

40 Years -

and 2nd Alton is still going strong!

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE



How did it all start?

The Boys' Brigade met for the first time in Glasgow, on 4th October 1883. So 1983 was a year of great celebration - the Centenary Year.



Autumn 1984 - and our Company takes shape



Above:
The Company
in 1991



Left:
The Company
in 2009



And in that year, Alton Methodist Church Council decided that a BB Company should be formed. Two leaders were found - Mr Tilley, an Officer in 1st Farnborough BB Company, who lived in Medstead, and Mr Allan, an ex-member of the 130th Glasgow BB Company.

After weeks of planning, helped greatly by the Battalion Secretary, the start date was set : Friday 27th January 1984.

Just five Boys turned up. But soon the word got around. And the rest is history!



Dates for your diary

Welcome to the New Year! As usual, upcoming events are listed below, and in addition there will be our Wednesday evening activities - Band Practice at 7pm and Young Venturers and Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition training at various times.

- Fri 5 Jan Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Wed 10 Jan Expedition training begins.
 Fri 12 Jan Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Sat 13 Jan **Battalion 5-a-side Football** at Aldershot. Leaving from the church at **1.30pm**. Expect to be dropped off at home.
 Fri 19 Jan Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Fri 26 Jan **40th Anniversary** - meet at **7pm** for a joint celebration with Anchors and Juniors, followed by our evening of special activities until the usual time of 9.30pm.
 Sat 27 Jan **Battalion Climbing Event** - details to follow.
 Sun 28 Jan **Anniversary Church Parade** - No, we'll not be marching! Just meet in uniform in the Hall at **9.45am**. Parents warmly invited!
 Fri 2 Feb Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Fri 9 Feb Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Fri 16 Feb NO MEETING - Half-term holiday.
 Fri 23 Feb Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Sat 24 Feb **Battalion Orienteering** at Farnham Park - meet at the church at **1pm**. We expect to get back to Alton around 4.30pm.
 Fri 1 Mar Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Fri 8 Mar Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Fri 15 Mar Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Fri 22 Mar Parade Night, 7.50pm.
 Sat 23 Mar **Battalion Day of Action** - PLEASE keep this day clear, as we need to have a full team to take on the other Companies in various events.
 29Mar-14Apr NO MEETINGS - Easter holidays.
 Fri 19 Apr Parade Night, 7.50pm.

Some dates after Easter

- Fri 10 May **Annual Display** and Parents' Evening.
 Sun 12 May Manning the **Water Station** for the Alton 10mile road race.
 Sat 15 or 22 Jun Battalion **Sports Day** at the Spectrum Centre, Guildford.
 Sun 7 Jul Battalion **Wide Games** (*afternoon*).
 Wed 17 Jul Last meeting of the session - **Walk and Barbecue**.
 10 - 17 Aug Likely dates for **Summer Camp** with 1st Woodley and 2nd Fleet

A huge “Thank you”

. . . . to all our BB Postmen! You did a magnificent job in delivering all the Christmas cards across the town.

Although fewer people choose to send cards these days, the arrival of a card through the letterbox can help to cheer people up, especially if they find Christmas to be a lonely time. And for those who send their greetings, we have provided a reliable service at a fraction of the cost of Royal Mail.

We were pleased to be entrusted with cards from the Town Mayor and from Alton Care, as well as from a wide range of individuals. This year, we delivered more than 820 cards, down somewhat from the thousand that we handled last Christmas.

We must also thank the Church folk who helped with our deliveries - Nancy Buck and Judy Janes, whose sons are ex-members (and even an ex-Captain!) of 2nd Alton BB.



Our first deliveries were made in December 1984, so 2023 is the fortieth year that we have provided this service.

In these 40 years we have delivered 93,645 cards.



Councillor Hill officially hands over the kit

Another huge “Thank you”

. . . . to Councillor Graham Hill of East Hampshire District Council. Through him, we were able to make a successful grant application to the Council, and received £450 to replace some of our old expedition equipment.

We will now enjoy using the rucksack and two new tents, this year and into the future.



Celebrating Jesus' birth, in song!

It was dry. It wasn't too bitterly cold. So the group that went out door-to-door carol singing were able to stay out for over an hour, raising money for the

charity Action for Children. After raising £106 for this good cause, the singers returned to the church for a well-deserved drink and some warm mince pies!



