

JUBILEE SCRAPBOOK,

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JUBILATE DEO

1890-1940

Hail to the past! Today we stand
With pulsing hearts and banished fears,
Kin of comrades in every land,
And heirs-apparent of fifty years.

Heirs of tranquil days of peace,
Sons of a sacrificial age
Whose trust endures till time shall cease,
Our proud and glorious heritage.

Through five decades our course has sped,
From small beginnings and numbers few
Our Boyhood - by the Master led -
In wisdom and in stature grew,

Till now in manhood's strength we stand,
Van of an army, pioneers
Blazing the trail in every land -
The torch passed on through fifty years.

(Reprinted from the Official Programme of the Boys'
Brigade Jubilee Celebrations, held in the Wembley
Stadium, 1933. By kind permission of the Brigade
Authorities.)

(Facts, scraps, odds and ends, bearing on the History, Life, and Progress of the 2nd Company of the Enfield Battalion of the Boys' Brigade.)

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INTRODUCTION.

It is logical to suppose that the best place at which to commence a story is "at the beginning". But it does not necessarily follow that such an action, apparently so obvious, is an easy one, for it is surprising, when one gets down to it, to find the number of "beginnings" that do intrude.

One might be tempted to insist that with anything bearing on "history" the place at which to begin would be obvious; but in this instance the writer feels that we have here one of those handy exceptions which prove a rule, and also, that there are many explanations - concerning a variety of items - that merit early prominence.

This being so has led to the adoption of "safety first" tactics, and the incorporation of an introduction by which it is hoped to succeed in the two-fold task of (1) getting the story well and truly started, and (2) acquainting the reader with the explanation of why the book has been written, an explanation which will, in its turn, embrace quite a number of minor, but none the less important, points the mention of which should help to make things clear and to give the reader a right idea and perspective.

If the reader is a past or present member, or a follower, or an acquaintance of the 2nd Enfield Company of the Boys' Brigade, he or she will be fully aware - having experienced disappointment by the fact - of the cancellation of the celebrations and festivities that were to have marked the attainment of that Company to its Jubilee Season. The celebrations were to have included a Re-union Supper and Social for Old Boys of the Company, and a Church Parade of past and present members, at which "Colours" - a gift from the founder of the Company - were to have been presented and dedicated. Two displays by the present Company were to have been given, also a concert by the now well-known **Grass** Band of the Company, and yet another concert, the "bill" of which was to have been made up of talent provided by past and present members of the Company. In addition, a Social evening had been planned at which the guests were to have been the parents of the boys forming the present Company. Altogether an elaborate, interesting, and excellent sequence of events and worthy of the occasion they served to celebrate.

Use is made of the verb "elaborate" in the sure knowledge that such use is merited. The organizing and arranging of a week of such varied activity as has just been mentioned, calls for the acceptance, in the first place, of a great deal of responsibility; in a second instance, for the display of a spirit of resource and resolve; and thirdly, but by no means lastly, for the preparedness to settle down to a huge amount of work with a consequent sacrifice of one's leisure time.

To Captain A.D. Wiltshire (as he was then) and, in a somewhat lesser extent, to the committee of Officers and Old Boys that worked with him, those attributes can be readily applied. For many months previous to the time appointed for the holding of the Jubilee Celebrations Capt. Wiltshire had been deciding and settling on the general plans and procedures for **this** forthcoming Jubilee, while later, and working with the committee, programmes had been set in fuller

detail, and work and rehearsal, routine and practice had, under his direction, started in real earnestness. So it was, that with the time drawing ever nearer things began rapidly to take shape. The boys of the Company made keen and willing response to the demands put upon them (and here, let it be mentioned, that the details and plans had arranged for it that every boy of the Company should play some part in the celebrations) Officers, Old Boys, and friends of the Company gave ready help and advice. Programmes were set, schedules fixed, routines arranged, parts allocated, artistes' booked, preliminary catering arrangements effected, and all was co-ordinating in a manner so satisfactory as to stimulate in one a real eagerness and a longing for the time when all these carefully laid plans would materialise and so enable us to carry through the obligations and celebrations befitting to the Jubilee of the 2nd Enfield Company of the Boys' Brigade.

