

Heritage

Newsletter of The Boys' Brigade Archives

Vol.5 No.1

12th January 2025

News from the Archives

Returning back from the Christmas holidays we are busy planning the content for the Virtual Museum and for Social Media, so please follow us to see what interesting content our social media team will be bringing you daily. Page two of this newsletter features the 'Almanac' for 1925, these wall calendars were highly decorated with images of BB activities of the time, and we look forward to making more of these available in the future.

We have been busy adding more content to the Virtual Museum, and existing pages are constantly getting updated, with additional content being added, so it is worth revisiting pages of the Virtual Museum to find the new content. We are also preparing content about The Boys' Life Brigade in advance of the centenary of the Union. Our archivist has been reading through the Life Brigade Chronicles, and has included an extract about the founder of the BLB, Dr Paton, from the Vol.2 No.11 issue dated July 1904. This can be found on page 7.

Chris Spackman has been analysing our Vimeo views for 2024. To learn more about Vimeo and how we use it, the report can be found on pages 5 and 6, Colin Swinton also reports on the Archives and Virtual Museum for 2024 and the growth in visitor numbers compared with 2023.

Together with the planning for the Virtual Museum and Social Media, we have reviewed the newsletter and have decided this will be sent out every second month. So please look out for the next newsletter in March. The newsletter is also always available on the Virtual Museum homepage, and please forward this newsletter to anyone with an interest in BB Heritage. If you know of anyone who would like to be added to the mailing list please contact us.



Contact us if you can help identify this Company or anyone in the picture.



archive@boys-brigade.org.uk

Contact Us



Almanac



Library

Contact Us

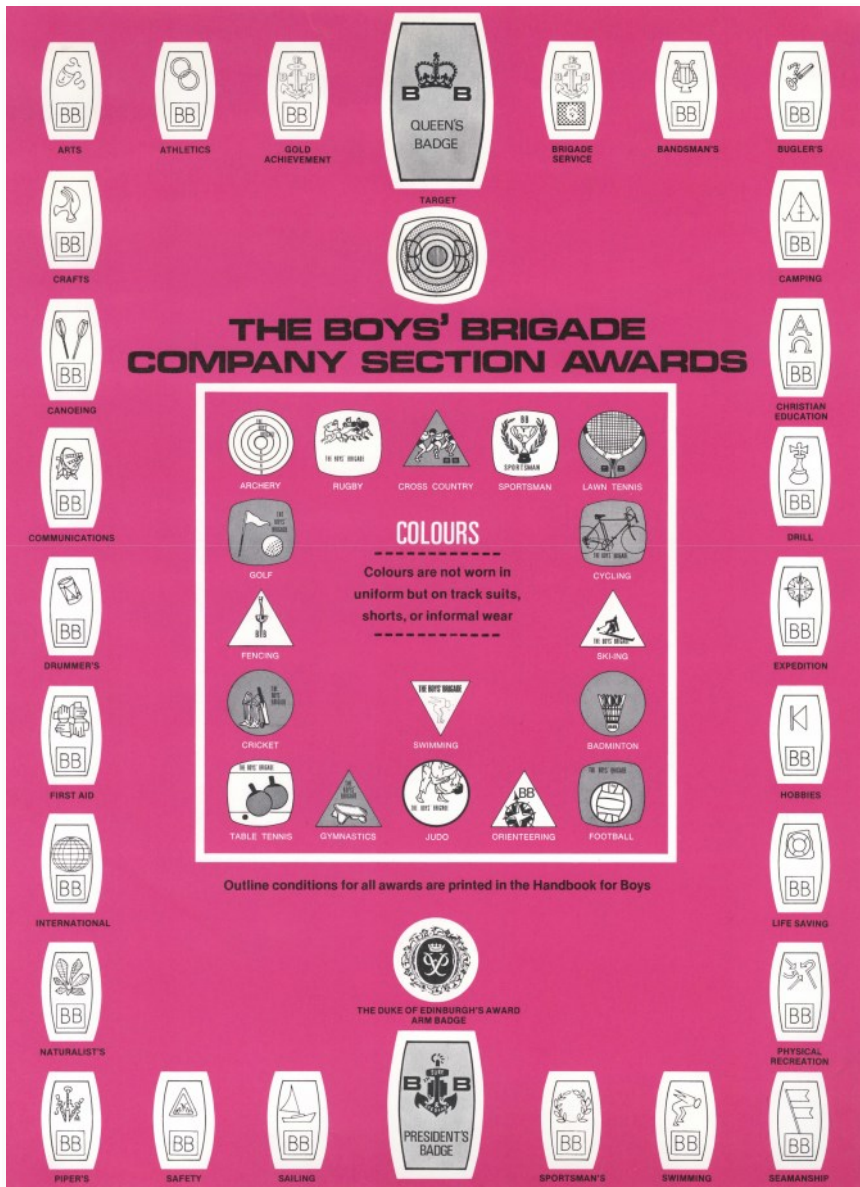
From 1897 the BB Gazette records that the Manchester Battalion produced a sheet Almanac available to Officers for the price of one penny each. This featured an image from Brigade Council in the centre. A few years later 1899 the Gazettes reports that the Dublin Battalion were selling for one penny a large sheet Almanac illustrated with some good local photographs, and it was noted *'the sale has quite come up to our expectations'*. Both these Battalion Almanacs continued to be sold for a number of years by the Battalions.

