

Newsletter



We once again remind you of how quickly you should deal with the contents of our first Newsletter of the Session:

Needs immediate attention

Needs your early attention

**

Don't leave it too long

belfastbb.org.uk



**The Boys' Brigade
Belfast Battalion**

BB House
14 May Street
Belfast BT1 4NR

T: 028 9032 4853

find us on **facebook**

follow us **twitter**



B.B. Festive Tunes

Our Battalion Massed Band of Pipes, Bugles, Flutes and Drums once again entertained Christmas shoppers in Donegall Place on Monday 11th December. It was another great display of B.B. witness in our city centre and from the many favourable comments received from the large crowds busily making their way from shop to shop, one that was greatly appreciated. And even before the Massed Band stepped out, our Junior Section choristers sang a selection of Christmas carols in the grounds of City Hall to all those enjoying the delights of the Christmas Continental Market. We extend our thanks and appreciation to all who participated both in the City Hall and in Donegall Place. Well done to all who braved the cold!

These events were preceded earlier in the day with our annual B.B. House Christmas at Home open day when we welcomed a number of B.B. Leaders and friends who popped in for a welcome cup of tea and indulged in the odd mince pie (or two!) throughout the day.

Around The Sections

Since our last newsletter many events and activities have taken place. Below is a short summary of the many events that have taken place to-date!

ANCHORS Potted Sports

This Session's Anchor Boys Potted Sports competition, held in Ravenhill Presbyterian Church on Saturday 4 November, attracted a good number of entries. Congratulations to all who entered the competition, which resulted in 16th Newtownabbey Anchor Boy Section emerging as winners and will represent the Battalion at the Northern Ireland District Anchor Boys Fun and Games Final at the end of January 2018.



Worship Competition

Judging is now underway for the entries to the Anchor Boy Worship and Craft Competition. We'll be announcing the winning Section in our next Newsletter.

Anchor Boy Outing

Plans are underway to hold the Anchor Boy Outing to the Queen's Film Theatre on Saturday 21 April 2018. Details were previously provided to Anchor Boy Leaders but you could do no worse than reminding your Anchor Boy Section Leaders to note the date and venue for what should be another great day out for Anchor Boys. There are a limited number of seats available so early registration is advisable.

JUNIOR

Quiz Kids

The Battalion heat to find the Quiz Kids of Belfast Battalion was held recently resulting in 2nd Comber B.B. Junior Section emerging as Battalion winners progressing to the Northern Ireland District Final in which they were runners-up.

Junior Section Football

It has been great to see that Junior Section Soccer is once again up and running. Played on a monthly basis, it is the intention to have regular 'one-off' soccer events like this to facilitate both already busy Leaders and provide an opportunity for our Junior soccer enthusiasts to enjoy regular B.B. Football.

Coming Up!

A number of events are planned throughout the spring for Junior Sections to get involved both at Battalion level and at District level. Details of all of these have been sent to Junior Section Officers in Charge but we ask you to encourage your Junior Sections to grasp these opportunities as an extension to their weekly programme of activity. This is a great way to get to know others from within our Battalion and beyond and great opportunities to share ideas and learn new ones. We would particularly encourage your Junior Section's participation at the 'Funtasia' weekend planned for the end of May 2018 at Ganaway. This is a great opportunity for you to enjoy a weekend residential with your Boys where perhaps you do not have the capacity to organise your own Section's weekend.

Company Section

A number of Company Section events and Competitions have already been completed and the results of these are recorded under the Congratulations Section of this Newsletter.



Football Leagues

Despite the recent poor weather, all are well underway and the draws for the Senior and Junior Knock-out Cup competitions will soon be made. As we seek to encourage greater participation in our Battalion Soccer provision, it has been great to see the launch of a new initiative of monthly 5-a-Side tournaments the first of which was recently played at our Belvoir recreation Centre's 3G playing surface. This has proved very popular and we look forward to similar events throughout the remainder of the Soccer season (and beyond!).

We would remind all football secretaries of their need to pay for their Company's fixtures to B.B. House in advance of their arrival at Belvoir to play their fixture. The process is simple. Once you've paid for your fixture, a Match Card is issued and stamped accordingly. This must be presented to the attendants at Belvoir on the relevant Saturday. If not, then the simple rule applies – NO CARD NO PLAY. To avoid disappointing your Boys from playing their fixture then abiding with this simple instruction should avoid any let-down. With fixtures now prepared for some weeks ahead we have a facility whereby you can pay for fixtures in a particular cycle in advance thus saving weekly trips into B.B. House!

Fantasy Football

For the arm-chair enthusiasts our Battalion Fantasy Football leagues are up and running once again and Teams can check their progress from Clive's weekly updates which are e-mailed directly to each team.

