

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



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Belfast Battalion**

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Dedication and Naming Ceremony at Ganaway

It was quite literally standing room only on Sunday 24th September where a packed Beacon was the venue for a special service of Dedication of Memorial Plaques and naming of The Maurice Williamson Boys' Brigade Heritage Museum at our Ganaway Activity Centre and the unveiling of a memorial Stone in memory of Maurice. Despite the inclement weather preventing us from holding our service outdoors, it was very encouraging to have many of our B.B. staff, Boys, colleagues and friends, from near and far, join together to celebrate and acknowledge the contribution of Maurice through his work in The Boys' Brigade particularly in Northern Ireland and especially within Belfast Battalion.

It was pleasing that members of Maurice's family were with us and to present the Battalion with Memorial Plaques, one for each of our Centres and B.B. House, in honour of their late father. Maurice's eldest daughter, Miss Janet Williamson, gave a moving tribute to her father on behalf of the family with the Battalion Chief Executive paying tribute to Maurice on behalf of The Boys' Brigade. These tributes and Memorials will provide a lasting tribute and ensure that Maurice is remembered by many generations to come through these visible gestures.



Around The Sections

A great deal has been happening around our Battalion since our last newsletter with many events and activities getting underway in the few short weeks since the beginning of the Session. Below is a short summary of the many events that have taken place with a reminder of some coming up very soon!



Potted sports

Ravenhill Presbyterian Church will be the venue for the Battalion heat of the Potted Sports competition on Saturday 4 November with the winning Anchor Boy Section representing the Battalion at the Northern Ireland Finals at the end of January 2018.

Craft/Worship Competition (****)

Don't overlook the Craft/Worship Competition of which details have been previously provided to Officers in Charge of Anchor Boys. You could do no worse than gently reminding your OIC's that the closing date for this competition is Monday 4th December 2017.



Drinnahilly hallenge

A number of our Junior Sections enjoyed a great afternoon in the foothills of the Mourne Mountains on the last Saturday of September. Participants enjoyed a glorious Autumnal afternoon and setting off in groups, from their base at The B.B.'s Shepherd Lodge Mountain Centre, they worked their way through the many challenges that lay before them under the watchful eye of Junior Section staff to ensure each and every challenge was duly completed.

Moonwalk 2017 ...

Just as we were about to hit the presses, sadly, news came through, notwithstanding the brave efforts of the organisers to ensure everyone's safety the weather beat us on this occasion. Due to the inclement conditions a last minute decision was taken to postpone the Moonwalk with a rescheduled date early in the New Year (to be advised).

Football Leagues

Company Section teams are up and running in the Battalion football leagues and, weather permitting, can look forward to a full season of fixtures when teams will be vying for the Battalion's League Trophies. It is pleasing to see a resurgence in Junior Section Soccer under the planned monthly tournaments when Sections can enjoy small sided games once a month throughout the Session. Training Section

A full Programme of Battalion-led Training has already seen the early completion of some of our well-known favourites with our Battalion Trainers very active since the start of the new Session. So far training for new Captains, Skills for

Queen's Badge Candidates have all been completed preceded by the ever-popular and very informative Training Fair at the end of September. Those present availed of the expertise and opportunities on offer while receiving valuable B.B. updates along with a thought-provoking Social Media and Online-Protection presentation that certainly gave those present some food for thought!

Skills for Queen's Badge

At our recent Skills for Queen's Badge Course at Ganaway, it was so pleasing to welcome 23 young men working towards The Brigade's Highest Award and are now well on their way to achieving their right to be called 'Queen's Men'. We thank the trainers who gave of their time to assist at this weekend imparting such valuable and vital hints and tips to guide these young men on their way towards completing their Queen's Badge Award.



Captain's Element

A number of new Captains attended our Captain's Element Training at Ganaway over the weekend of 13 – 14 October and it was pleasing to welcome so many new Captains who are taking up this challenging yet extremely rewarding role of Leadership in The Boys' Brigade.



Vaulting, Gymnastics and Physical Activity Course

A fully-booked course held at Ganaway proved valuable to those in attendance where practical instruction together with some practical ideas for Display items was offered to course participants.