Some of the singers

Some Highlights from our Forty Years



Raising money for Save the Children in 1984
Sponsored Walk from Alresford to Winchester



First Summer Camp at Brockenhurst in 1984
with 1st Farnborough and 1st Fleet



Launch of the Junior Section in 1984



First DofE expedition in 1985



Battalion Fishing Contest, 1990



Dedication of new
Colour, 1990



Launch of the Anchor Boys in 1986





First DofE Silver expedition - Wales, 1989



First DofE Gold practice - Dartmoor, 1990



Church Parade to Assembly Rooms - 1991



First Winter Venture - Peak District, 2005



Launch of Young Venturers, 2017



OLD

The Big Uniform Change, 2007



NEW



At the Fair

Our help in running the "Games Zone" at the Church Christmas fair was appreciated by everyone. Keeping the younger people engaged and busy let parents spend time (and money!) at the Fair - which raised over £900.



Alton Remembers

The Town Remembrance Ceremony was held as usual this year, and, as is the custom, the parade to and from the memorial was led by our band, augmented by Matthew Richards (back in Alton for the weekend!).

Unfortunately Cpl Joshua George, who normally carries the BB King's Colour, was unwell, and so that duty had to fall to Mr Allan!

As the parade made its way towards the cairn, there was a special (low!) flypast by a Chinook helicopter from RAF Odiham - but despite the clatter of rotor blades everyone could still hear our band!

In the afternoon, some members of the band went to Yateley, to lead that Town's Remembrance parade.



Be bold! Go bouldering!



The six Boys who chose to come to the Bouldering walls at the Oakwood Centre near Wokingham soon overcame their fear and enjoyed their activity!



Fancy an expedition ?

Winter isn't the best time for camping, so our expeditions take place between April and October. But learning about navigation, campcraft, cooking, safety and first aid can all be done indoors, in preparation for the summer activities.

The classes will be held on Wednesday evenings, from 10th January until Easter. If you're interested - as part of DofE or Young Venturers - please speak to Mr Allan.

Then you can look forward to getting outside into the great outdoors in the coming summer.

What's next on the horizon ?

There's lots to look forward to! First up is the Five-a-side Football being held at the Garrison Sports Hall in Aldershot. A fortnight later, there's a visit to a Climbing Centre for an informal evening of activity with Boys from other BB Companies.

We hope to have a good entry for the Orienteering Challenge in February. It's being held in Farnham Park, a new area for this competition. The plan is that the Scout Hall at Upper Hale will be used as the base for the event. The Scouts are even offering to provide drinks and hot food, although the down side is that you'll definitely have to pay for your own!

Battalion Competitions

We've enjoyed a couple of Battalion events recently, even if we haven't come home with any trophies!

Jonathan was the only Boy who was willing to take up the challenge of the Table Tennis tournament, and he finished in a creditable 6th place out of 16 players. At the chess, we were again unable to field a full team, but the star of the show was Jackson from Juniors, who finished up in 4th place overall!



Jonathan and Jackson concentrate hard

Wild, windy, and wet wet wet

. . . . the Winter Venture that nearly didn't happen!

When our Welsh Bunkhouse booking was cancelled at 3pm on Christmas Eve, it seemed that the Venture would have to be called off. But we managed to find another place that was able to accommodate us - a small converted barn south of Brecon. Phew !

However, it wasn't all good news - the Met Office were forecasting Storm Gerrit , with winds of up to 70mph and almost continuous rain.

And they weren't wrong ! It meant that hillwalking was out of the question - the Mountain Forecast said it would be difficult to make progress in buffeting, gusty wind. So we changed plans, and chose low-level walks instead.

We explored the woodland below Sugar Loaf on Wednesday - with Mr A having a spectacular slip on a tarmac road! On Thursday we visited Sgwd-yr-Eira waterfall - and

this must be the highlight of the whole Venture. Although the stream was in spate, with brown water crashing over the fall, we managed to walk behind the curtain of water!

We enjoyed cooking our meals, and playing games of Sequence and Trivial Pursuit in the cottage, with the log burner chucking out plenty of warmth. And Friday saw us walking in Garwnant Forest - where we briefly saw blue sky!

