

Stedfast News

The Newsletter for former members, serving officers, associates and friends of The Boys' Brigade in Brighton Hove and District www.brightonstedfast.org.uk.



Winter 2025

The Object of The Stedfast Association

To further the Object of The Boys' Brigade and to foster the spirit of Comradeship between past and present Members of the Brigade and to render Service to Others

The Object of The Boys' Brigade

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

Stedfast Committee

President; Peter Ford

Vice President ; Geoff Fitch

Chairman; - Geoff Fitch

Chaplain; Brian Pickard

Treasurer; Alan Caperon

Secretary; Alan Caperon

Membership Secretary; Vacant

Committee;
Les Russell, Sue Standen,
Dave Norman,

Newsletter Editor, Terry Pomfrey

The Brighton Stedfast Association Committee

invites YOU to attend our

**Annual Reunion
on**

Sunday 22nd March 2026

**from 2pm
Guests to arrive
at 2.15pm
the service
commences at 2.30pm**

**followed by tea and
refreshments and the
AGM.**

Dear Stedfast members,

After a lovely September we had the first of two very important steps on October the Fourth with a good number of celebrated Founder's Day members, with a magnificent meal organised by Les Russell followed in November by the second step as we and countless B.B. Members celebrated Remembrance Sunday.

Now, together with our brothers and sisters in the Brigades, from around the world, we break into a March towards Advent and the wonder of Christmas morning. As we look forward to this tumultuous event, we must especially remember those who are suffering as Persecuted Christians in so many areas of Africa and the East, as well as those who, not being Christians, are involved in tragic warfare in so many areas.

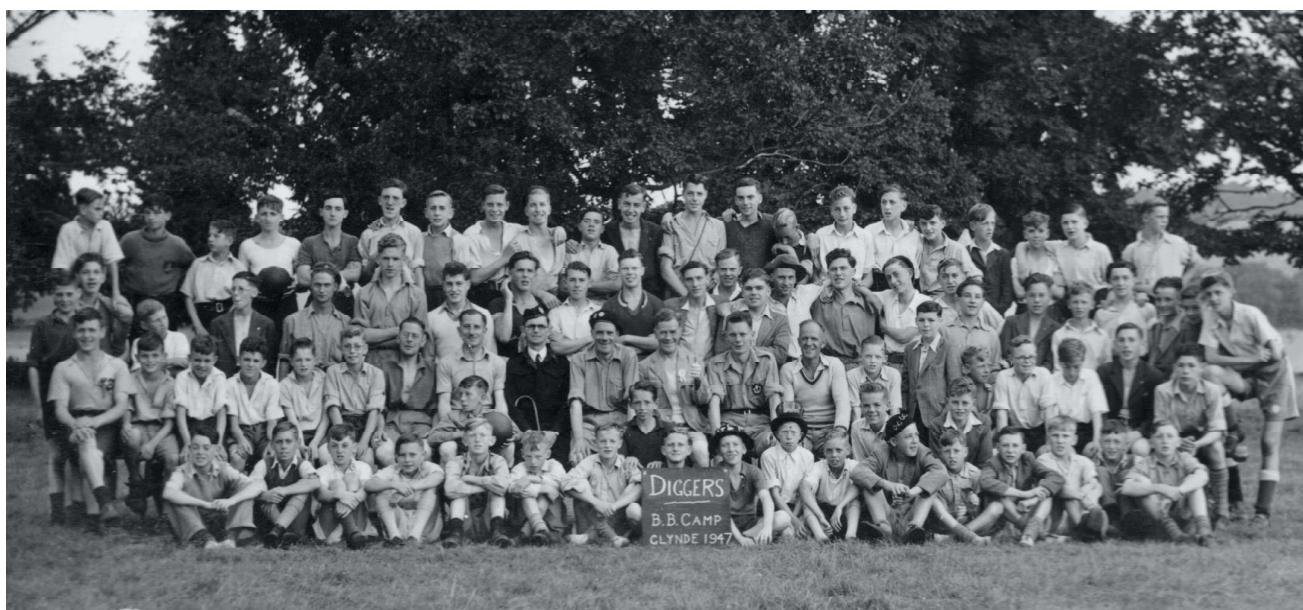
Let us however keep alive the wonder of Christmas, both in our lives and in our families.



Although it seems a long time ago now, the Battalion spent an amazing week in camp at Glynde, and the great spirit throughout the camp was very evident. As usual, the weather was good, the food was good, and it was an example of what really good camping should be. I have started a collection of postcards and other photos related to Glynde Camp throughout the years, and if anyone comes across any appropriate photos, they will be very welcome to let me know, and perhaps they could get them together and pass them on at the 2026 Reunion.

