

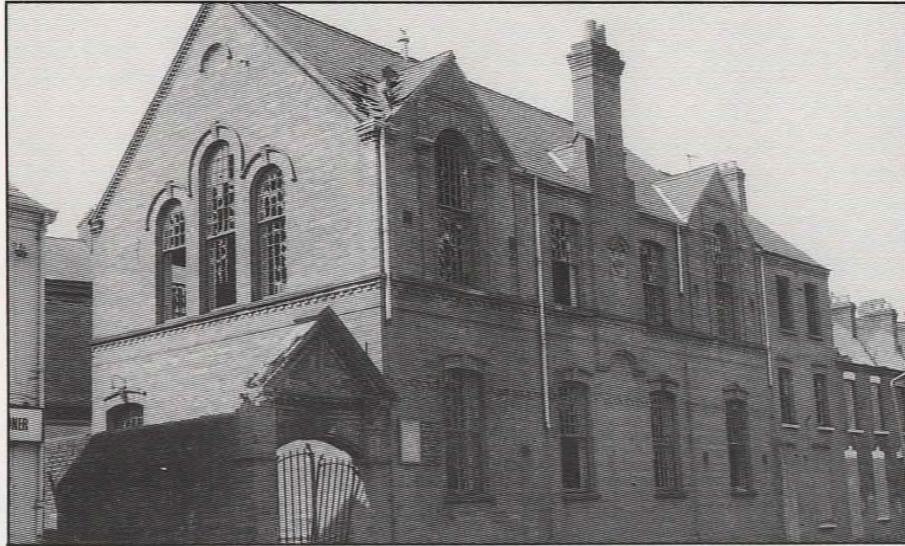
THE  
BOYS' BRIGADE



CENTENARY  
YEAR

6

6TH - 8TH APRIL, 1990



*McClure St. Mission Hall*  
*"Where it all began"*  
*13th April 1890*

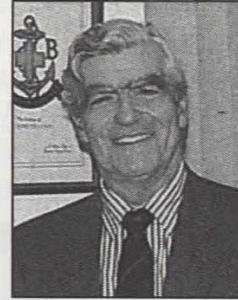


*O.B. Hall - Fitzroy Avenue*  
*Opened 24th October 1908*  
*"Where the work continues today".*



## MESSAGE FROM BRIGADE PRESIDENT

Congratulations 9th Belfast on your Century of Service to the Boys' Brigade and your example to the young people of South Belfast. May you flourish for another 100 years in the service of our object.



THURSO

## MESSAGE FROM BATTALION PRESIDENT

It is my pleasure to send the greetings and good wishes of the Battalion Executive as you celebrate your centenary. We congratulate you on reaching this important milestone in your Company's history and record our appreciation for the outstanding contribution made by the 9th Belfast to the work of the Belfast Battalion.



For one hundred years you have provided unbroken service to Boys, the only company in our Battalion to achieve this record. At all times your Officers have played, and continue to play, an influential role in our movement with many former 9th members providing excellent leadership in other companies and on Battalion committees.

We rejoice with you at this time and pray that God will continue to bless your endeavours as you lead Boys to Him.

F. MARTIN



1890

# CENTENARY

1990

IT WAS 1890, Alfred Nobel had just invented dynamite; GB Shaw and Oscar Wilde were the angriest young men of the day, and it was fashionable to play tennis or bridge, or head off to the fever swamps of a proud, decaying old Empire.

Something else happened that year, too. McClure Street Mission, then a part of Fitzroy Avenue Presbyterian Church, planted the roots of a Boys' Brigade Company whose role here has never been anything less than unique. Unique not just in celebration of a 100th birthday milestone, but because the 9th Belfast is now the oldest company in Ireland, a bastion in granite of B.B. tradition and high values. The acorn has grown into an oak.



*1896 Company*



The history of the 9th needs no embellishments. It's a jigsaw of lore and legend, an inviting commentary to men of vision and influence. Like Dr R. H. Steen and Sam Gourley (later to become the Rev Gourley of Ballyjamesduff). Like Robert Glass and John Campbell ... George Crawford and Henry Doggart ..... William Whiteside and the McCullough brothers ..... Seymour Armstrong and Charlie Finlay. All names that slip easily off the tongue when memories of the 9th are revived, and there are others, too, who have played a front-stage role in the company through good times and bad.

