came to deprive the Company of its first "Old Boy" Captain, to change the circumstances and conditions of all men, and to deny the writing of pages in the History of this Company which would have held immense interest for all those who have at heart the well-being of ~~the Company~~ it.

Yet it is History herself that serves to show how it was that the Company was not long to be denied the unique circumstance of having at her head a Captain who carried the distinction of being also an "Old Boy", for it has now to be recorded that Mr. Jenkins, who had done such valuable work during those war-time seasons, had, by this time, withdrawn from his position of Acting-Captain, to leave the Company under the full command of Mr. Percy Roddis.

(A simple coincidence, is it not, that the Company, both immediately before and after the war, should be under the command of "Old Boy" Captains both of whom bore the Christian name of "Percy"?)

So it came to pass, that the young boy, who, in the summer of the year 1907, had carried home the Sports Cup on the occasion of its first visit to Bush Hill Park, attained, in his manhood, to the honour and very great distinction of having command of his old Company. And, looking back on those times, it does seem mightily fitting that Captain Roddis should have been welcomed and encouraged in his command with such a season of outstanding performance as did greet him, and there is little doubt that the jubilations, which must have been manifest at that time of success, took on added meaning in view his succession.

And while we are touching on that aspect of old boys holding office within the Company, there is such another example which is worthy of mention in the person of Mr. Claude Moses. At the time of which we write he too, was serving with the Company, holding commission as a Lieutenant. He will be remembered by all old boys who knew him; and remembered with affection, for his cheery personality, and his kindness endeared him to all; while his prowess on the football field, his exposition of gymnastics (in which he instructed the Company for many years) and his military bearing made for him a place in the hearts of all boys who made contact with him.

And so we set it down, in honest fact, that, in this new era, the Company continued to prosper.

Particularly was this so in the realm of Sports and Athletics, the Football, Cricket, and Swimming Shields, Sports and Gym Cups, all coming "home" again to Bush Hill Park during the season of 1920-21. In the season following this, the Company achieved added distinction when the football team succeeded in winning the Battalion League Shield for the 13th time, the distinction coming, not in the questionable fact of such an anniversary being unlucky, but rather for the fact that this 13th victory was also the 6th in succession, a feat which qualified for recognition as a record: even so the team did not rest on those laurels, and by recording yet another victory in the season '22-'23 set this total of consecutive wins at seven, a total which remains unbeaten to this day.

But into this tale of success there has now to be introduced a note of sadness. It concerns a personality who has already been accorded deserved mention in this book - the Rev. H.G. Gray. He had, by the time of which we write, been compelled through reasons of failing health to retire from his Ministry of the Bush Hill Park Congregational Church, and, with the sincere and earnest hopes of his many friends that the rest and quiet of retired life would restore him to health and vigour, had left Bush Hill Park to reside in Sussex. For a time it seemed that those hopes were to be realised and a measure of restored health awaited him, but alas, such was not to be, and in the October of 1923 he passed into eternal rest and peace. His passing was mourned by all who knew him, for the life he had lived had earned him the respect and affection of all; and among many who were saddened to learn of his passing were countless old boys of this Company, who, recognising that at his passing they had lost a lovable friend, cherished their memories of him with even more sincerity.

The Rev. E.H. Wilcox, who had succeeded Mr. Gray in the Ministry of the Church, showed much interest in the work of the Company, and, as its Chaplain, was ever ready to play the part required of him, and to assist in the fine work that was being practiced among the boys of this district.