In conclusion, my very best wishes for Christmas and for 2026.

Peter Ford, Brighton, Hove and District Stedfast Association President



Glynde Camp 1947 Diggers

EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

As I sit down to write these lines, I have had to put the lights on and turn on the heating.

The evenings are fast closing in and soon we will be in the deep grip of winter.

I am thinking of those who do not have any form of luxury, either because of homelessness poverty, natural disaster, or war.

How blessed are we to live in a land where there are people and organisations who work tirelessly to alleviate poverty and homelessness, and to ease the suffering of those affected by conflict.

We will soon be singing “Peace on earth and good will to all people” whilst bearing witness through the news delivered to us via our TV and radio to some of the most violent acts ever by mankind.

I sincerely wish for a Christmas that will bring true peace, joy and happiness to you and the whole of the world.

A joyful Christmas and a 2026 full of peace.

Stedfastly Yours Terry

IN MEMORIAM

Michael Drake 13th Brighton

Chris Benson of the 1st Shoreham and 1st Lancing

We send Our Deepest Sympathy and Condolences to Their Family and Friends.

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

A Typical BB Christmas

I have been invited to share some of my memories of past BB Christmas activities which involved the lads of the 4th Eastbourne Company.

I remember that Christmas started the middle of November with the Anchor Boys. Each week the boys would complete some art or craft work which was saved by the staff and at the final session before the Christmas break each child went home with a large box of goodies including presents for parents together with a gift from the officers. For the Junior Section similar activities were arranged with simple toys and decorations not only for the lads to take home but some to sell at the church bazaar. Does your church still hold Bazaars?

The bazaar was one of the money raising activities of the church and the Company Section provided some of the manual labour setting up stalls and providing lads to serve where needed. The lads also collected items to sell on the various stalls and then when the bazaar was finished helped to clear the rooms for church the next day. The men of the church were always very grateful.

One of the best remembered Christmas activities was the pantomime, featuring all the staff in costume and almost word perfect. The story, if I remember right, was a cross between Dick Whittington and Sleeping Beauty with the final song being 'You'll never walk alone' I don't think it won any 'Oscars' but was much appreciated by parents and boys.

The question that I reflect on now is, what influence did we officers have on our lads over the Christmas period and do they remember the story of the greatest happening the world has ever known? Were our boy's lives affected in any way by what was said in devotions. Do they still sing carols under their breath? I would love to know.

Blessings to all as we prepare once again for Christmas.

James Stirmey

We thank Jim Stirmey for covering for Rev. Bryan Pickard by writing the Chaplains piece. We wish Bryan better health and pray for a speedy return to his duties as Stedfast Chaplain.

Chairman and Vice President

A Sporting Life

My family have always been sports men and women. Mum was a strong swimmer and won the Brighton Pier to Pier Race. Dad played football and my brother Barry followed in his footsteps, playing professionally for Brighton and Salisbury City. Barry was 5 years older than me but 5 years younger than Peter, who played Rugby for Hove Rugby Club and The Army.

I followed in Mum's footsteps by taking up swimming. I also competed in the Sussex Schools Sports in the discus and javelin. I won the discus event and went on to the Southern area finals at Crystal Palace. I was not a natural athlete so I concentrated on my swimming. In 1968 my times were such that I was looking to qualify for the Mexico Olympics.

I enjoyed football but did not have my older brothers' talent. I played in the local leagues but found my niche' in Refereeing and coaching.

A number of us from the 13th Brighton and from Bevendean started a team called Paragon in the mid sixties and played in the Sunday league soon after receiving our discharge certificates from the 13th.

First in the back row was Roger(Paddy) Flynn who's Dad was an Ice Hockey referee. I'm standing between him and the goalkeeper. To the right of the goalie is John Bishop, who was a prolific goal scorer and had trials with Chelsea. Second from the right in the back row is Bill Dean, one of trio of lads from Hornby Road in Bevendean. In the front row with the ball is Alan(Robbie) Ollis with Peter Ilott on the right. So the 13th made up almost half of the team.

In the Boys Brigade I was introduced to a number of sports and attained my Arts & Crafts badge by doing fencing and judo. I was also introduced to Stoolball at camp and played for Outlaws, a local team with Brian and Barry Griffin.