Arthur Robinson was captain for six years after the Whiteside era and is now chairman of the Old Boy's Association; Harry Currie, President of the Old Boys, has a spring in his step that makes a mockery of his age (92), and what can you say about the likes of Tom Briggs and the late George Carlisle, what more that is?

George Crawford was in the September of a long and distinguished captaincy when I joined the 9th. For him, a romance that began in 1913 was to span two World Wars, or an incredible 32 years, and there wasn't one recruit in all that time, you can be sure, whose heart and mind he failed to touch in some way.

That's the kind of man he was; warm, energetic, basically modest, a person of great charm and authority. His timing could make silence more eloquent than words.



*George Crawford President of 9th Cricket Club 1950*



The respect and affection we had for George never waned. They were heady times at Fitzroy, and there were few dry eyes when the indefatigable Mr C. talked about changing gear and doing a lot of things in retirement.

Retiring, however, wasn't one of them. When a crowded Ulster Hall rocked to gala-night celebrations at the Company's 1950 Diamond Jubilee, George was there to take a bow and greet a multitude of old and lasting friends. He died eight years later.

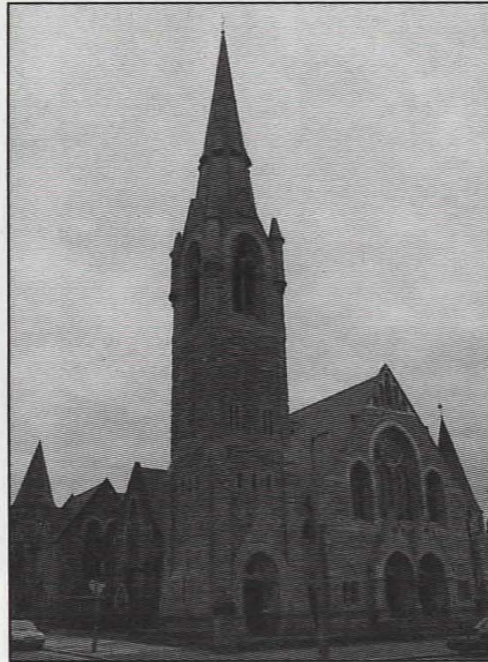
It was in 1883 that William Alexander Smyth founded the Boys' Brigade in Glasgow, and within five years the First Irish Company (St Mary Magdalene Parish in Donegall Pass) had been born. For some years the only two companies in the Ormeau Road area were 1st and 9th, and it was hardly by accident that Harry Currie found himself seconded to All Saints' Parish and in a pioneering role at the baptism of the 16th Company.

Harry's memory-bank for the old days is like a computer.

"The Company bible class in McClure Street was a great meeting place," recalls Harry. "The formation of the Old Boys' Association was the happy result, and within a few years (1908) they had raised enough money, about £300, to build the present Fitzroy Avenue Halls. It took another £100 to furnish the premises. Our first billiard table cost £3 down, plus six monthly instalments of just over £1 and we engaged a caretaker, too, at the princely sum of half-a-crown (12½p) a week"

The Halls were soon a mecca for just about every B.B. and sporting activity you could think of. "They have been home to both Company and Old Boys, the reason why each has such a close affinity with the other," says Harry. "And it will always be that way!"

Most Companies and Associations seem to delight in disposing of minutes or written records, but not the 9th. Their programme of a money-raising 'Bazaar and Sale of Work' from 1906 is still as fresh as the day it was printed.



*Fitzroy Avenue Presbyterian Church*

Some of the advertisements of the day are eye-catching to say the least. Like men's tweed suits from 50-bob (£2.50), or 'An Infallible Cure for Sluggish Liver and Stomach Wind', courtesy of Elliott Chemists, of Shaftesbury Square, price 1s 6d (7½p). A lotion for exzema and dandruff came cheaper at one shilling (5p).

The early years were good for both the Brigade and 9th, and in its first 12 years alone, we're told, over 300 boys passed through the Company's ranks. If the annual summer camp to Killough and later Millisle was always popular, it couldn't have been because of a daily diet of porridge and drill before breakfast. Yet nobody complained. Not when the Battalion Drill Flag was about to be won for the sixth year running, and the Challenge Cup for soccer as well.