If one is able to appreciate the drive and industry with which these preparations were being prosecuted one should likewise be able to appreciate the great disappointment which came, with the cancellation of the celebrations, to all who were so busily engaged in that work of preparation. It is a circumstance to be pondered on. In the one instance, the period of prolonged and earnest preparation, the setting up and maintaining in efficient motion of machinery destined to produce results that would be acceptable too, and worthy of, a great occasion: and then, in a space of time - one that will ever remain historic by the fact of the far reaching events that will transcend to mankind by reason of the tremendous diplomatic and international upheavals that have since emanated - the scene was changed, and the "show" was "Off" ! Further rehearsal unnecessary; schedules and routines, plans and programmes, just dreams of "might have been" : the cherished hopes dashed! the humble desires to play some small part in a proud occasion frustrated! In more ways than one, "the shutters were up" !.

There is no reason to suppose that the disappointment that came to the hundreds of old boys, friends, and followers of the Company was any the less profound than that suffered by those who had accepted and were carrying through the work of preparation. That the crisis, which was to prove a prelude to war, had to come at all was a fact to be deplored: that it should have to come at such a time made its coming even more bitter. But though, as undoubtedly was the case, many suffered disappointment, an accusation of "depression" could not justifiably be levelled at us; and, it can be recorded, the general feeling seemed to be on the lines that it was just another of those irksome sacrifices that had to be made, and that if this evil which had come upon us was to be uprooted and done away with then the sacrifice would be well made and not out of keeping with the principles of the Boys' Brigade.

So much then for the first of the purposes for which this introduction was to serve, i.e. the well and true starting of the story. There yet remains the second purpose : the explanation of why this book has been written, and, incidentally, why it has been written by such a person as it has; a person whose only qualifications are, that he is an old boy of the Company; that he served for the full time allowed, and that he was honourably discharged - with the rank of sergeant - on attaining to the age limit some, ah.....er... ..ahem.. few years ago!

To put the facts as briefly, yet as clearly as is compatible with a satisfactory explanation, it is necessary to refer to the two displays which, you may remember, were to have played a part in the

Jubilee Celebrations. It had been decided that these displays should not follow the style usually associated with the Annual Company Displays (perhaps better known among old boys as "P and F" nights) but that a programme more in keeping with, and bearing on, the fifty years of the Company's progress would be more applicable and acceptable, especially to old members of the Company. With that idea in mind therefore, a play had been written and devised which was to allow for the presentation - in the form of short sketches - of notable incidents and occasions which, in the past, had played their part in the fashioning of the great traditions of this Company. A scheme had been devised that assured of continuity being maintained, and it was planned to cover the whole history of the Company - from its inception in the year of 1890 up to the attainment of its Jubilee season - so that old boys of all ages might find, at some point, an interest which might prove personal and, perhaps, conducive to some pleasant reminiscence.

One may consider it rather a colossal task to concentrate a bulk of fifty years into a ninety minute play! And yet it was felt that a fair measure of success had been achieved, and all concerned were looking confidently forward to the opportunity of putting the effort, which, by the way, had been titled "Jubilee Scrapbook", to the test of public presentation. As one can well imagine a great deal of research was necessary before the shaping of such a play could begin, and these searchings unearthed a surprising amount of interesting data and information. Not all of this material could be used, for, apart from the fact that many of the items - though undoubtedly of great interest - did not lend themselves to "reproduction", there was always the "time factor" to be considered; but, nevertheless, enough had been included in the play to make abundantly plain the steady and definite growth of this great Company.

The test of public presentation, alas, was never made, and the play, as with all else concerning the Jubilee celebrations, remained a "might have been". The disappointment was keenly felt, for no one likes to have sacrificed hours of hard endeavour; and so it was that Capt. Wiltshire in a letter sent to one of those who had collaborated in the creation of the play, sought to offer consolation by writing these words, ".... at least the History of the Company has been written".