We cannot pass on from this season of 1922-23 without making mention of the new "Colours" which had been presented to the Enfield Battalion by the late Major P.W. Leggatt (a gentleman who proved a true friend to the B.B. of Enfield). The old "Colours", which, as you have read early on in this story, were presented to the Battalion by Mr. Hardman, the founder of this Company, were made over to the safe keeping of the 3rd Enfield Company to serve as a permanent memorial of their late and great Captain, T.R. Plowman. Of these new Colours, who knows but that there might be a different story to tell of its connection with this Company? but whatever it is it must come in its proper place. (It maybe, that as the reader has passed through this history of the Company he has been struck with the marked tendency of the members who have formed this Company for winning trophies which were making "first-time" appearances, and in the light of that discovery he may be well excused for anticipating the fact of another such achievement in regard to those new Colours; but if such be the case, disappointment and disillusionment await him, for the Company did not distinguish itself in that direction but maintained the usual consistency in the manner of execution and endeavour that had, for so many years, been its wont. (Which is a nice and polite way of saying that the good old, jolly old 2nds were just as good as usual!))

However, be that as it may, there is a section of B.B. work in which this Company can lay claim to unique and remarkable distinction. For many years the Company had had working - among its many other activities - a small but enthusiastic Ambulance Class, and it was in this season of 1924-25 of which we are now concerned, that the chosen representatives of the Ambulance section of this Company were successful in the Battalion competition, and, as a result of that success, were awarded that striking, and most appropriately designed, Silver Trophy.

That victory was the fore-runner of many subsequent triumphs, and to date - and such is the magnificence of the fact that we can well be excused for jumping ahead of our time - that trophy has been won by an Ambulance Squad of this Company on 14 occasions during the last 15 years! It is a record without precedent in the whole history, not only of this Company, but also of the Battalion; it is also one in which all past members of those successful representative squads may well be proud to share, for, undoubtedly, great credit is due to them. And let us not forget those who have had charge of this fine and valuable work - Lieutenant A. Adams, who has been associated with this class for so many years, and Lieut. E. Sweetman, a more recent instructor, but who is well worthy of commendation. Our thanks then to them and those who have assisted with them, and may they know that we rejoice with them that such reward has come to mark their labours.

It will probably be agreed amongst those who, by the time of which we now write - season 1925-26, had qualified for the title of "Old Boys", that during the time they had served with the Company they had, on such occasions as Ceremonial and Church Parades, been a little regretful, as they had watched and listened to the Bugle Bands of other Enfield Companies, that this - their own - Company was without such an asset. There was, we confessed to ourselves, something very colourful, and animating about those bands, and though there were occasions when we passed extremely candid criticism of the playing ability - for the most part quite unwarrantably so - it is a fact that, deep down in our honest selves, we wished that there was such a Band to play at the head of our Company: a Band to animate within us a marching rhythm, to help keep our heads high, and our sprightly feet in step, and maybe - when the occasion was considered worthy of such - to help us put on an extra special swagger befitting a special occasion!

The formation of a Company Band then is an event worthy of very special mention, and it is at this stage in this Company's History that the fact of such formation has to be announced. It was at the conclusion of a Sunday morning Bible Class in the early part of the season 1925-26 that the first intimation of the introduction of such an exciting event as a Company Band reached the boys (and through them, soon after the Class had been dismissed, their interested parents and the many friends of the Company.) On that memorable occasion Captain Roddis addressed the Class thus:

"This Company is going to have a Band. But it is not going to have a Bugle Band; neither is it to have a Drum and Fife Band: it is going to have ..... a Brass Band!

And a Brass Band the Company had, and has had ever since!

But it did not come without a great deal of hard work - teaching boys the rudiments of music, coaching them in the art of playing on the various instruments, and (not the least difficult and tiresome) coaxing them into regular practice. For the novelty, and the glamour, soon wore off for many who had, at the first flush of this new and attractive enterprise, expressed themselves keen, and enthusiastic, and willing to undergo the necessary initial training. However, there were many who were made of sterner stuff, and so it was that under the able direction of Mr. Herbert Field the Brass Band of the 2nd Enfield Company of the Boys' Brigade began to take shape and settle down to steady progress.

And so it came about that on a certain Sunday morning in the early part of the year 1926 the Band made its debut, and the people of Bush Hill Park were introduced, through the medium of their favourite Company, to yet another aspect of B.B. work.