Only the 9th's newly-formed band seemed out of tune. That's because they had only learned to play one, something Second Comber Presbyterian might not have been aware of when they asked for a potent sample!



The 9th has often been called "the family company", and with good reason. It's not unusual for sons to follow fathers through the ranks, and several years ago no fewer than four third-generation boys were in the Company at the same time, a rare 'first' indeed.

"Clearly, with so many social and environmental changes close to Fitzroy Avenue, plus the trauma of civil unrest, life for the Company in recent years hasn't been a bed of roses," says Seymour Armstrong. "Fifteen years ago there were five strong active companies in the lower Ormeau Road area of our city, but due to a variety of reasons, principally the large movement of population from the area, 9th Belfast are the only survivors. "Today's roll-call might be only a fraction of what it was 25 or 30 years ago, yet where do we look for a remedy? It's good to know that you're still an active and busy company in South Belfast, and passing the 100-year milestone".

The gaggle of top people attached to the 9th would fill a page or two of "Who's Who". Sam Baxter was President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Victor Lynas the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church here in the mid-70's, and Alderman Bill Lawther a former chairman of Belfast Water Commissioners. And in sport, Billy McCleery had two International strings to his bow in soccer and cricket, while the late Joe Kenmuir was not only a great track coach, but a past-President of the Northern Ireland Amateur Athletic Association

Behind the scenes, Bob McCullough, Ernest Hobson, Jimmy Lindsay and George Carlisle stood out like beacons in an official capacity with the Old Boys, all cherished names in the 9th as Ireland's oldest surviving company carves another niche in B. B. history.

The present company under Jim Beers with a youthful and enthusiastic staff still endeavour to uphold the traditions of the past.

In recent years, despite declining numbers the company has achieved numerous successes in the field of sport, in soccer, tabletennis and athletic competitions due largely to the expertise and enthusiasm of Tommy Williamson, the modern day Charlie Finlay.





*Company Football Team 1984*

'The object' as it was in 1890 is paramount in all the activities of today:

"The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Boys and the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness".

What a delight it is to welcome Lord Thurso, the Brigade President, and Lady Thurso to this anniversary week-end, an occasion none of us will forget, I'm sure. "We want it to be a truly memorable party", said Company captain, Jim Beers, this week. **AND IT WILL BE!.**

Jack Magowan.



**DISPLAY PROGRAMME**  
**COOKE CENTENARY CHURCH HALLS 7.30 pm**

**Chief Guest:**

**The Right Honourable Viscount Thurso of Ulbster JP**

**Selections By: 55th Old Boys' Silver Band**

**Fall In**

**Fanfare on arrival of Brigade President**

**National Anthem**

**Prayer (Company Chaplain)**

**Hymn**

Soldiers of Christ! arise,  
And put your armour on,  
Strong in the strength which God supplies  
Through His Eternal Son;  
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,  
And in his mighty power;  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.

Stand, then, in His great might,  
With all His strength endued;  
And take, to arm you for the fight,  
The panoply of God.  
To keep your armour bright  
Attend with constant care,  
Still walking in your Captain's sight,  
And watching unto prayer.

From strength to strength go on;  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;  
Tread all the powers of darkness down,  
And win the well-fought day;  
That, having all things done,  
And all your conflicts passed,  
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone,  
And stand complete at last.

**Chairman's Remarks**



Inspection  
Centenary Song  
Company Section Drill  
Dwarfs on Parade  
Immigrants in America  
Junior Section Singing  
Old Boys will leave to form up  
Musical Interlude  
Company Section PE  
Junior Section PE & Games  
Old Boys' Parade  
Jonah Man Jazz (GB & BB)  
Prize Distribution  
The Brigade President  
Epilogue  
Retreat  
Vesper

Great God, Who knowest each boy's need,  
Bless Thou our watch, and guard our sleep,  
Forgive our sins of thought and deed,  
And in Thy peace Thy servants keep.

We thank Thee for the day that's done,  
We trust Thee for the days to be;  
Thy love we learn in Christ Thy Son,  
O may we all His glory see!



