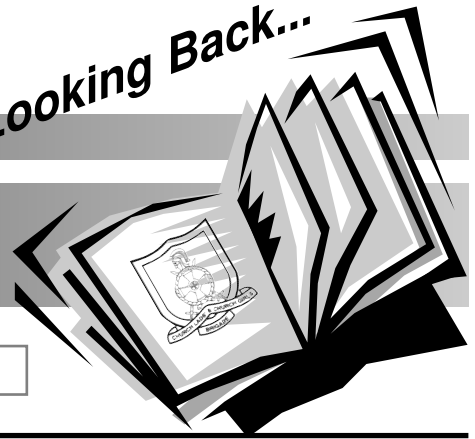


Factsheet

NUMBER 44: CLB NAVAL COMPANIES

Looking Back...



The 'Brigade' Magazine of February 1909 carried an article by Walter M. Gee concerning the Brigade's attitude regarding the 'Naval Brigades'. At that time a number of such groups were being formed throughout the country and it seems that the CLB had been approached to enrol an existing one as part of the Brigade. Naval opinion was sought and the idea firmly rejected. Firstly, on the basis that the Lads who joined would be taught nothing different from the ordinary CLB and would consequently be '*subject to ridicule*' when joining the Navy having come from a supposed Naval organisation. This would make a CLB Naval organisation a 'Sham'. Secondly, it would introduce 'uniform' rather than the favoured 'equipment' and thus counter the CLB's purpose in improving a Lad's appearance in normal so-called civil clothing.

By 1914, the somewhat tenuous criticisms of CLB Naval units apparent in 1909 had been completely forgotten in the light of Cadet recognition and the outbreak of war. With the full sanction of the Governing Body the first CLB Naval Company was enrolled on 6th November, that being Co. No. 204 Christchurch Folkestone. Commanding Officer was Lt. Dennis A. H. Lawrance supported by 2nd Lt. C. J. Offer. The Company was given official recognition as a unit of the County of Kent Cadet Force in April 1915. Further details emerged in the October and November 1915 editions of the 'Brigade'. The article in October stated: '*the CLB obeys the law of progress. That law states that if you stand still you die. The CLB has no intention of*

dying, and therefore it goes forward to experiment, persistent experiment is progress. The particular line of experiment today is the Naval Company.'

Lads in the Naval Companies wore ordinary 'bluejacket's uniform' with the words 'CLB Naval Brigade' on the cap tally with the letters CLB in red on the sleeves. Training Corps members, used the same cap but with a knitted jersey instead of a jumper and collar. The Army Council sanctioned a uniform for officers consisting of blue trousers and a 'monkey jacket' with anchor buttons, a naval officer's peaked cap with a badge in gold wire consisting of laurel and the letters CLB above the anchor. Rank was distinguished by specially designed gold stars worn on the cuff under the letters CLB.



**Co. No 204 Christchurch Folkestone.
The first CLB Naval Company.**

Lt. Lawrance is at the centre of the officers on the above photograph.

Instruction was given in such nautical pursuits as knotting and splicing, rigs of sailing vessels, different types of warships, armament, naval ranks, ratings, badges, nautical terms, watches, Morse code, semaphore and flags, artificial res-



Factsheet 44 continued:

piration and first-aid. In the summer months practical lessons in rowing and managing a boat featured strongly. Before Lads were allowed in a boat, however, they had to pass a swimming test consisting of 30 yards in a bathing costume and 30 yards in clothes and boots.

Lt. Lawrance, writing in the 'Brigade' magazine, stated that the first year's working had been by way of experiment. Examinations were held with three certificates being awarded; A, B, & C. Certificate C was awarded on completion of the recruit course resulting in the rating 'AB' as an 'Ordinary Seaman'. On passing the 'B' certificate a Lad would become a 'Leading Seaman' and to become a 'Petty Officer' must have certificate 'A'. The whole set-up was modelled on the Royal Navy.

On the 31st January 1919, the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty granted official recognition of the CLB Naval companies as Sea Cadets which certainly included Folkestone and one on the Shetland Islands. Other companies known are 2438 St. John the Baptist, Tilbury dock, 3042 John Gibbs Home, Penarth, 3298 St Barnabas, West Silvertown, 3454 St Peter, Clifton, 3464 St James Bristol and 3493 St Andrew West Kirby.

Into the 1920s the number of Naval companies increased, but not dramatically. Cap tallies with wording such as 'CLB Naval Cadets' and 'CLB Naval Section' was also used. On the photograph below, which was taken in the late 1920s at an Oxford Regimental Inspection.



CLB 'Naval Section' Lads and Training Corps members on parade alongside Lads wearing the 1924 full blue uniform. The JTC members display two types of woven badge on their jerseys.