As was to be expected the Band made an instant appeal to these good folk of Bush Hill Park, and, indeed, in districts set further away, and in the early years of its existence the Band - by reason of its popularity - took part in numerous processions, carnivals, and other such efforts held on behalf of local charities.

No one, however, who has had an insight <sup>into</sup> the working of this Band will seek to deny the fact of the ever present effort required of the Instructors in order that the Band might be kept efficient. The fact of the B.B. ruling concerning the honourable discharge from the Company of a lad attaining to the age of 17 adds much to the normal difficulties of a Bandmaster, for invariably, these lads of 17 are, by the time they reach that age and so qualify for discharge, quite efficient players, and their going leaves gaps often extremely difficult to fill. So it is that these gentlemen who shoulder the responsibilities of Bandmastership have always to be at work, not only keeping the full Band up to scratch - a task often difficult enough in itself - but also with teaching, coaching and encouraging those youngsters who are serving that irksome apprenticeship, known as 'learning', and whose somewhat natural impatience and desire to run before they can walk, adds considerably to the difficulties and trials.

Small wonder then, that the Officers of this Company have always been very grateful for the assistance rendered in the management of the Band by the gentlemen who, well knowing the difficulties that would be encountered, have yet been ready and willing to shoulder the responsibility.

Fortunate indeed has the Company been with these men, for they have, one and all, been possessed of qualifications that have made them eminently suitable for such position. There can be few old boys who do not know of, or who have not - at some time or another - heard of, the late Mr. Albert Plume. He had, for almost a lifetime, been closely associated with the Brass Band movement of Enfield, being, perhaps, best remembered for his connection with the old - and now defunct - Enfield Silver Prize Band, of which, for many years, he was Bandmaster and Conductor. His reputation as a Brass Band enthusiast, excellent musician, and a candid - yet fair and honest - critic, extended throughout the country, and he was always a welcome and respected figure at the many Brass Band Festivals, and Contests, which, every year, are held throughout this land of ours.

One can be sure then, of the pleasure and pride which came to the Officers, boys, and friends of this Company when Mr. Plume consented, some years ago, to take over the control of the Company's Band, a position he held - and which gave him pleasure so to do - until his rather unexpected passing, towards the end of 1939.

Under his able direction, in which he displayed an energy which was surprising in a man of his mounting years, the Band reached a high standard of efficiency, and though they just failed to make the winning grade they gave some excellent performances when in contest with Brass Bands of other B.B. Companies for the B.B. London Championship Shield.

But such a tale of success does not run through the whole of the Bands History, and the honest fact is that there have been times when the Officers of the Company have been hard put to it to ensure that the Band remained among the activities of the Company. That is why there are remembered with deep and real gratitude those who's success with the Band stretched little beyond the fact that it was kept going, for in such success did they accomplish much.

Since its formation some hundreds of boys have benefited from the tuition they had been given the opportunity to receive as members of the Band, and, as a result - due mainly to their own enthusiasm and industry, for which they are deserving of credit - many have, on reaching their discharge, graduated as very competent players into the various Brass Bands residing in Enfield and its neighbouring districts.

The Band is now some 15 years of age, and well established. Those original Brass instruments have long since been replaced with a finer set of Silver plated ones, and it needs no superlative eloquence on the part of the writer to draw a picture of the fine and colourful spectacle which is there for all to see as the Company, led by its own Band with its glittering array of instruments, marches off, at its own rhythmic pace, bound - maybe - for some distant Church, there to join with the other Companies of the Enfield Battalion in forming a huge and impressive parade, in which the presence of this Brass Band never fails to excite a deal of interest and invoke much approving comment.

It is on such occasions as these, when the Band of this Company shares with the Bugle Bands of other Companies in the provision of the marching music, that there is made very plain what actually applies to that mention, a moment or so ago, of this Band's "own rhythmic pace", for it is a fact that to march to the music of this Company's Band invokes a noticeable steady, comfortable, and swinging style of marching, very contrary to that induced by the music of the Bugle Bands which set a pace having the appearance of being somewhat hurried, a contrast always markedly manifest when a Bugle Band "takes up" immediately after the cessation of the Brass Band. However, this little treatise, though of passing interest, is all by the way, and we must hasten on to other matters.