## CAPTAIN'S COMMENTS

The Company Staff extend a warm welcome to all Old Boys and friends attending our Centenary Display.

Life has changed very considerably in the 100 years since Dr Robert Steen founded our Company on 13th April 1890 in the McClure Street Mission Hall (a hall and indeed a street which no longer exists as we knew it).

We have lived through two World Wars which have taken their toll when many of our finest former members paid the supreme sacrifice and a great many more went forth to serve King and Country in all three Services.

In the 100 years that have passed, the Brigade and our Company have lived through many changes and faced many challenges. The big camps as we knew them in the past have largely disappeared and our success in this area is in the development of a series of small weekend camps over the summer period.

When I took over the Company in the early 80's numbers had already started to fall and the last ten years have been difficult. We have seen all our neighbouring Companies in the lower Ormeau Road area disappear one by one, due largely to the movement of population from the area together with the trauma of civil unrest.

Where 25 years ago practically every boy in the Company lived in the area surrounding Fitzroy Avenue, today there is hardly a boy who does not have to be 'transported in'.

The Brigade caters for not only the boy from the Church, but was principally founded to cater for and encourage boys with little or no church connection and it has given great satisfaction throughout the years that, among the latter are pillars of the church today.



It is felt there is as great, if not a greater need today, for the church to support and develop organisations such as the Boys' Brigade so as to attract boys who might otherwise have no link of any kind with the church and its Christian teaching.

In spite of declining numbers, the company continues to take part, and indeed on occasions win group and Battalion competitions.

We have always enjoyed a good working relationship with our Girls' Brigade Company and express our thanks to them for their assistance in the programme at this, our 100th birthday.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Staff, Boys and Parents who have spared no effort to ensure a successful display.

Jim Beers  
Captain



*Present Day Company*



**CENTENARY CELEBRATION DINNER**  
**SIR WILLIAM. WHITLA HALL**  
**Queen's University Belfast**  
**7.30pm**

**Doxology**

**MENU**

**Vegetable Broth**  
—

**Roast Sirloin of Beef**

**Carrots Cauliflower**

**Roast and Creamed Potatoes**  
—

**Fresh Fruit Salad with Cream or Ice Cream**  
—

**Tea or Coffee with Shortbread**  
—



## TOASTS

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The Queen

---

The Boys' Brigade

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The NI District and Belfast Battallion

---

The Company and Old Boys' Association

---

Absent Friends

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23rd Psalm

V1. The Lord's my shepherd,  
I'll not want.  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green: he leadeth  
me  
The quiet waters by.

V2. My soul he doth restore again;  
And me to walk doth make  
Within the paths of righteous-  
ness,  
Even for his own name's  
sake.

V3. Yea, though I walk in  
death's dark vale,  
Yet will I fear none ill:  
For thou art with me; and thy  
rod  
And staff me comfort still.

V4. My table thou has furnished  
In presence of my foes;  
My head thou dost with oil  
anoint,  
And my cup overflows.

V5. Goodness and mercy all my  
life  
Shall surely follow me:  
And in God's house for ever-  
more  
My dwelling-place shall be.

National Anthem



**CENTENARY THANKSGIVING SERVICE**  
**FITZROY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3.30pm**

**Entroit**

**Call to Worship**

**Hymn**

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.  
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,  
Come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the lord is God indeed;  
Without our aid he did us make;  
We are his folk, he doth us feed,  
And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,  
Approach with joy his courts unto:  
Praise, laud, and bless his Name always,  
For it is seemly so to do.

For why the Lord our God is good,  
His mercy is for ever sure;  
His truth at all times firmly stood,  
And shall from age to age endure.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
The God whom earth and heaven adore,  
Be glory, as it was of old,  
Is now, and shall be evermore.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**Centenary Choir**





Scripture Reading  
Presentation and Dedication of Window  
Hymn

All my hope on God is founded;  
He doth still my trust renew.  
Me through change and chance He guideth,  
Only good and only true,  
God unknown,  
He alone  
Calls my heart to be His own.

God's great goodness aye endureth,  
Deep His wisdom passing thought;  
Splendour, light, and life attend Him,  
Beauty springeth out of nought.  
Evermore,  
From His store  
New-born worlds rise and adore.