In 1968 I was working at Creed's at Hollingbury where I made friends with Pat Richardson, an Irishman who played bowls at Carlton Bowls Club on the corner of Preston Road and Preston Drove. In 1984 we moved from Brighton to Ringmer and I found the travel to Brighton too much so I joined Lewes Bowls Club. In 1992 I was runner up in the club championship and the pairs with Jim Edwards. I was playing well and I was approached by a friend to play for Ringmer which made more sense as there was so little travelling. I played there for 17 years until we moved house again and I played for several clubs in the Eastbourne and Hailsham area.

It was while I was playing for Ringmer in 2003 that I got the call to play for Sussex. As a 6th generation Sussex man I was immensely proud to wear the shirt. It was away at Nailsworth Mills in Gloucester. I arrived at Grattons Bowls Club in Crawley at 9.45 to meet the coach, scheduled to depart at 10 o/c. but it had gone. I drove all the way to Gloucester in driving rain expecting the match to be called off. It wasn't. They said that as we had travelled such a long way the game would be played. I don't remember the result, only that the water was running down my neck inside my waterproof jacket. There was standing water on the green so the conditions were very difficult.

That was my first of 32 county matches over the last 21 years but I was forced to miss the whole of 2024 as I needed a hip replacement. The operation was 100% successful and I have had a full season of bowling this year although it was a slow start and I was only selected for one county match late in the season. Bowls has been good to me and I have had immense enjoyment playing over a long period. I'm still fit enough to play but I coach as much as I play these days as I love to pass on my many years experience to others.

Geoff Fitch, Chairman and Vice President



SECRETARY AND TREASURER REPORTS

Stedfast Annual Reunion on 22 March 2026

The 2026 Reunion arrangements are well in hand and your invitation is included in the newsletter.

Updates on the Reunion will appear on our Stedfast website at <http://brightonstedfast.org.uk> and in the newsletters.

2025 Stedfast Association accounts

The Stedfast Association accounts for the year to 31 December 2025 will be prepared and circulated for your consideration before the Reunion.

Membership

The newsletter includes the Stedfast membership subscription form for 2026 and we would appreciate you keeping us updated with your contact details for your ongoing membership.

Website

Please visit our website at <http://brightonstedfast.org.uk> to view the 2025 reunion photos and where you can see all previous Stedfast newsletters and history.

The Reunion will be held as usual at Southwick Methodist Church, Manor Hall Road, Southwick, West Sussex BN42 4NA.

Stedfast Association committee decisions, office bearers and appointments

We would appreciate members giving consideration to joining the committee in 2026 since our numbers have reduced to 8 members and some of us would like to step back on some of our duties to give others the opportunity to take on responsibilities for the Stedfast Association going forward.

Conclusion

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a healthy New Year and I look forward to welcoming you to the Reunion on Sunday afternoon 22 March 2026 from 2pm onwards.

Yours Stedfastly

**Alan Caperon,
Secretary and Treasurer**

Ernest James Griffin (Nickname BUMBLE)

Born 6th April 1909, Ware, Hertfordshire.

Moved to Brighton for his fathers health.

Joined the old 3rd Brighton, Countess of Huntington, North Street (Now demolished)



He went to camp as a boy and later as an officer. Excelled at sports and gymnastics and also the ability to create humour. The nickname arose among his friends due to his funny way of running. After the war ended in May 1945 he did not come home until November 1946 as he was sent to Palestine as part of the peacekeeping force – not much changes. He somehow managed to wangle his way to Bethlehem on Christmas Eve 1945 to see the celebrations of Christ's birth. Whilst in Palestine he was so glad to see some of the places he read about in his bible at BB bible classes etc.

When back in late 1946 he got back in touch with his BB friends and helped Jack Rovery who was Capt of the 11th Brighton in Lewes Road opposite the 13th. He was back at camp the next year. One thing he was known for was to lead the camp band round the camp at 7am to make sure everyone was awake and used a hugh wooden mallett as a mace. He later acted as a Medical Officer and also entertainments officer where he used to recite limericks at lunchtime (little 5 line ditties) if a boy made one up they would get 6d which was quite a lot in old money. He also used to put together a camp concert on the Thursday night and arrange other things in the event of wet weather. In the early 1950's he formed the new 3rd Brighton based at Christ the King in Patcham with Les Harris and Wilf Constable. Due to lack of facilities and helpers the company folded and some boys moved to the 30th in Patcham and others to the 16th at Stamford Avenue. He continued to keep going to camp his last in 1963 and he died from a heart condition in January 1964.