The BB Gazette of October 1900 reported that: *Instead of the usual Christmas Gift-Book, the Executive have arranged to publish an Illustrated Sheet Almanac for the coming year, full particulars of which will be duly announced.*

We plan to add all the Almanacs to the Virtual Museum soon. If anyone has copies of the Almanac please contact us so these can be scanned. We require scanned copies of 1903-1909, 1917-1920 and 1923. The last Almanac was produced in 1939.



Virtual Museum



1968-82 Awards

The Haynes report of 1964 had resulted in the total reorganisation of The Boys' Brigade in the UK including modernisation of the Company Section awards program. The certificates, a prominent feature of the previous awards system were abolished, and 24 activity awards were introduced, two target awards for the new recruit, as well as the introduction of cloth sports colours awarded for participation in sporting competitions. The regulations for the Queen's Badge, the highest award were toughened, making it harder to achieve, as well as the introduction of the President's Badge. The modern uniform design of the badges which became known as 'barrel badges' was changed from metal to plastic in the mid 1970s' due to pressure over costs of the metal badges. Following a restructuring of the awards system again in 1982, the 'barrel badges' were abolished. However, the design of the President's and Queen's Badges remained the same until 1994.

Click on the link on the right to learn more about these awards on the Virtual Museum.



Archivists 2024 Report

2024 was an important year for the BB Archives. The collection held at Felden Lodge was properly assessed and sorted, and then carefully packed and crated in preparation for the move to Carronvale House. The process was made a lot easier by the fact that much of the sorting, digitisation and packing into plastic crates had been going on for 5 years, however this was still a monumental task, and in the end 780 boxes and crates were packed, sealed and shipped up to Carronvale. Thank you to the small team of volunteers who helped with this task. The collection is now in secure storage at Carronvale, however a lot of work will need to happen over the next few years to get the boxes organised onto shelving, and the existing material held at Carronvale sorted and merged with the main collection which has just arrived there.

The digitisation of the archive collection is continuing, principally the slide and photograph collection as this is a valuable resource for social media, and the Virtual Museum. We are also looking ahead to the centenary of the union with the BLB and a lot of research is being conducted to prepare content for the virtual museum. It is hoped that this resource will be used widely, and the contribution of the Boys' Life Brigade which has shaped The Boys' Brigade of the 21st century, recognised. A lot of the awards and uniforms familiar to every BB member today, can be traced back to the Boys Life Brigade in the 1920's, and I am hoping to be able to share this story in the coming years. I am also trying to get a complete list of every BLB Company recorded and added to the virtual museum, if you have any BLB records or Life Brigade Chronicles please contact us.