Now it became very apparent to the old boy to whom those words were addressed that though the essence of that remark remained true it could not be applied in full faith to the play, for much had knowingly been left out of its pages which had full right to a place in any record styled as a Company History. Thus was the idea born that if the play could not embrace all the known essentials, a place could be found for them in a book! That thought persisted; as did also a keen desire to save something from the wreck; and so it is that the effort has been made to take the scraps and fragments that were now available and to set them out and so to mould them into a shape having some resemblance to a History of the 2nd Enfield Company of the Boys' Brigade.

Prudence here demands a word in self-defence. At the outset let there be a stressing of the "general" nature of this history, and then a warning off of the reader of any expectations of finding in the pages that follow a thousand and one incidents of a personal kind. Where it is in keeping with the main idea the personal touch is introduced; indeed, many of the outstanding personalities are accorded the mention they so rightly deserve; but to set down a history based solely on those hundreds of personalities and the occasions and incidents associated with them, while proving - as it undoubtedly would - of unique and immense interest is, of course, a sheer impossibility. Bear this point in mind, "every member of the Company, past and present, is a potential chapter": that fact makes ~~it~~ crystal clear the difficulties and unsurmountable obstacles that stand in the way of the writing of such a history.

Furthermore to this statement of prudence. Though the writer is bold enough ("impertinent" would perhaps be a more suitable word to use) to quote this effort as being a "History of the Company", he readily

admits that it must fall far short of one fully embracing the Company's existence, and that it may prove to contain (should it ever be read by someone other than himself) gaps that other people could easily fill; for there must be many people who are more qualified to write of the Companys experience than he who now sets his pen to the task, and who, as he labours at it, is terribly conscious of his shortcomings as a scribe, and of the responsibility he has voluntarily shouldered. Yet again; the effort cannot truthfully be described as carrying official status, though, it is pointed out, it can well be accepted as authentic, for many of the facts made use of have been taken from official records, from old programmes and magazines, handbooks and drill cards, while further information has had a more personal source and has been passed on by gentlemen who include Mr. H.S.Hardman, Mr. Martin H. Jenkins, Mr. Henry Sawyer, Mr. H.Hudson, Capt. A.D.Wiltshire, Mr. Jesse Lacey, and many others, all of whose help is greatly appreciated.

One final word. Indulgence besought here for sins of commission, but more especially for sins of omission, will probably have more effect than if made at a later stage, and therefore the writer does ask the reader, particularly if he be an old boy of the Company, to bear with him and to make an endeavour to appreciate the difficulties that have prevented this book from being more comprehensive than it now is.

And so, steadfastly taking his stand, and preparing to dismiss all comment and criticism with the simple remark that "it's only a scrapbook anyway", the writer humbly presents for your leisurely perusal and (he hopes) your ultimate approval,

JUBILEE SCRAPBOOK.

Chapter One.

The play, which bore the self-same title as this book and of which reference has been made in the Introduction, was destined to open with that mythical character "Father Time" suffering two young, eager, and curious B.B. boys to beseech him to tell them of the Company's past history. The venerable old gentleman agrees to do as they wish and promises that he will conjure for them, from the time-scarred Scrapbook he carries, visions of memorable occasions and thrilling incidents which have marked the road of the Company's progress just as surely as a milestone measures the distance along a highway. At the very outset he briefly tells of the appearance of the district of Bush Hill Park at the time of the formation of the Company.

It might be of interest to the reader to know even now of that appearance, and so let us have Father Time to say his piece and start us off on our journey through the Company's history. Say on then,

Father Time :

The district of Bush Hill Park (says that venerable old gentleman) was, to say the least, a rather outlandish sort of place. Its general aspect was of the countryside, though there had risen up, by the year 1890, a number of cottages and dwelling houses, and yet a few shops, the very first of which - "Rudlands" (Oil and Colourmen) which stood on the South-East corner of the Fourth Avenue, and which, incidently, served as the local Post Office - had appeared in 1878, just twelve years before the time with which we have to concern ourselves. The erection of these houses, which was in the nature of a speculative venture (rents were in the neighbourhood of four shillings, while incentives offered in the effort to induce folk to take up tenancy included the offer of two weeks tenancy free of rent, or the gift of half a ton of coal, etc.) gave promise that the district would eventually develop into a populated area, a promise which we now know to have been abundantly fulfilled.

But our concern is with Bush Hill Park as it was fifty years before the year of grace nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, and of that time it