Training Section

Youth Leader Training (***)

The next Battalion-led Course will be held at Ganaway Training and Activity Centre



over the weekend of 26 - 28 January 2018. This is essential for all Leaders working in their Company as it provides valuable instruction on how best to create meaningful weekly Programmes for the young people in their care. Not forgetting the valuable fellowship and time spent sharing with fellow Leaders. Registrations are filling up well but there is still some room for a few more! Contact Irene Lowry here in B.B. House for further information. A registration form can be downloaded from the Battalion website. It is now a BBUK requirement that trainees must have completed B.B. Leader Registration prior to their attendance at any B.B. training.

Building Your Skills Courses(***)

Boys working towards their President's Badge will need to complete this Battalion-led Training and four courses are planned for this Session. A form giving details of all of this Session's Courses can be downloaded from the Battalion website but at this stage, Course A is fully booked! It is essential that Boys are registered ahead of each Course and you are reminded that B.B. House will be closed Friday 22nd December 2017 to Monday 1st January 2018.



Seniors Adventure Activities Weekend (***)

Our Seniors Activity weekend at Ganaway over the weekend of Friday 9 – Sunday 11 February 2018 is open to both BOYS AND GIRLS from B.B. and other youth groups. Activities will include archery, zip-line, caving, high level ropes course, climbing and so much more together with team-building skills, night activities to ensure that all who participate, experience a very enjoyable weekend. Boys working towards their President's Badge can also complete their residential experience and Building your Skills modules. Further details and a registration form can be found on our Battalion website to ensure that your Boys as well as GIRLS do not miss out and are booked in for this Course.

Queen's Badge Residential Course (****)

What was formerly known as Queen's Badge Completion, this Course is an essential element for every young man undertaking his Queen's Badge and can be completed at Ganaway over the weekend of 16 – 18 March 2018. Over recent years, demand for this particular Course has seen this Course fully booked well ahead of the published date for registrations so to avoid disappointment, EARLY REGISTRATION IS ADVISED and forms can be downloaded from the Battalion website.



NB The B.B. requirement that a period of six months must have elapsed from when the Candidate completed his Skills Based Training. i.e. those Boys who attended our Battalion-led training in October '17 are not eligible to attend this Residential Completion Course. Boys who attended our October 2016 and June 2017 S4QB Courses are eligible.

President's and Queen's Badges

Many of our Battalion Captains welcomed their ability to purchase President's Badges and Queen's Badge Record Books on the spot in May Street. In addition to this service, we can now facilitate the issue of Queen's Badges following a Boys' attendance at a Queen's Badge Residential. Queen's Badge Certificates will continue to be presented at the Northern Ireland District Queen's Badge Celebration, which this year will be held on Friday 18 May 2018. Queen's Men will receive further details following their successful completion of the Residential Course.

Financial Section

Time's run out for you ... (****)

If you haven't already paid your Battalion/District Dues ... AND equally important returned your completed Statistical form. These fees have now increased by 20% between now and 21st December, thereafter your Battalion registration ceases. This means that you can no longer take part in Battalion or Group competitions. We remind you that if your view is 'So what ~ we don't take part in these anyway' THEN YOU NEED TO THINK AGAIN as this registration affects your Insurance and Child Protection Cover. It means, in effect, that you are no longer a B.B. Company in Belfast Battalion! Please bear in mind that this also applies to the return to B.B. House of your Battalion Statistics.

A special note was issued recently to those Companies

which have not yet made both returns. Please do NOT confuse your local Dues with your Brigade Fees which are payable direct to Felden through the new web-based Online Brigade Manager.

Felden Statistical Returns (****)

When Companies are paying their Annual Felden H/Q Fees we respectfully request that you send a copy of your Company's Return to B.B. House. Not ALL Companies are doing this causing problems for us maintaining full Company records.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU PROVIDE B.B. HOUSE WITH A DIRECT COPY.

N.I.I.D (****)

All Companies should by now have informed B.B. House about their return from the 2017/18 N.I.I.D. House to House Collection. If you still have to make a return please do so as soon as possible to ensure that we can record their collection as part of the Battalion's grand total. The enclosed note serves as a reminder to those who have previously participated in the Collection but we will also be pleased to accept returns from others.

General Section

Keeping our Records Up To-date

Some time ago we alerted you to the fact that there is no longer a need to send Leader Registration Forms to the Battalion Headquarters in the first instance. However, and in an attempt to retain complete Company records, we ask that you continue to send to us copies of what is sent to BBUK HQ at Felden. By doing so allows us to perform two things; first we can update our own Battalion records and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, we can send an early welcome to newly appointed Officers/Leaders etc. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND COPIES OF YOUR FORMS TO B.B. HOUSE.

Our New Look Battalion Prayer Card

is once again being issued to you to cover the whole calendar year. This will provide you with prayer topics throughout the year for your use at Bible Class or on other suitable occasions. If required, extra copies are available upon request.

Accident Books

Hopefully you'll not need it but you just never know when something will happen that you will need to recall several years after an incident. Better to be safe than sorry it is recommended that each section should have its own Accident Book.