Youth Leader Training (****)

Don't forget to register those within your Company for the up-coming Youth Leader Training Residential Course over the weekend of 26 – 28 January 2018 at Ganaway. Registration forms can be obtained from B.B. House or from our Battalion web-site www.belfastbb.org.uk Demand has traditionally been high for this particular course so early registration is advised if not to be disappointed. Please ensure that anyone wishing to avail of this training is appropriately registered by the latest date of entry.

Building Your Skills Courses (***)

Boys must complete this element as part of their preparation for their President's Badge and registration can be made on the enclosed form which when completed, should be sent together with the appropriate fees to B.B. House. Copies may also be downloaded from the Battalion website belfastbb.org.uk

Opportunities Section

A different kind of weekend (***)

Is what can be experienced at the Seniors Activity weekend at Ganaway over the weekend of Friday 9 – Sunday 11 February 2018 and 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. A registration form is enclosed to ensure that your Boys as well as GIRLS do not miss out and are booked in for this Course. Copies may also be downloaded from the Battalion website belfastbb.org.uk

Battalion Massed Band (***)

Will take part in its annual Christmas outing in Belfast city centre on Monday 11 December. This annual event is open to all Companies with bands together with individual players who otherwise would not have the experience of parading with a B.B. Band. While we are entertaining Christmas shoppers in Donegall Place, it's a great way of publically displaying The Boys' Brigade. Recent years has seen great public appreciation of the band's performance and ensures that the witness of The Boys' Brigade is presented in this unique way in our capital city centre. Details are enclosed and you are asked to make your return to B.B. House by Friday 17 November 2017.

Junior Section Choir (***)

Also on Monday 11 December, our Junior Section Choir will perform traditional carols under the Portico of the City Hall adding some Christmas joy to the Continental Market. This is open to all Junior Sections and makes for an enjoyable evening preceding the Massed Band performance in Donegall Place. Further details are available from the Battalion website.

Beware Section

Time's Running Out (***)

If you are to save your Company 20% on top of your Battalion and Regional Dues. Approximately 10% of our Companies have made their returns for 2017/18 and to avoid any additional fees, your Company's completed Battalion Statistical form together with the fees outlined on your Invoice should reach B.B. House no later than 14 December 2017 to avoid paying the extra 20% which applies after that date. After 21st December your Company

will automatically be excluded from Battalion or Group Competitions until arrears are paid which includes competitions in which you are already entered. We also ask that you bear in mind the rule which requires that if you do not pay your Battalion Dues by the set dates your Company's Battalion registration will be regarded as having CEASED.

We would remind you again not to confuse local Dues with your 'Felden Headquarters' Fees which must be completed using Online Brigade Manager about which you will have received details of these under separate cover.

Financial Section

B.B. Week (***)

One excellent way to raise funds for your Company remains the annual B.B. Week Collection and to assist you, cards and literature can be purchased from our B.B. Shop.

Gift Aid – You Can Help

The more we as a Battalion can avail of Gift Aid the better position we are able to support your Company work. All you need to do is to ensure that all your staff who pay tax, complete a Gift Aid Declaration (copies available from B.B. House) and when completed are returned to us. Some have previously done so in response to our requests and we have benefitted from this over recent years. BUT we need to update our records and ask that you and your staff give this consideration.

Battalion Charity Fund

We ask Companies and Old Boys' Associations to support our Battalion Charity Fund through donations from Bible Classes, Enrolment Services and other collections and events. Please keep the Fund in mind as we can only distribute what we receive!

Planning Ahead Section

Planning for QUALITY

Is what your Battalion Executive will be planning to do in 2017/18. The enclosed leaflet should be seen by ALL YOUR STAFF as it sets out Executive's Statement of Objectives for this Session by way of follow-up to the Target of Excellence ~ Vision with Purpose Strategy.

