

First Dromara Presbyterian Church

The Link



Remembering well!

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8- "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth..."

You'll discover that this edition of 'The Link' is dedicated to the Diamond (60th) anniversary of our Boys' Brigade (BB) Company and remembering its work and witness in our church and community. What does remembering look like?

No doubt, those who have come through the ranks of our BB have been taught many lessons worth remembering - on camps, expeditions or normal badgework evenings in the hall; lessons that will have reinforced the teaching of parents and teachers, "don't speak with your mouth full", "Stop! Look! Listen" or "always brush your teeth before bed." However, I'm sure if our BB officers were asked by an Anchor Boy, a Junior Sectioner or a Company Lad, "what is the most important thing I should remember?" I'm sure the answer would be the answer given above from Ecclesiastes 12:1. "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth." This is much more important advice.

The book of Ecclesiastes, in the Old Testament, contains the musings of Solomon, now a wise old man, looking back and reflecting on his life, with hindsight and experience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It's almost like he, as a wise old BB officer, is putting his hand on the shoulder of a young lad of 15 or 16 in the Company Section and says, "this is what I want you to remember. Don't live like me. Live for the Lord now in your youthful days so you don't have regrets, like me, in my senior days." This is the main thing to remember, even as our BB celebrates this year. We see 3 things that help us to remember well.

Remember your Creator!

This is the main thing we all need to remember. When Solomon uses the word remember, he's not speaking about all those lines you perhaps had to learn for a BB display, the first-aid or map

reading skills before an orientation or the steps you had to remember for marching. This remembering isn't just something we do in our head. Instead when the Bible speaks of remembering it's an active and deliberate thing. It is a thinking that leads us to action. It is a commitment. Just like every year, during the annual BB church service of enrolment, promises are made to follow God, serve Him



and the company for the ensuing year. This remembering involves a changed life. It shapes our character and our conduct. "Remember your Creator" we're told. This is the God who made, formed, moulded, fashioned, crafted, sculpted - you and everything you see! You owe your life, talents, abilities, sight and breath to Him! He made, knows, watches, follows you! God made you, He put you in your family, He allowed you to be a part of the BB (perhaps!) your church, your family. You are blessed in Him and because of Him. The BB, as it creates an environment of safety, friendship, activity, enthusiasm, bible teaching and more, is a little picture of the church, where we come to learn about this Creator who we are to remember - that's why we love to come to church, to hear about Him. Basically, take God, the Creator, seriously! That's what we remember.

Remember your Creator, now!

Maybe, when it comes to trusting in Jesus Christ, you are of the opinion that you'll leave it for now and have some fun first. Especially if you're someone reading this and you're currently in or have just left BB. You think you will have time for spiritual things when you're old. You might even be a Christian reading this and think simi-



larly, that you have trusted in Jesus Christ, but the repercussions, the living for Him in your life can wait until you're older and there isn't as much fun to be had. Just like a little boat, you think you can drift backwards and forwards and bob along until it's time to live your life for Christ. But that is just the point. Drifting further and further out to sea is not safe or secure. There is a reason the BB have the anchor as their emblem, it comes from Hebrews 6:19, "We have this as a

sure and steadfast anchor of the soul." This verse is speaking about Jesus. He is the anchor we all need. The BB hymn says,

"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, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love."

Take this anchor! He doesn't want your leftovers, He doesn't want the scraps. He wants your best years, and He wants to anchor you now! Your mind is sharpest in your youthful days, your limbs and joints are at their most nimble in your youthful days, your brains are able to soak in knowledge and process it more quickly and speedily in your youthful days - any late converters to faith in Jesus Christ will no doubt be reading this and saying the same thing, they wish they had remembered their Creator in the days of their youth, but you can! Remember Him, now!

Remember your Creator, now, before it's too late!