His friends, Harry Norman Vic Knowles, Jack Shorten to name a few decided to have a memorial and had a lecturn made to keep the camp bible and prayer book in and a blue table cloth with the BB Crest. A memorial service was held at Glynde Camp in August 1964 where his family and friends came. They also planted an oak tree in the cricket ground which unfortunately died a few years later followed by another that suffered the same fate. Later we planted a field maple which thrived and stands tall in the old cricket field today.

Truly a man of his time who is sadly missed.

Brian Griffin.

Lest We Forget

Peter Ford and I met at Brighton War Memorial as arranged. We were both on time and made our way to pay respects to the Royal Sussex Regt with our usual interest on The Day That Sussex Died.

We then went to the bronze plaque showing names of those local people who paid the Supreme Sacrifice during WW 2. I was able to find the name of my Uncle Fred Russell who, with all his shipmates, was sunk by enemy action on December 24/12/41.

We then made our way to Ernest Beal's VC paving stone where we placed the Stedfast Wreath. A kind lady passer-by offered to take photo of us both.

Stedfast donated a second wreath which was laid at Southwick War Memorial during the Civic Parade on Sunday 9th by local BB boys on our behalf.



Founders Day Dinner 4th October 2025

To celebrate the 142nd anniversary of the first Boys' Brigade meeting, a group of 14 members and friends joined together to share an enjoyable evening at Preston Bowls club in Brighton.

Our Vice President, Geoff Fitch opened the proceedings by leading us in a toast to our Patron, His Majesty King Charles III. The camp grace was then sung, before we settled down to eat a very delicious three course meal.

We paused at 8 o'clock, to mark the historical moment when the first meeting opened its doors in Glasgow. Peter Ford our President, shared a few words about that first meeting and the man we need to thank for founding the Boys' Brigade, Sir William Alexander Smith. We shared a toast to our founder, before resuming our meals. The evening concluded with the singing of the vesper.

As you can see in the photos, it was really lovely evening full of fantastic food and fellowship. Our thanks go to committee member Les Russell for organising such a great event, which was enjoyed by all who went.

If you wish to join in the celebrations with us next year, keep a watch out for details in future editions of the newsletter.



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Greetings to you all!

Following a very successful Glynde Camp with our highest number of young people for some years, we have started this session in September with 7 companies in the Battalion. I have had the pleasure of visiting each of these companies over the last couple of months and it has been so encouraging to see the hard work of the officers and helpers, and the enjoyment of all the young people involved.

We have successfully run 'Taskmaster' for the Company and Senior boys, potted sports for the Juniors and an Anchor challenge event. We are looking forward to Christmas parties for all age groups in December.

As we move into the new year, we have a number of events planned including a Seniors Weekend Away and a Battalion Day for all sections to be held in June. A huge thank you to all those on the Executive who have helped to organise these events.

Our Battalion chaplain Sue Conroy chose a bible verse for us to focus on this year "A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13 verse 34). As we approach Christmas I pray that we may all focus on this as we continue to support the young people in our care.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Kind regards,

Darrell Ward

Stedfast Prayer

Gracious God, for the Boys' Brigade and all its members past and present, for their health and well being and peace of mind in advancing years and our members who have died and are now in your care, and that their families are comforted.

We pray for the world;

- For violence to cease - that negotiations bring about lasting stability.
- To calm the aggressors - so violence becomes just a memory
- To enlighten the predigest - so a true dialogue can happen.
- To protect the helpless - who are so often the victims.
- For the aid providers - who put themselves in danger to help others.
- To recognise out differences in race culture and religion - so that all may live side by side.
- For understanding - so that understanding will be at the heart of all things.

Lord God who sent you son to save the world hear our prayers that we pray in and through Jesus Crist your son,
Amen.



Brighton Hove & District Branch

of Former Members, Serving Officers, Friends and
Supporters of The Boys' Brigade

December 2025

President:

Peter Ford

Dear Members, BB Company Officers, Friends and Supporters

STEDFAST ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION SERVICE ON SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2026 from 2pm WITH THE BRIGHTON BOYS' BRIGADE BATTALION followed by tea and refreshments and the Annual General Meeting.

It is with great pleasure that our President Peter Ford. Vice President Geoff Fitch and the Committee invite you to attend our annual Reunion service at Southwick Methodist Church, Manor Hall Road, Southwick.

Our special guests will be the Mayor of Brighton and Hove and the Chairman of Adur District Council whom we expect will both arrive from 2.15pm onwards. We hope that Councillor Andy McGregor will also be able to join us as he has done in recent years. Immediately after the service, afternoon refreshments will be served followed by the AGM.