Pride of man and earthly glory.  
Sword and crown betray his trust;  
What with care and toil he buildeth,  
Tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power,  
Hour by hour,  
Is my temple and my tower.

Daily doth the Almighty Giver  
Bounteous gifts on us bestow;  
His desire our soul delighteth,  
Pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand  
At His hand;  
Joy doth wait on His command.

Still from man to God eternal  
Sacrifice of praise be done,  
High above all praises praising  
For the gift of Christ His Son.  
Christ doth call  
One and all:  
Ye who follow shall not fall.

Prayer of Intercession  
Address  
Offering



## Centenary Choir

### Hymn

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,  
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
Fasten'd to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
When the breakers roar and the reef is near?  
While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,  
Shall the angry waves then your bark o'erflow?

Will your eyes behold through the morning light  
The city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,  
When life's storms are past for evermore?

## Benediction

### Vesper

GREAT God, Who knowest each Boy's need,  
Bless Thou our watch, and guard our sleep,  
Forgive our sins of thought and deed,  
And in Thy peace Thy servants keep.

We thank Thee for the day that's done,  
We trust Thee for the days to be;  
Thy love we learn in Christ Thy Son,  
O may we all His glory see!



**Taking Part:**

**Old Boys' Centenary Choir**

**Rev KNE Newell BA BD MTH Company Chaplain**

**Rev RE Alexander MA Senior Chaplain**

**Rev Paul Stevens**

**Very Rev R V A Lynas BA DD**

**Organist - Jim Arneill**



## An Old Boy's Contribution

1890 - 1990

The Ninth Belfast Company of Boys Brigade  
Celebrate an Anniversary.

One hundred years of service to Boys.

A proud record for all to see.

So let us give our humble thanks

To those in the past decades

Captains, Lieutenants and PCO's

Fine contribution they have made.

Men of Christian character

Lead and will lead, an institution that will last  
For the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys

Now, in the present, as in the past.

They made this Company of Boys' Brigade

Unique in everything they do

To set a fine example

Of things that are good and true.

When we leave nineteen and ninety

In this our Centenary year

With God's help, wisdom and courage

The future will hold no fear

Through the wars and troubled times

We were not dismayed

Sure in our resolve to carry on

Steadfast in God's way.

The past is past, the present now

The future yet to come

Leave, we who served in the Boys' Brigade  
With friends and thoughts, when we were young.

We older men have memories

Which time will not erase

Of the pals we made and comradeship

In our boyhood days.

We look forward to the future

The challenge and the test

But now we remember and feel very proud

With one thing we were blessed.

"The Ninth"

BOBBY BROWN (74)



## COMPANY CAPTAINS 1890 - 1990

1890 R H Steen

1894 Robert Glass

1895 John Campbell

1913 George Crawford

1945 William Whiteside

1966 Arthur Robinson

1971 Seymour Armstrong

1978 Arthur Robinson

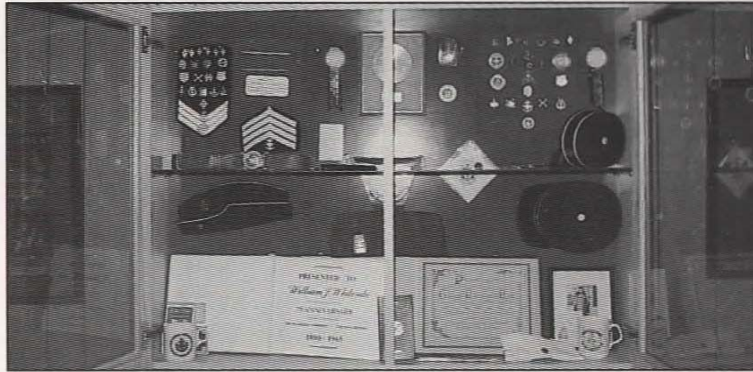
1980 James Beers



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The 9th Belfast gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance so freely given by numerous friends and associates in the planning and execution of the weekend's events.

## AUTOGRAPHS



*Souvenir Display Cabinet  
Joe Kenmuir Room*



*George Carlisle Room*



Installed in Fitzroy Church by Old Boys of 9th Belfast to mark a century  
in "The Advancement of Christ Kingdom Among Boys"