The first verse shows us, when we read it to its end, "before the evil days come and the years draw near." Life does not last forever. Founded

in Glasgow in 1883, (this year is the 140th anniversary of the entire movement) by Sir William Alexander Smith, the stated object of the Boys' Brigade is "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." In many ways, this motto is as crucial as ever, as it helps us remember our Creator now, before it is too late.

Picture King Solomon here, but instead of wearing his state crown and holding the symbols of state and office, wearing his BB Captain's regalia, his Officer's cap and tie, with his shoes polished and trousers and shirt pressed perfectly, just how a BB Captain would have them. He is standing with his hand on the shoulder of a young anchor boy, a junior section lad, a company section teen about to be discharged after 13 years of commitment and dedicated service, or a recipient of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, prior to marching into Buckingham Palace to shake hands with Monarchy - and with his hand placed tenderly on that young shoulder he describes the aging process. This isn't the aging of the organisation and the changes that happen in 60 years in uniform, badgework or health and safety, but instead, this is the aging process of life. We can relate with each of these descriptions:

"Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain." The pace of life quickens. Many BB boys will remember summer camps in the Mourne Mountains, the Lake District or other parts of the UK, and when you look back you remember the long, bright, sunny evenings, perhaps having to go and take a dip in the bubbling streams nearby and the lighting of campfires and singing and telling stories all night long. But then, you also remember the camps that were an absolute wash out. Your tent was damp from the torrential rain, your tent wasn't pitched correctly so water drip, drip, dripped into the tent and everything you had with you was drenched.

Life is like this, the sunshine turns to rain, especially as time marches on and we age. Caring for others, working long hours, bills, and obligations to pay for and take responsibility for.

Solomon continues, "In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, ⁴ and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low— ⁵ they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets— 6 before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, ⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. 8 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity."

We see descriptions of failing eyesight, creaking joints, light sleeping, teeth needing replaced, grey hair, even receding hair. Eventually, the mechanism of life stops working. All is vanity! At this point the Old BB Captain wishes he could turn the clocks back - he wouldn't misspend his youth, he would live it now, for his Creator, whilst he can. But you can! Don't put it off, live life now, to the full! (John 10:10)

After all, "Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever" (Genesis 6:3). These are words for all of us. Words that help us to remember our Creator, now, before it's too late! Isn't God, the Captain of our Salvation, a good and kind God? He even writes about the aging process in such loving, poetic, and even humor-

He knows all about hands, feet, ous ways. mouths, and eyes. He knows about it all. This is surely encouraging, this is worth remembering. Perhaps as you read this, you remember the formation of the BB here, or you are now well and truly through its ranks. You are not too old to remember well and bear fruit. Your usefulness in the kingdom isn't relegated to the past. You've breath in your lungs and your time is not up. It's not too late to be in prayer for our BB, to encourage the leaders and boys of our BB, to remember the work and witness of our BB in our church and community for 60 years, well! It's not too late to remember the Savour who is "sure and steadfast" and who's "Kingdom amongst boys" is extended. Why would you not trust Him?

I've quoted the traditional BB song, "Will your Anchor hold" already - please take time and listen to this modern piece, One day by Matt Redmond. In it he quotes some familiar and traditional words, too. He says,

"One day You'll make everything new, Jesus
One day You will bind every wound
The former things shall all pass away
No more tears

One day You'll make sense of it all, Jesus
One day every question resolved
Every anxious thought left behind
No more fear.

When we all get to heaven
What a day of rejoicing that will be
When we all see Jesus
We'll sing and shout the victory"

Congratulations! We celebrate 60 years of First Dromara Boys' Brigade Company. We remember with fondness. Please, remember your Creator, now, before it's too late!

Rev Scott Moore

First Captain reflects on his BB highlights

Former 1st Dromara BB Captain Nelson Andrews has been reflecting on some of the highlights of his 19 years at the helm of the Company.

A Dromore man, Nelson, together with Bobby Woods (father of Elizabeth Aiken) took on the task of leading the newly reformed Company in 1963.