The Virtual Museum, supported by social media, remains our main outlet for telling the story of The Boys' Brigade. The graph above, records our page views (74700 views) and visitor numbers (20400 visitors). This records a 36% increase in page views, and 32% increase in visitors compared with 2023. We are obviously pleased with this growth, and this is due to high quality, varied, and curated content in the Virtual Museum. We currently have over 450 pages available to view, with plans for another 50+ pages to be released over the next year. The small team working with me to create the content put in a lot of hours to create the high quality of content, and the visitor numbers are a tribute to the hard work which is put into this project. There will be a focus in the coming months to start adding Company histories to the Virtual Museum and expanding the Battalion histories pages. If anyone would like to assist with this project then please get in touch with us. We are also looking to add team members with website and database skills, video and audio editing, as well as content creation, if you would like to join our virtual museum team then please get in touch with me.

Colin Swinton - Honorary Boys Brigade Archivist



archive@boys-brigade.org.uk

Contact Us



Virtual Museum future content



The new content for the Virtual Museum is worked on months in advance of it being released, and we try to tell the stories through as many varied and different mediums as possible.

We are busy preparing a series of pages on the Life Boys, including a page on the Life Boy programme. This was based on the theme of 'Play the Game' and we recently found some sheet music for a Play the Game song. We would love to add an audio clip of this to the virtual museum. If anyone knows if this was recorded and where we may be able to find a copy of this please contact us.



[Contact Us](#)

Vimeo

2024 Vimeo Analytics Review – Insights and Engagement

Welcome to our review of The Boys' Brigade Archive Trust's Vimeo analytics for 2024. Chris Spackman has put together this report to share our video content's key trends and performance over the past year.

What is Vimeo?

Vimeo is a video-sharing platform where we upload and share our content. It's a great tool for reaching our audience and preserving our valuable video archives.

Key Numbers

In 2024, our Vimeo content saw:

Total Time Watched: 17 hours, 35 minutes, and 59 seconds

Views: 492

Impressions: 6,265 (14% more than last year). Impressions refer to how many times our videos appeared on viewers' screens.

Unique Viewers: 170

Where Do Views Come From?

Most of our viewers (76.63%) find our videos through the Virtual Museum.

[Vimeo](#)





Vimeo

How Do People Watch?

Our viewers use both mobile devices (48.17%) and desktops (46.34%) almost equally. This is something we consider when adding new content to make it accessible on both.

Regional Insights

Our audience spans across various regions, showing the global interest in our content. Here are the top 10 countries:

1st United Kingdom: Leading the way with 400 views and 3,387 impressions, the UK remains our primary audience, reflecting strong domestic engagement.

2nd Australia: With 29 views and 406 impressions, Australia shows solid engagement.

3rd Ireland: Our content resonates well in Ireland with 15 views and 182 impressions.

4th Hong Kong: Indicating a rising interest, Hong Kong emerges as a significant viewer base with 11 views and 159 impressions.

5th Germany: Showing our reach in Europe, Germany continues to engage with our videos with 8 views and 124 impressions.

The remaining countries making up the top 10 were The Bahamas, The United States, Nigeria, New Zealand, and The Netherlands.

Top Videos:

1st Sure & Stedfast: This video remains the most popular, maintaining its top position from 2023 with 131 views.

2nd 1998 5th Swindon Company Display: Second most popular with 47 views, this is a new addition to our video archive.

3rd 1966 Opening of Brigade House: A consistent favourite, maintaining its popularity from 2022 with 42 views.

You can watch our most popular videos from 2024 through the links on the right.

Conclusion

The 2024 data shows our growing engagement and reach. Our strategies, like refreshing the Vimeo account and promoting through social media, have been effective. These insights will guide us in 2025 to continue sharing and preserving our valuable archives.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to explore our videos on Vimeo using the links to the right.

If you have video content that could be included in our archive, please reach out to us. Your contributions are invaluable in helping us preserve and share the rich history of The Boys' Brigade.

And finally, digitising the film we hold has a cost involved. If you would like to contribute to the cost of digitising the film, please get in touch with us, or use the Donate link on the right.