Used Stamps

Over recent days many of us will have received cards and letters from those close to home and those beyond our shores. While the custom of sending cards may appear to be diminishing, those that we do receive through the post are valuable in many ways. Apart from conveying good wishes at this time of year, the stamps on the envelope carry a value that can be converted into much needed funds.

Rather than throw out the stamps on the envelope, we are happy to receive used stamps, which in turn we pass onto Mission Societies who then convert them into much needed funds. Have you thought about using this as an all year round Company project?

Turning Point 2018 (****)

Turning Point is our Christian Youth Festival for young people aged 11 – 18 held at the Ganaway Activity Centre in Millisle. It is organised by a dedicated team of BB, GB and church youth leaders. Celebrating its 12th Year, TurningPoint continues to be an integral part in many Companies and Churches youth outreach programmes and plans are getting underway for this year's event which no doubt will be jam-packed full of exciting activities, worship, seminars, trading post and socials to mention but a few. Planned for the weekend of 27 – 29 April 2018 at the Ganaway Training and Activity Centre, there is sure to be something to suit everyone. Our young (and not so young) group of volunteer leaders, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that TurningPoint is the success that it is, would appreciate your support at this year's event.



Stedfast Supplies

Or otherwise known as The B.B. Shop and located in B.B. House 14 May Street, Belfast, The B.B. Shop caters for all Boys' Brigade Companies across the Emerald Isle. In addition to B.B. Uniforms and resources, a wide selection of B.B. and non-B.B. items are available, some of which are exclusive to The B.B. Shop in Belfast. And the best part is, you can walk-in and speak to our experienced staff who are only too willing to assist you with your purchases. Parents are also welcome to make purchases too. Open Monday to Friday from 9.30am – 5.00pm all year round along with special Saturday openings, make The B.B. Shop your first stop when planning what gifts and prizes you need for your Company and Section Displays, Parents' Nights and other events and special occasions throughout the year.

Coming Up

Don't Overlook (***)**

ENTRIES DUE BY

Fri 5 January	Youth Leader Training Registration
Fri 12 January	Ten-Pin Bowling
	Inter Company Bible Quiz
Fri 19 January	NID J/Sect 5-a-Side (Batt Heat)
Fri 26 January	Table Tennis C'Ships
	Seniors Adventure Weekend
	Ind Chess & Draughts
Fri 2 February	Defibrillator & First Response Training
Fri 16 February	Christian Faith Exam
	Junior/Senior Company Drill
Fri 23 February	C/Sect First Aid Competition
Fri 2 March	Queen's Badge Residential
Fri 23 March	Badminton Championships

NB. Company Section Cross Country Championships were postponed with a rescheduled date to be advised in the New Year.

Also – don't forget about The Stedfast Association Annual Dinner on Friday 2 February 2018. Numbers have been in decline in recent years and the members of the Association

would value our support at their annual Dinner which this year is being held once again in Newforge Country Club. The Stedfast Association has been very supportive of the work of our Battalion since its inception 25 years ago so it would very fitting that we reciprocate this support with a good attendance of Battalion Leaders at this year's 25th Anniversary Dinner. Further details and tickets can be sought from the Association Secretary, Mr Trevor Cardy whose contact details can be found in your Battalion handbook.

Congratulations Section

Well Done to ...

The following winners in recent competitions:

Junior Section Quiz Kids (Batt Heat)

Winners - 2nd Comber & NID Final Runner-Up

Company Section Table Quiz

Winners - 4th Newtownabbey

Special Congratulations to Roy Nesbitt – Captain of 12th Bangor B.B. Company becoming the United Kingdom's best Newsagent of the Year 2017. At a lavish ceremony held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London, Roy was presented his accolade in recognition of his excellent customer service skills and work within his local community.

Passed to Higher Service

Edwin McMurran M.B.E.

Edwin was Captain of 22nd Belfast B.B. Company and had a long association with Woodvale Presbyterian Church where he served as an Elder. As a former Personnel Manager for the Belfast harbour Commissioner's Office, Edwin spent many years as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Belfast Boys Model School and governor to Glenwood Primary School on the Shankill. He was recognised for his services to education by being appointed M.B.E. in 2016.

Martin Migan

Martin was a very enthusiastic Leader in 2nd Comber B.B. Company Section and led their football team within the Battalion Football Leagues. Following a short illness, Martin's Passing not only leaves a void within 2nd Comber but more especially remembered by his wife Debbie and their children Nathan, Aaron and Katie to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

B.B. House Christmas closing arrangements

From Friday 22nd December to Monday 1st January 2018 and will re-open on Tuesday 2nd January 2018 ready to serve you and your Company in the year ahead.

E-mail sign up

To enable us to communicate more effectively with you, please send us up to-date e-mail address to our **new e-mail address** info@belfastbb.org.uk

The B.B. Object

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.