The Company had been originally formed and associated with St John's Parish Church in the late 1950s by Rev Long but eventually the Company ceased to operate.

Nelson explained how the four local ministers subsequently got together - Mr Wright (Covenanters), Mr Long (St John's), Mr Johnston (2nd Dromara) and Mr McComb (First Dromara) - to put together a new company.

He added: "I was a lieutenant in Third Dromore but lived at Kinallen, so they asked me if I would take over the new Company." At the time Nelson was 24 years of age.

"I took it on in St John's hall and the four ministers were four chaplains. They took it in turn, I think from memory, it was on a monthly basis. They each took a bible class for a month."

In the first year of formation there were 18 boys in the Company section (11-18 years). For years there was only a Company section with the Juniors and Anchor boys coming along at a later date.



When the Junior section was formed, brother and sister Reggie and Betty Jess were the leaders. The anchor boys were in the charge of Mrs Hanna (Covenanters) and Mrs Jess (St Johns).

Nelson continued: "It was always very much a joint enterprise between the churches which is quite unusual.

"I have never heard of a BB Company being officially attached to more than one church.

"I'm not aware of two ministers being chaplains, even though we had four ministers for chaplains. I thought it was quite unique because it shows great co-operation."

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Nelson has a number of highlights of his time as Company Captain.

"I was always keen on squad drill and in 1977 we won the NI district squad drill competition. It was quite an achievement. For those who are keen on drill, it's the ultimate - the best drill squad in Northern Ireland, and we were the best drill squad that year.

"We were a drill company. I was always interested in drill. We were second and third a couple of times before we actually won it. Bruce Steele was the squad commander.

"I personally feel that drill is important and still do. It's discipline - I've seen Companies trying to do drill, and I don't know why, but they just can't do it. I feel it's good for discipline and the personal achievement is fantastic when you do well. We competed for a number of years and were close but never actually won it until 1977. It was a very proud day.

"Another highlight was a new event organised for Northern Ireland region - orienteering - and we



Back row from left: Freddie Heenan, Gordon Steele, Raymond Walsh and Malcolm Ball. Front: Reggie Jess, Nelson Andrews, Bobby Woods and Adrian McDowell.

won it, the first year. We were on a mountain or hillside or forest and you got markers and you would have punched your card and whoever was back first got a point.

"It was open to all companies in Northern Ireland and Lylehill in Co Antrim were our closest runner-up and they were very good too. William Jess, who was aged around 15 at the time, was the outstanding competitor on the day. He stood out for his speed - he was always back first and that was how it was decided.

"I was the best in the social class, so I was all chuffed. One of the days I was back first and I said 'there's something wrong here if I'm back before William Jess'. One of the points was on the top of a mountain surrounded by forest trees and there was no path into this place. It was a check point and you had to look where you came out to know where to go down again, so several got lost and I was fortunate that I got away immediately."

Another highlight during Nelson's 19 years in charge was the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

"Several boys took part, but Reggie Jess won The Duke of Edinburgh Gold and he and Betty and myself flew to London and that was some achievement then. We went to Buckingham Palace into the room and the Duke of Edinburgh came in and handed the awards to another officer who then gave them out individually. The Duke didn't give them personally hand to hand, but he came into the room and talked to everybody. He talked to the parents and then he talked to the recipients. So that was a highlight. I remember he asked how the parents reacted to the boys' achievements - something to that effect and he was very pleasant.

"We met some girls from Third Dromore - which was Banbridge Road Presbyterian - who had got their gold too and they were in the same room at the same time. Reggie would have been around

17 years of age at the time.

"The funny thing was that many of the boys did the scheme, but they didn't do a report and Reggie was the only one that submitted a report. The others had performed to the same standards but didn't submit the report so they didn't get the award.

