

THE CHURCH LADS BRIGADE AND THE CADETS

By Roger Ray

In about 1906 a company of the Church Lads Brigade was formed in Slaugham Parish with its HQ in Handcross Mission Hall. The officer in charge was the Rev. H R White, Curate from 1906 to 1910, and the second-in-command was J R Warren. They carried out the drill and were often called out on church parades when they would march from Handcross to the Parish Church. Their uniform was just a pill box hat held on the side of the head with a strap under the chin, a leather belt and a white haversack over the right shoulder.

Around 1911, the Rev. A H Boyd formed a Company of the Kings Royal Regiment with about thirty lads of the Parish with the Rev. W A Dengate and Jim Boyd as lieutenants. I think the local lads thought that this was more like the army as they were dressed like real soldiers right down to their puttees and, from the photographs I have, they looked really smart.

The Cadets met at Handcross every Tuesday evening for drill and at the Old School, Slaugham, every Thursday evening for PT under their Drill Instructor, Ted Jenner. The Rev. Boyd was very keen on boxing and some of the boys did well at the noble art. Percy Godsmark, who lived at Slaugham, showed me the Challenge Cup he won outright by winning it three times. Percy was only 5'8" but was no pushover. Another good boxer was Jim Powell who won the Senior Cup for boxing at Hastings in 1921. Percy Godsmark told me of one or two amusing incidents such as the time when they were boxing at Crawley. Ruben Langridge had one look at his opponent and legged it straight back to Handcross; I think he was rather a tough-looking customer!

The Sergison Shield, which was awarded for foot drill by Sussex companies, was won by Slaugham Cadets from 1920 to 1924 and they won a shield for signalling in 1921. The signalling team was Bob Ellis, Jim Powell, Fred and Percy Godsmark, Fred and George Gravett. The gymnastics team was George and Bert Hygate, Percy and Fred Godsmark, Percy Faulkner and John Gratwick.

Sometimes some of the lads used to go to camp with the Territorials. I read that one year the greater part of the second week was occupied by a four-day march. The first day the regiment marched from Arundel to Chichester under trying conditions; the heat being so great. The second day was even more trying as fully 21 miles were covered; the camp was pitched at Petworth. The third day Storrington was reached and on the fourth day the troops marched via the South Downs to Arundel.

THE CHURCH LADS BRIGADE

By Mrs Ena V. Tulley

The Church Lads Brigade Company was first formed in the Parish by the Rev. G. R. Leefe who was curate for some years. When Mr Leefe left the Parish no one could be found to command the Company until the Rev. H R White became curate. He formed a strong company, and a band of buglers and drums was trained.

Boxing was introduced and Indian club swinging. Eventually the Rev A. H Boyd became C.O. helped by Rev. W A Dengate. The numbers increased and each village had its own squad which met weekly in its own mission room, and once a month at the Old School, Slaugham. Each year they went to camp joining other Companies, either at Littlehampton or Worthing, making 200 to 300 lads under canvas.

The C.L.B. gave exhibitions of gymnastics, club swinging and boxing. Bible classes and confirmation classes were held, and the duty of attending church and Holy Communion was taught.

The boxing and fencing kept them interested in their amusements as well as religion.