



It's FAB!

*The Newsletter for Friends of Ayr Battalion
Issue 81 September 2020*

Happy 20th Birthday to FAB Newsletter!!

First the Good News:

You may or may not be aware that this is a special issue of your Friends Newsletter as the very first newsletter was issued to members in September 2000. That makes FAB 20 years old this month and an important milestone in its support for the work of Ayr Battalion. It is great credit to the Battalion that in that time we have had only two Newsletter Editors with Robert Gemmell from 1st Troon producing them for the first ten years and myself the next ten. At this time in the work of the Brigade when Companies are closing through lack of support or restrictions on where and when meetings can take place it is good to know that Friends of Ayr Battalion continues to support the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom here in Ayr Battalion. The not so good news is that the London Stedfast Association is in imminent danger of closing down. In its day it was one of the largest Stedfast Associations but a lack of volunteers coming forward to fill vacant posts means that it may have to close. They are hoping to hold a special meeting soon to resolve the present problems but Covid Restrictions may well prevent that from taking place.

Greetings from Stonehaven:



View of Stonehaven from the road to the War Memorial

I am not quite sure if it should be classified as good or bad news but during August Anne and I have relocated and are now staying in Stonehaven. This means that I will be working remotely on the compilation of future issues of your newsletters and we will have to see how that works out in

practice. Should anyone locally feel that they would like to undertake the role of FAB Editor then please get in touch with either the Battalion Secretary or myself and we will try to help get you started. In the meantime should you need to get in touch with future material for the newsletter my new phone number is listed at the end of this issue and my email address remains the same. The really sad news for me is that there is no longer an active BB Company in Stonehaven and the nearest one is in Newtonhill. Who knows though, I might manage to make contact with them at some point when restrictions ease.

Background to Present Position:

At the time of writing the only Company that I am aware of to reopen is the 17th Ayr (Castlehill) with the 8th Ayr (St James) due to reopen on Friday 23rd October. Other than that it would appear that the rest of the Battalion is unable to operate for one reason or another. Companies are having to work round a myriad of restrictions from the Church of Scotland, Local Authorities and even the Brigade itself. To give readers some idea what Companies are having to cope with the Brigade have produced a publication entitled Stronger, Safer, Together - Framework. This includes sections on Guidance, a Company Action Log and a Covid Ready Risk Assessment. All Company Captains and Leaders in Charge of Age Groups are expected to read this framework and be involved in reviewing and completing the Company Action Log and Covid-Ready Risk Assessment. Having recently been involved in the preparation of the Church of Scotland Covid Risk Assessment for the reopening of Kingcase Church I shudder to think just how many trees are being cut down to provide the paper for all these publications. Among the current restrictions are the following:

Maximum group size of children/young people and leaders is 30.
Social distancing of 2 metres required for young people aged 12 and over.
Face coverings must be worn by all persons aged 11 and over.
Leaders should restrict movement between groups meeting on the same day.

I can only assume that floor soccer is not on the menu at this time!!

In addition when schools are able to open in something like a near normal situation it is difficult to follow how school lets and church hall use cannot be allowed to be utilised to allow youth work to restart.

I can only wonder what Sir William Smith would have made of the present restrictions. Drill at 2 metres distancing would not be easy for a start!!

An Update from the Smith Memorial Museum:

You will not be surprised to hear that my planned trip to Thurso this year has had to be cancelled. I am currently sitting with four boxes of material for the museum and once restrictions on meetings are eased I intend to travel north with them. Among the material now being held in the museum are a number of tapes and CDs recorded by the BB Boy Soprano Derek Barsham which have been passed to us by museum supporter John Russell from Poole. Derek's widow is hoping that at some point she will be able to return to the UK and inter his ashes in the family grave. It is good to know that some of his recordings have found a home in the Thurso Museum. As it is an integral part of the halls belonging to the 1st Thurso Company they were not allowed to open over the summer months and planned work on a number of displays had to be put on hold. Rest assured I will keep you up to date with the ongoing work in the museum and your newsletter will have details of recent additions to it once I get a chance to unpack some of our many boxes.

Meantime the museum are selling dishtowels featuring the Founder and Pennyland House. These are easily posted and are available from the Company at a cost of £5 plus postage. Contact the Company at 07811 767950 for more details.

The Clansman Public Bar:

Always on the lookout for subject matter for inclusion in the newsletter I recently came across the Clansman Public Bar in Stonehaven. This is just a short distance from our current flat and I thought that readers might be interested in seeing a picture of it. I was going to go in for a small refreshment but thought that the other customers were a bit wooden!!!

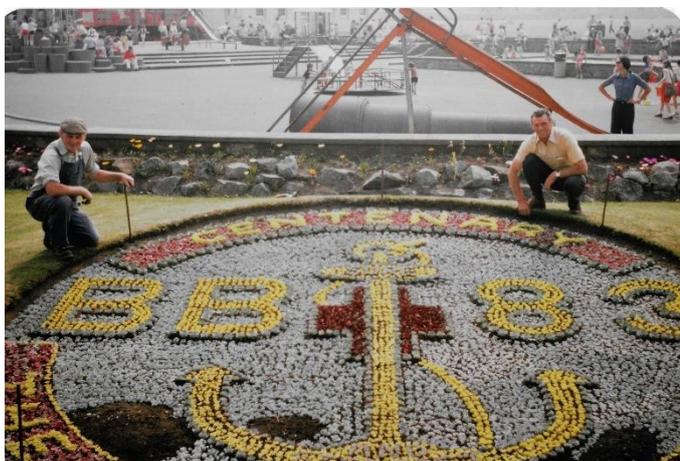


The Clansman Public Bar

It just goes to show what can be done to brighten up a front garden! Must admit though the customers are more trunk than drunk!!

Down Memory Lane:

I recently had two photographs of the floral displays created by Ayr Parks Department for the Brigade's Centenary in 1983 passed to me. It is a throwback to the days when the local council were happy to support youth work and a reminder of the expertise now lost to the present council.



Floral displays for the Brigade's Centenary in Ayr seafront

Thought for the Day:

Given that much of my BB material is still in boxes and might not see the light of day before we get to our new abode I was wondering what I could include as my Thought for the Day in this issue. Luckily in a blue folder which I use for Council Meetings I found the following verse and have included it here. It is taken from an old issue of the London Stedfast Association's newsletter called The Onlooker.

Memories of Camp

*The drums beat out a crisp Tattoo
The bugles sounded clear
The Boys' Brigade were off to Camp
With Boys from far and near.*

*The Colours were held proudly high
And Boys marched with their Band
Belts glistened in the morning sun
They're off to Sea and Sand.*

*The Camp field beckons - tents in rows
With flagpole standing tall
The BB Flag is hoisted high
- And then "First Dinner Call."*

*The Church Parade - a great event
We pack the Chapel tight
The local folk all welcome us
A full church - what a sight.*

*The daily swim and lots of sports
The daft Plum Duff Parade
We'll remember this in later years
Life in the Boys' Brigade.*

*The friends we make, and keep for life
And places that we see
With habits formed that helped us grow
Lord - Thank You for the BB.*

I am always looking out for pictures or stories about Company events and if you have any material available please pass it to me at the E Mail address below. Thanks.

Your points of contact for all the information you would like to see included in, or deleted from this newsletter or any comments about it are as follows:

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[The web site has recently been updated and well worth a visit if you have not already seen it.](http://ayr.boys-brigade.org.uk)