But before we do return to our ordered inspection of this Company's progress, there is a point of interest bearing on music which Mr. Jenkins has drawn attention too, and which is certainly deserving of mention. He remarks on how fitting it is that this Company should have an excellent Band, for there have been many connections between this Company and that most popular of all the arts - Music. He goes on to point out the worthy fact that there are at least four Old Boys of this Company who have developed into first class organists, three of whom - Mr. J. Zala, Mr. Percy Roddis, and Mr. Fred Carter - to Mr. Jenkins' knowledge, played the organ at our own Church while still in years that belonged to their boyhood; while the writer takes it on himself to quote the immense pleasure which has come to the many friends of Mr. Carter, when, a few weeks previous to the writing of these words, he distinguished himself still further by qualifying for the Diploma of an Associate of the Royal College of Organists.

There is also a very close connection - in a musical sense, apart from a mutual regard - between this Company and the orchestra of the Bush Hill Park Brotherhood, a combination of musicians who have distinguished themselves for the excellence of their playing, and whose reputation is widespread. For more than thirty years has Mr. J. Lacey - a veteran among old boys of this Company - served that orchestra as its conductor, a record of voluntary service such as it would be hard to find an equal, and of such a nature that it has earned for him the high and somewhat rare Brotherhood distinction of their award known as the "Star Badge of Service". Then there is Mr. Henry Sawyer, an original member of this Company, and one of its first Sergeants: he too, for a long period of years, has played with the orchestra. Fred Ives, Syd Briggs (who succeeded Arthur Cox - another old boy - as leader of the orchestra) and Jim Hogg, are among others who have followed in the steps of Mr. Lacey and Mr. Sawyer in the rendering of long and fine service to the orchestra and the Brotherhood, while it would be possible to mention numerous old boys of this Company who have at some time been members of that orchestra, among them Ted Phillips, Reg Orland, Fred Farmer, Fred Carter.

It is meet then, that this orchestra should have received benefit and assistance as a result of the Company Brass Band, and in that direction it is a pleasure to be able to record the fact of the fine and consistent service given to the orchestra by Mr. George White and Mr. Charles Wright - original members of and graduates from the Company Band - who for many years have occupied the positions of 1st and 2nd Trumpet in the Brotherhood Orchestra. Of more recent years other, and younger, past members of the Company have linked up with the orchestra, among them Walter Harlow and John Kent (a product of the Band); and so it is that one is quite justified in anticipating that others will follow in their train, to keep close this valuable connection between two Movements which have much in common.

In the same season that saw the formation of the Band there took place a further change in the Captaincy of the Company, Mr. Roddis - with seven successful seasons to his credit - feeling that the time had come for him to withdraw from active participation in the affairs of the Company.

Let not the going of Percy Roddis pass by without appreciation being made of the fine work he achieved while with the Company, and of the manner in which he steered it through difficult circumstances.

It is well that we pause here to give thought to those particular circumstances which come to those who courageously take command of a Company such as ours. In no manner of means can the holding of a Captaincy be looked on as being "all beer and skittles", nor a "bed of roses" (should it be that the reader desires something artistic in metaphors.) Even at the best of times, with a Company running along sweetly and smoothly, there is always the unexpected to be watchful and prepared for, and there is ever present circumstances which demand constant attention and adjustment, with a necessary co-ordinating of the many - and sometimes trivial, but always important - processes concerned with Company management. Circumstances which can well be anticipated as of proving helpful and leading to success can - and do - take unexpected turns and in the doing take on the characteristics of awkward failures. But at such times is it that we see made plain the stamp of these men who hold command, when their personalities and characters leap at the chance to prove themselves, when, in face of shaken confidence and subdued hopes, they have sensibly to face up to facts and to set about the remodelling of much of what was dear to them.