[Sure & Stedfast](#)

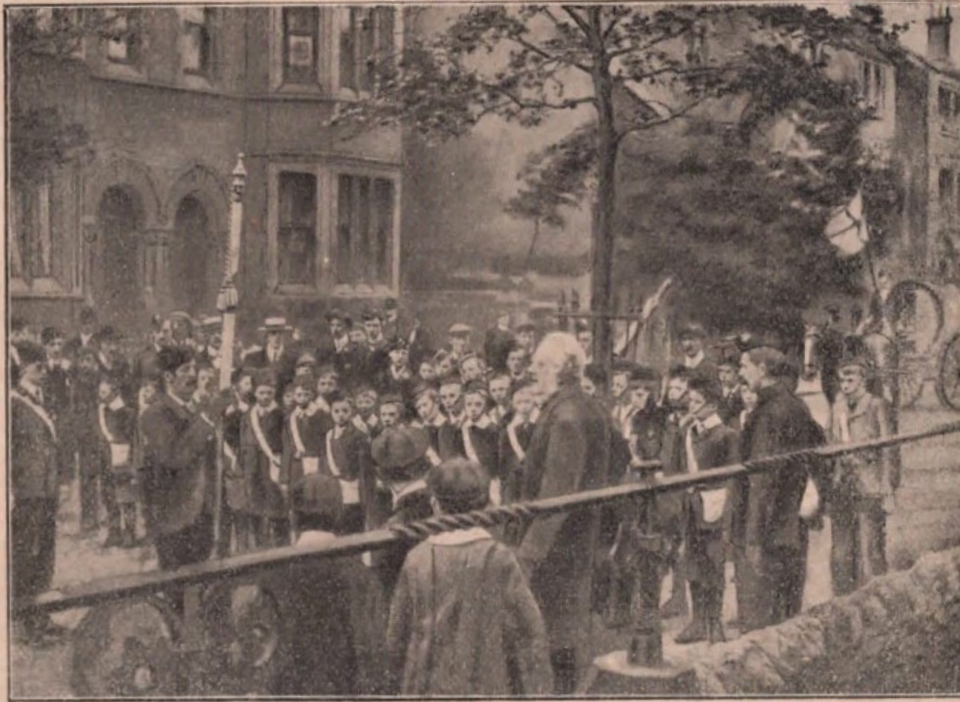
[5th Swindon](#)

[Opening Parson Green](#)

[Donate](#)



Life Brigade Chronicle Vol.2 No.11



NORTH MIDLANDS BATTALION.—The Companies affiliated to the North Midlands Battalion continue to grow in numbers and to increase the circle of their friends. Our illustration depicts one of the most interesting events in their history, which occurred on Whit Monday; the Rev. Dr. Paton, the president of the Battalion, presenting the colours. These are the gift of one of the vice-presidents, Henry Ashwell, Esq., J.P., and consist of a very handsome silk flag, on which is worked the B.L.B. device. The ceremony of presentation had unfortunately to take place without the presence of the donor, but Mr. Ashwell sent the following message, which was read to the assembled Companies :—“If I had been there to speak to the boys I should have urged each one to set before himself a noble ideal for his life, to be faithful to duty, to remember that the credit of the Brigade is partly in his keeping, and to maintain the honour of his flag.” In giving the flag into the custody of Lient. Jackson of the 1st Nottingham Company Dr. Paton, who was in splendid voice, said that those who enlisted under a flag saw in it, not a piece of flaunting silk, but the sign and symbol of the cause for which they were banded together; that every one in the Army understood that the flag was to be defended to the very last drop of blood, and that the members of the Life Brigade, whose glory it was to be organised, “not for themselves, but for others,” should be as loyal, faithful, and devoted to their flag as the best of soldiers. Dr. Paton then invoked the divine blessing on the Battalion and its new colours, and afterwards called for three cheers for Mr. Ashwell; these were heartily given, and three more were added for the good Doctor himself. [Eo.L.B.C.]



Dr J B Paton



From the Archives



Centenary



Our Archivist scanned this newspaper cutting recently, and then wondered if we had the floral display amongst the 30000 photographs in our collection. Fortunately the image had been digitised.

We are still working on digitising the rest of the photo collection and this is a valuable resource when preparing content for the Virtual Museum.