"We were keen on badge work and we did a crafts class and we constructed a sailing dinghy. It was a Mirror model, after the Daily Mirror because the drawings were available

through the Mirror. We constructed it in the Covenanters shed at the back of the church and we launched it in Begney Lough and we had the Mourne Observer there who did an article on it. It stayed afloat for years, and years and years. And then it went to Ian McCullough's and it wasn't used for years. When somebody took it out apparently it nearly fell apart - I think the joints went. It was made of plywood with fibre glass joints. I would say it took a whole session to build."

Another favourite activity for the boys was canoeing.

Towards the end of his term as Captain, the numbers in the company section had grown to 36. Each meeting lasted from 7.30pm to 10pm.

Nelson added: "Another thing that we were very much involved with were BB camps. The boys at First Dromara teamed up with the company from 1st Comber and for their first camp went to the Isle of Man and we did that for years with First Comber.

"It was quite an adventure for the boys. It was a big thing for many of them. We spent one week under canvas and did that for quite a number of years.

"I remember being in the Isle of man at Port Erin



THE DRILL SQUAD WHICH WON THE 1977 NI FINALS.

and I was adjutant and Jim Magowan was the CO of the camp and someone came to say that someone had let a brake off on a railway carriage on the railway line. We could never find out who did it. It ran into the buffers - it just free wheeled."

There was a swimming pool where they held a gala each year and there was a plate diving competition. "They put tin plates down in the bottom of the pool and you had to dive and see how many you could retrieve and I won it - I got all of them, I think there must have been 11.

"Badgework was an important part of the activities. Badgework included first aid, and many other things. I was very keen on badgework and boys won their presidents and queens badges which was a great achievement . All these things stand the boys in good stead. Then the mothers pinned on their Queens badge on the night of the display onto their arm. It was a very proud moment for them."

After 19 years in Dromara, Nelson left to take up the captain's role at Sloan Street Presbyterian Church. His successor was Ian McCullagh who still holds the role.

Meet the elder

Name: Ian McCullagh

Age: On my last birthday in January, I was 67 years young.

Occupation: I work as an Estate Agent.

Family:

I have been married to Rosemary for almost 38 years.

I was greatly blessed growing up in a Christian home and was brought along to church and the organisations of the church from an early age. Those early habits that were formed have stuck with me and been a great influence throughout my life. I have two brothers, one older and one younger.

How long have you been an elder?

I was ordained as an elder in First Dromara in November 1984.

Tell us about your role with the BB.

I first joined the Boys' Brigade in 1967 as an eleven-year-old. At that stage the 1st Dromara Company did not have Anchor Boys or a Junior Section. I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of BB life and took every opportunity to experience all sorts of activities in the company such as canoeing, sailing, orienteering and a broad range of badge activities. I managed to gain a Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award, a BB President's Badge and Queens Badge.

When my time in the ranks of BB came to an end, I attended an Officer Cadet Company for a year which was excellent training and which led me to become an officer in the company. It also led me to become associated with the 1st Hillsborough Company for a number of years. The terms of the Officer Cadet Company were that in your second year you were placed in another company for further "on-the-job"

training. One year led to another finally lasting 16 years when I decided that one company was enough.

From 1963 up until 1982 Nelson Andrews had been Captain of the Dromara company. However, he was living in Lisburn and belonged to a church in the town. I believe after some persuasion from his home church, he stood down from the captaincy in Dromara to take up this role in his local congregation. That left a vacancy and the Chaplains of the four Dromara churches invited me to take over the position. It does seem like a long time to have been in this role, but it has only been possible because of the unstinting support of many Officers over the years.

Apart from the ongoing work at Company level, I have been involved in various roles over the years at Down Battalion and at Northern Ireland District levels. I had the immense privilege of going on BB teams to Uganda on three occasions to carry out short term projects in building and maintaining a primary school and a high school.

How did you become a Christian?

It will hardly come a surprise when I say that I became a Christian at a BB camp at Largs on the west coast of Scotland in July 1973. I was in a tent with six or seven other boys but in the quietness, after lights out, I made that decision for myself, to ask Jesus into my life.

What difference did it make to your life?