But - and thanks be for it - despite the responsibilities that - as with Sinbad and that Old Man of the Sea - are forever around their shoulders, these men do have their reward, and, the contrariness of success applying equally well to failures, can and does bring to them a joy of such character that may well be denied to us, while many spontaneous, and often intensely sincere, tributes paid to these men bring a measure of recompense which is, to them, of untold worth and encouragement. And above all, there rests in their minds and on their consciences the supreme fact that they are, in serving their fellow men, serving also their Master; and in that knowledge - which they accept and suffer in all humility - there is that which brings them peace of mind, keeps warm their hearts, and enables them to hold high their heads.

We thank God for these men; and for all who assist them in their great work - the Lieutenants and Warrant Officers, Staff-Sergeants and Instructors - those gentlemen who labour with no thought of reward, save the knowledge that theirs is a job well done; those who, as comes the time for a fellow to give up his service, take up the torch and carry on; on, to fresh fields of success and achievement, all of which will be found hall-marked with the noble and great traditions which comes from a true regard of the principles of the Movement.

And so it was, that in the season of 1925-26, Percy Roddis - held high in esteem and affection, respected and popular - retired from the position of Captain of the 2nd Enfield Company. At his going he handed over the charge of the Company to one of his able lieutenants - Mr. A. D. Wiltshire - one who had, during his service in that capacity, taken a lively and active interest in the work and affairs of the Company, and who, by reason of the experience so gained, appeared eminently suitable for the responsible position he had accepted, an appearance which did not belie itself, nor in anywise prove deceptive, as the remaining chapter of our story will show.

## Chapter Five.

-----

Perhaps the biggest compliment that can be paid to the new Captain is to record herewith the simple, brief, yet expressive fact that during the first two or three seasons of his control "nothing much happened". The compliment meant to be implied is that the change in the Captaincy did not, and was not allowed, to interfere with the sensible policy - justified by results obtained - which had been adopted and practiced by Captain Roddis. With commendable and worthy commonsense Captain Wiltshire refrained from introducing anything untoward in the way of reforms, but rather did he judge that the sound condition of the Company gave ample proof of the correctness of his predecessors policy, and, as such, justified continuance: it was, therefore, continued, and the Company's prosperity suffered not a whit.

. . . . .

Season 1927-28, and the introduction of the "Founders Prize". This, as its title makes obvious, is a prize put up by the founder of the Company - Mr. H. S. Hardman - and it is set apart for award each year to the boy who, by the general consent of the whole Company, has been of greatest service to the Company. It is a prize which has become much coveted, not for its monetary value, but rather for the distinction which is attached to it, for its recipient is well able to bestow on himself the title of "Number One boy of the Company". To Corporal Frank Garrett (incidentally the youngest of several brothers who served with distinction in this Company) went the honour of being the first to receive that award.

Season 1928-29 came and went, during which the Sports Cup and Ambulance Trophy - both of which had been won in the previous season - were successfully held by this Company against the challenge from the other Companies comprising the Enfield Battalion. The Founders Prize was awarded to Sergeant B. Wallis, while it has to be recorded that with the resignation, from the Ministry of the Church, of the Rev. E. H. Wilcox, the Company lost a good friend and helper, and one who had carried through the duties that were his - by virtue of his office of Chaplain to the Company - in a manner that was full of understanding and genuinely sympathetic.

His going left a vacancy, and aroused the usual interest bearing on who would be his successor. It was, sometime, however, before the vacancy became filled (it was, <sup>ever, truly,</sup> during the season 1929-30; incidentally the 40th in the Company's history) and the successor proved to be, the Rev. Peebles Fleming. His advent was made all the more interesting to the Officers and boys of the Company when it became known that he had served - for a short while in his boyhood - in the ranks of the 1st Glasgow Company of the Boys' Brigade, the original and pioneer Company of the movement.