This invitation is also open to the Battalion Company Officers as in previous years. If members and guests wish to bring their partners and BB friends, they will also be very welcome as we all know how important their support is to our BB lives. We will once again be displaying BB company colours as we have done in previous years which will provide a wonderful reminder of the BB companies we have served in. Please bring your colour stands if possible.

We invite you to visit our website at www.brightonstedfast.org.uk for confirmation of arrangements where you can also see photos of the 2025 reunion. Please make sure that you check the website for these announcements.

Please join us in worship for an afternoon of celebration of The Boys' Brigade in Brighton Hove and District.

Yours sincerely and Stedfastly

**Alan Caperon
Secretary**

Email address: alan.caperon@hotmail.co.uk
72 Poulter's Lane, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 7SZ

Battalion Diary of events 2025 - 2026

DECEMBER

Friday 5th Company and Senior's Christmas Party at 3rd Burgess Hill 7.30pm-9pm
Thursday 11th Anchors and Junior's Christmas Party at 2nd Burgess Hill 6.30pm-7.30pm

JANUARY 2025

Saturday 10th Youth Leader Training Modules 1,2,6,7,8 at 26th Brighton 9am – 6pm

FEBRUARY

Monday 2nd Camp Council at 1st Crawley 7.30pm
Friday 6th to Sunday 8th Seniors Weekend including Skills for King's Badge at Parkwood, Poynings
Tuesday 17th Executive at 26th Brighton 7.30pm

MARCH

Saturday 7th Holiday Leadership Training at 26th Brighton 10am – 4.30pm
Tuesday 24th Anchor's and Junior's Easter Party The Gattons School Burgess Hill?

APRIL

Tuesday 14th Executive at 26th Brighton 7.30pm
Thursday 30th Juniors, Company and Senior's Swimming?

MAY

Saturday 9th Company Management Training at 26th Brighton 10am – 5.30pm
Monday 18th Battalion AGM at 26th Brighton 7.30pm

JUNE

Monday 1st Camp Council at 1st Crawley 7.30pm~
Saturday 6th Anchor's, Junior's, Company and Senior's Battalion Day?

JULY

Wednesday 22nd Setting up Marquees at Glynde from 6pm
Thursday 23rd Seniors Advance Party at Glynde starts at 9am
Saturday 25th Company Section Glynde Camp starts at 10am
Saturday 25th Juniors Day Trip at Glynde 10am til 8pm
Friday 31st Glynde Camp Ends 6pm

AUGUST

Saturday 31st Battalion Financial Year Ends



**2026 Reunion will be held at Southwick Methodist Church on
Sunday afternoon 22 March 2026 from 2pm**

The next Newsletter will be Spring 2026

Please submit all contributions as soon as possible, before the end of **March 2026**
(electronically or typed if possible)

To Terry Pomfrey 148 Mile Oak Road Portslade Brighton BN41 2PL.
Email; Pomf3es@virginmedia.com

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Welfare

Please let me know if you are aware of any of our members who are unwell or in need of Support. We will try and help (Contact Alan Caperon)

The Stedfast Association - Brighton is an organisation for past members of The Boys' Brigade Brighton Hove & District Battalion.

If you have been a boy or member of staff in any company past or present within our Battalion you are automatically a member.

Past Members of The Boys' Brigade from all over the world are welcome to join our Association.

To register, contact our secretary:

Alan Caperon 72 Poulter's Lane Worthing, West Sussex BN14 7SZ
alan.caperon@hotmail.co.uk

*To help with the association costs, we would suggest a donation of £10
Associate members now welcome
(cheque's payable to the Stedfast Association)*



Membership Form for 2026

May we remind you that subscriptions are due, the present recommended subscription for members and associate members is £10-00 per year (more/less if you wish).

Subscription/Contribution enclosed £

Cheques payable to "**Stedfast Association**" .. please

Or pay directly to the following bank account:-

Lloyds Bank plc

Account name-The Stedfast Association Brighton

Sort code-30-90-89

Account number-56240860

Company

Name

Address

Tel Number

Post Code

Confirm e-mail

Newsletter via email **OR** Hard copy by post Please indicate in one box

E mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Old Boy..... Officer..... Helper Friend /Supporter..... Band Member

Please return this completed form together with your subscription to:-

The Secretary

Alan Caperon

72 Poulters Lane
Worthing
West Sussex BN14 7SZ

Should you no longer wish to remain on our mailing list, would you also please inform the Secretary by email to alan.caperon@hotmail.co.uk