Becoming a Christian does not make all your problems disappear, but it does give you the strength to deal with the problems that come our way. To know that God has all our days planned and that He works everything for good for those who trust Him is a great comfort.



Any words of wisdom?

Ecclesiastes 9 v 10 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might".

What is your favourite hymn and why?

I really enjoy some of the modern hymns such as "In Christ alone, my hope is found" simply because of their words. Some older hymns are timeless such as "What a friend we have in Jesus" and the BB hymn "Will your anchor hold" means a lot to me. However, one of my real favourites is "When peace like a river attendeth my way.....it is well, it is well with my soul". The depth and meaning is simply awesome – verse 3 "My sin – not in part – but the whole, is nailed to His cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul.

What is your favourite verse or passage?

I find that different verses or passages have greater significance at different times. However, one passage which has real significance for me is Romans 12. I read this passage to the school assembly on my last day at school 49 years ago and it has stuck with me over those years. It talks about being saved to serve, not thinking too highly of ourselves and for each of us to do the job that God has given us to do.

Can you tell us something we don't know about you?

Probably not a lot of people in First Dromara know that I was on a team from Friends School in Lisburn that took two Land Rover vehicles overland to a Mission Hospital in Nepal in 1972. Interesting experience!!

Church Records

Deaths

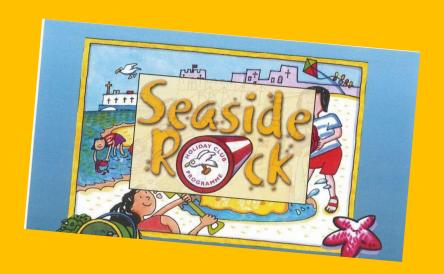
Mr Gary Gray — 3.8.2022 Mr Leslie Graham — 20.10.22 Mr John Clinghan — 1.12.22 Mr Mark Shankly — 5.1.23 Mrs Minnie Elizabeth Walker — 16.2.23

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18

Holiday Bible Club

3rd- 7th July P1-P7 (6:30-8:30pm)

6th-8th July Yr8-Yr12 (9am-3pm)



All welcome!

A look back down through the BB years

Derek Kerr, William Hutchinson (now in Accounty) Galway, Berwyn Walsh and John Kenny. Standing in

A TWENTY-SIX YEARS OLD SUCCESS STORY

Initial meetings of a projected Boys' Brigade Company were held in the Orange Hall, Dromara, in 1956 when the Rev. S. E. Long, in his first year as Rector of Dromara and Garvaghy, thought to bring the organisation to the district for the first time. He had served in the ranks of the 4th Belfast Company, College Square Presbyterian Church and had founded the 5th Belfast, Willowfield Parish Church in 1952.

Soon the Dromara company was affiliated to the Northern Ireland District and to membership of the West Down Group and the boys were made conversant with the time honoured B.B. activities of drill, physical training and games. From its beginning the company welcomed boys of all the churches into membership and that community emphasis has always been maintained in 1st Dromara B.B.

The early years were memorable, for the boys had to be persuaded of the value of drill for discipline and pleasure. Even in those beginning days there were those who were naturals at drill and the company has earned a reputation for always having boys who are fine performers on the drill floor and for drill squads which showed up well in group and battalion competitions. The greatest pleasure at the be-ginning was in the simple physical exercises and games which were often boisterous and noisy. In time the introduction of P.T. equipment has made for much more skilled activity of the kind, though many of the original games retain their popularity.

The first Enrolment Service of 1st Dromara was on 13 January, 1957, in St. John's Church when the preacher was Canon R. W. Kirkpatrick, Dromore Cathedral, and Captain Norman Jeffers and Lieutenant Tom Jeffers of the 5th Belfast company were in attendance. The boys had first worn their uniforms on 12 December, 1958.