Your Activity and Recreation Centres ... Ganaway, Shepherd Lodge & Belvoir (***)

All three of our Centres have been busy of late. Ganaway has welcomed many visitors, some for the first time and some making repeat trips as their preferred venue for their residential – so much so that Groups are making advance bookings into 2019 to secure their preferred dates. If you are planning a residential or even an activity-based day/evening why not consider making use of YOUR Battalion owned facilities? The B.B. Heritage Museum (recently named The Maurice Williamson B.B. Heritage Museum), located at

Ganaway welcomed many visitors during the European Heritage Open Days in September even attracting the President of Ayr Battalion during his recent holiday to these shores. Many other groups and individuals have been facilitated by our small but enthusiastic band of B.B. Volunteers and who will gladly welcome you to the Museum for a guided tour. Enquiries in the first instance can be made by contacting B.B. House. Check out the Ganaway Centre's web-site by visiting www.ganaway.co.uk where you'll find more information and a short video clip of what's on offer.

Belvoir is enjoying a resurgence with soccer teams making full use of the grass (despite the wetter than normal early Autumn period so far) and the 3G playing surfaces on Saturday mornings and afternoons and mid-week evenings. It has been great to see Groups also using the newly refurbished Pavilion Building for their meetings and training events. And in addition to the footfall at our Centres, Shepherd Lodge has been used extensively over recent months by a host of Groups ranging from Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition Groups, Youth Groups and Church groups all seeking a place off the beaten track so that they can achieve their group's objectives. Nor must we forget the main hub of our Battalion, B.B. House where staff have been extremely busy over recent weeks facilitating requests for information, resourcing Training and Committee events, sourcing equipment and planning ahead for new Programme ideas to support both Staff and Young People in their Sections' weekly activities as well as the personal service to customers in Stedfast Supplies. We are so very fortunate to have in our ownership four viable Centres all now contributing to the continuing work of Boys' Brigade in the Greater Belfast Area and far beyond!

Coming Up

Don't Overlook (* * * * *)

ENTRIES DUE BY

Mon 30 October	Anchor Boy Potted Sports
Fri 3 November	Table Sports Quiz Battalion Soccer Trials
Fri 10 November	Cross Country Championships (Postponed to Spring 2018)
Fri 24 November	Colours and Open Drill
Mon 4 December	Anchor Boy Craft/Worship Competition
Fri 15 December	Indoor 5-a-Side Football Tournament Junior & Senior Knock Cup (if not already involved in Leagues) Open Music Competition

NB Refer to the Battalion Calendar of Events and don't wait for the issue of Competition details and enter Competitions and Events by the latest date (or before) to avoid late fees and assist those organising events on your behalf! Registration and Entry Forms are available from B.B. House or by downloading from the Battalion website belfastbb.org.uk

Congratulations Section

Congratulations to ...

A number of Companies celebrating significant Anniversaries:

5th Newtownabbey	95 Years
24th Belfast	90 Years
58th Belfast	75 Years
13th Newtownabbey	50 Years

NIID Collection

Once again we congratulate those Companies who participated in the annual Door to Door Collection on behalf of the Northern Ireland Institute for the Disabled and for their commendable efforts. Sadly fewer of our Battalion Companies are doing this yet those that do, are making some significant returns for their efforts and we congratulate them for making the time and effort to continue with this significant part of our Battalion Programme. Now in its 104th year, we await the final total and to assist us finalise this, outstanding returns must be forwarded to B.B. House as soon as possible. Whilst it may appear insignificant to us, the Institute really appreciates our Companies efforts in raising this money as it contributes greatly to what the Institute seeks to achieve and more importantly, adds value to the range of services that they offer those less fortunate than many of us.

Passed to Higher Service

George Toombs B.E.M.

George was one of our great B.B. stalwarts and like so many, he didn't grow up in The B.B. but in another Youth Organisation for Boys' – The Scouts! But nonetheless, when George was asked by his Church to become Captain of the Company, he readily agreed and set about bringing his vast experience to bear in 1st Lisburn B.B. Company where he remained Captain for many years later becoming Company President following his retirement as Captain. George was renowned for his ingenuity and would always have something on the go. He captured the attention and imagination of young aspiring Boys particularly within Lisburn Group and will be well-remembered for adapting a version of the popular TV Quiz for young people, Blockbusters and through his inventiveness, produced several game boards mirroring those used on TV.

E-mail sign up

To enable us to communicate more effectively with you, please send us up to-date e-mail address to belfast@boys-brigade.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.