When St. John's Hall was onened officially on 9 November, 1957 the 1st Dromara B.B. company formed a guard of honour for the Bishop of the Diocese, the Right Rev. F. J. Mitchell, D.D., and Mr. John E. Balley, J.P., M.P. Parliamentary Secretary to the Mimistry of Agriculture who deputised for the Lord Wakehurst, Governor of Northern Ireland, who was unable to attend because of illness. Mr. Bailey, a Select Vestry man of St. John's, performed the opening ceremony while the dedication was by the Bishop. By the date of the opening of St. John's Hall the Rector had founded a St. John's Church Girls' Brigade company of which Miss Sadie Thompson was first captain. The girls paraded in uniform, too, and were inspected by the Bishop and Mr. Bailey. The earliest meetings of the G.B. were held in the Rectory, now Dromara House.

Incidentally the local sergeant of the R.U.C. in charge of traffic on the day was the now Assistant Chief Constable, Mr. Michael Forde.

While efforts were made to get help with the running of the com-B.B. officers from pany and one towns, neighbouring Warrant Officer from Dromore Cathedral company, Mr. Kenneth Martin, gave assistance for a few months, there was no-one to take over permanently. That meant that the Rev. S. E. Long had to captain and officer the company single-handed though he had the benefit of Mr. Robert Thompson's work as treasurer and man of all parts.

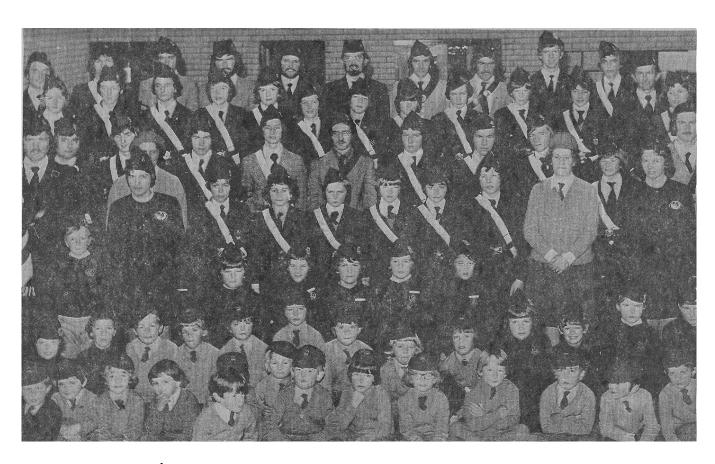
In spite of the weakness of officer strength the company matured sufficiently to have its annual enrolment services when the parade was led by Dromara Highland Pipe Band - on the second occasion the band was the newly formed flute band of the Dromore Cathedral B.B. company - and annual camps with (Willowfield Belfast 5th Church), the 44th Belfast (Christ Church), and the 47th Belfast (St. Silas' Church), companies under canvas in Wales and the Isle of Man. The one B.B. area service in Dromara -- the West Down Group - was held in those days, 8 June, Captain Patterson, with Banbridge Road, Dromore company in charge of the parade from the Orange Hall through the village to St. John's Church where the Rector was the preacher.

When it became apparent that the Rev. S. E. Long could not take the company on into advanced activities, badge work and competitions, he was forced to close down the company white constantly seeking men and ways to put it on a permanent basis. Finally he made overtures to the ministers of the other Dromara Churches and after lengthy consideration they joined him in the reformation of the company which had its first drill night on 6 November 1963 with Mr. Nelson Andrews, a lieutenant in the Bann Road, Dromore company, as captain.

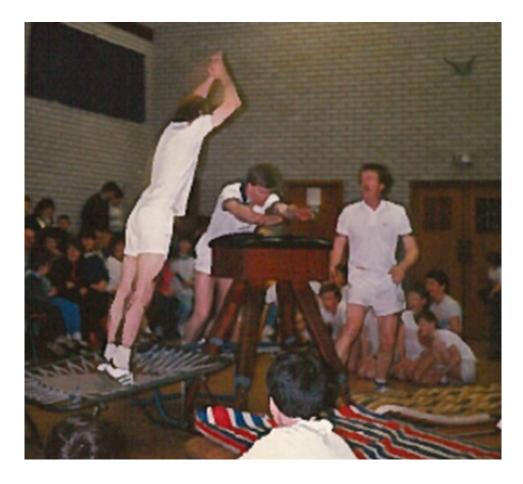
Mr. Andrews was introduced to the chaptains by the Rev. I. Minister Wright, Renwick Reformed Presbyterian Dromara Church, and he opened a new era of B.B. activity which produced strong company, a large officer staff and thriving junior and Robins sections in time. He resigned from the captaincy of 1st Dromara at the end of the 1981-82 session to take over the captaincy of the Sloan Presbyterian Lisburn, Street, Church's company, of which he is an elder.

Mr. Ian McCullough has succeeded Mr. Andrews as captain of 1st Dromara on the appointment of the chaplains. Mr. McCullough has come up through the ranks of the company and has all the qualifications for this onerous and responsible post. He has that primary requirement, a deep commitment to the philosophy of B.B. and a loyalty to his First Dromara Presbyterian Church of which he is a member of committee.

Looking back on the early days of the 1st Dromara B.B. Company is to be reminded of boys who are now men and fathers with their own B.B. sons. The extent of the B.B.'s influence on its members is not possible of evaluation, for there are many other formative influences in a young men's life but there is reason to believe that its effects in the formative years are lasting and beneficial. There can be no doubt that the coming of this organisation to Dromara twenty-six years ago was a happening of some consequence to the churches and community and to churches and communities elsewhere.



1st Dromara B.B. – Early 1970's



Annual Display 1985







Building your Skills Training, 2014



Annual Display, 2016

Duke of Edinburgh scheme—The Mournes 1980





Gold Expedition Supervision



Training in the Mournes 2012



Gold Award Presentation
St James Palace, London, 2003
L-R: Ian McCullagh, Ian Wallace, David Spiers, Brian Small, Craig McDowell,
Adam Heanen, Keith McDowell, Stephen Young

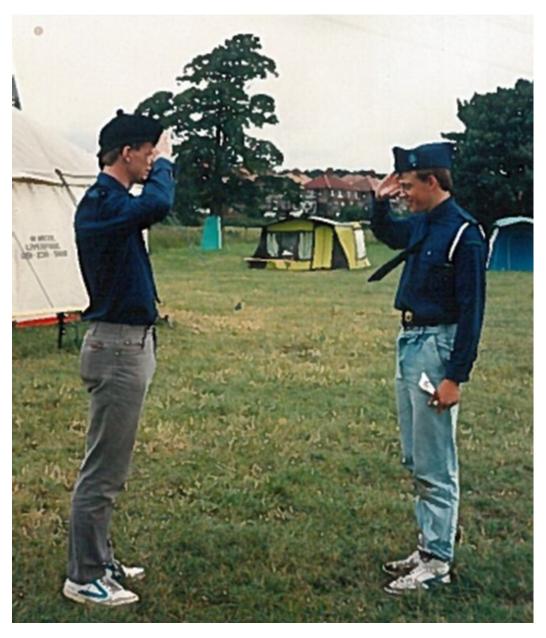


Level 2 Expedition Supervision Training Mournes, 2016



Canoe Instruction, 1979





Summer camps

Above:

More-

cambe

1982

Left: Morecambe 1988.



Down Battalion Millennium Project Kawondwe Primary School Nakasongola, Uganda





1st Dromara Members of the 2000 Team Harold Kerr and Ian McCullagh





1st Dromara Members of the 2009 Team Left to right: Scott Carson, William Wallace, Aaron Hamilton, Robin Harte, Stewart Mitchell, Ian McCullagh



1st Dromara Members of the 2014 Team Left to right: Nicky Gamble, Marty Redmond, Matthew Harper, Timothy McCracken, Zac Hanna, Ian McCullagh

The 60th annual 1st















Dromara BB display



















































Annual 1st Dromara

GB display































