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# ANNUAL MEETINGS & DINNERS 1900- 1910

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SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE EST.1866

Reports by the local press of both the annual meetings & dinners of South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade

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## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL MEETING 1900

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Last night the thirty-fourth annual meet of the members of the above brigade was held in the Brigade House, South Pier, South Shields. Dr J. Robertson Crease occupied the chair, and there was a fair attendance of members.

Mr S. Malcolm, hon. secretary and treasurer, read the annual report, which stated that the committee were glad to report that during the past year there had been no wreck services the south side the harbour. Reference was made to the stranding of the s.s. Maltby on the Black Middens, during a moderate gale from the S.S.E., on December 7th, and the saving the crew by the lifeboat. October 6th the brigade inspected by Captain Freeland, R.N., who expressed himself highly satisfied with its efficiency. The annual income was about same usual, and as the expenditure was below the average they had balance in hand of £25 13s 3d. With regard to the ambulance class, the committee regretted that there had been no lectures during year. This was not the fault of the hon. medical officer, who was prepared to continue this useful branch of work, and it was a grave reflection on those members who failed to respond by absenting themselves therefrom.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report, referred to the lack of interest in the ambulance classes. He pointed out that since 1883, when the centre was formed in South Shields, 1,455 men had obtained the first aid certificate throughout the town, and no fewer than 341 men had been enabled by remaining three years under training to obtain the medallion. During the same period, 433 ladies obtained the first aid certificate, and no fewer than 205 had gone through the nursing course and qualified, so be able to render not only first aid to the townspeople, but also to employ their powers in nursing. He suggested that in a large town like South Shields they should form the nucleus of a bearer company in connection with the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Why should they not have in South Shields a hundred trained ambulance men formed in one or two companies under the respective surgeons who had taught them ready at any moment to anywhere in town or perhaps out of the town, to render first aid they would require nothing but co-operation, and systematic and periodical drill. It was singular to observe the apathy in that neighbourhood, more especially with the Workmen's Compensation Act in full force. He knew large works in the neighbourhood where 2,000 men and boys were employed, and where the ambulance class at examination consisted of 17 men. If employers were alive to their own interests they would have a large number of men trained. He hoped that next year the report would be able to point out that there had been a response in regard to the suggestion he had made, and that interest had been deepened in ambulance work.

Mr J. W. Henderson seconded the adoption of the report.

The Hon. Secretary said that there were only about 20 men who had not attended the ambulance classes at all: All the rest had certificates and medallions. Of the 20 men there were probably seven or eight who were up in years, and whom they could not expect to join the class. But at any rate there was a good round dozen of men who certainly must attend these classes and render themselves efficient in first aid.

The report was adopted.

Dr Crease was re-elected hon. medical officer, and Mr James Henderson was reappointed house captain. The election of other officers resulted follows:— Secretary, Mr S. Malcolm; captains, Messrs G. Robson, J. W. Buckland, Jae. Page, T. B. Grimes; deputy captains, Messrs James Thompson, Thos. Newby, J. T. Ross, Robt. Bell; committee, J. Thompson, R. Bell, J. E. Purvis, J. T. Ross. R. Terviel, G. Ogilvie, C. Riley, J. W. Henderson, R. O. Middleton, T. Newby, and F. Oliver.

A hearty vote of thanks to Mr Malcolm for his services as hon. secretary, a position he has occupied since the formation of the brigade, having been accorded, the meeting concluded with a similar compliment to the chairman.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 7 July 1900

## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL SUPER 1900

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There was large beat up last night at the Watch House on the South Pier, in connection with the annual dinner of the Volunteer Life Brigade. The house, for the occasion, was profusely decorated with flags and bunting, and presented a very pleasing appearance. The chair was occupied by Dr J. Robertson Crease, in the absence, through illness of the hon. secretary, Mr S. Malcolm. Amongst those present were the Mayor (Alderman Donald), Councillor J. W. Henderson, Mr S. Cottew, Mr G. R. Potts, Mr T. Whitfield, Chief Constable Morant, Mr John Taylor, Mr G. Hannay, Mr J. Pringle (Newcastle), Mr P. Thornton, Captain Watson, Mr T. Dilka Page, Mr G. B. Smith, Mr Douglas, Mr G. B. Hodgson, Mr S. Adler, Capt. Harland, Mr D. Cameron, Mr J. H. McLean, Mr H. Schofield, Messrs G. Robson, J. W. Buckland, J. Page, and T. Grimes, captains of the Brigade; Messrs Thompson, Newby, Ross, and Bell, deputy captains; Mr Williams, chief officer of Coastguard South Shields; Messrs Ridley, Swan, Walker, and Herbert, captains; Burns, deputy-captain, and Mr W. J. Oliver, secretary, representing the Sunderland Brigade; Messrs John Purvis, B. Harrison, and W. Marshall, representing the Tyne lifeboatmen; and others.—After a substantial meal, supplied by Mr W. H. Curry of the Metropole Restaurant, the loyal toasts were honoured.—The Mayor gave "The Navy, Army, and Volunteers," to which Quartermaster Herbert (Sunderland), Captain J. Taylor (5th V.B.D.L.I.) and Mr Williams of the Coastguard responded.—Mr T. Whitfield gave "The Mayor and Corporation," and the toast was cordially honoured.—The Mayor, who was warmly received, in the course his reply, expressed his regret that the Corporation and the Tyne Commissioners should have been in conflict during the past year with respect to the Pier. He could never see how the Corporation could establish a right-of-way over the pier, but he was glad that one outcome of the trial was that the interests of the life brigade were thoroughly protected. (Applause.);—Mr G. R. Potts proposed "Kindred Brigades," and Messrs Ridley and Oliver replied. The toast of "The Lifeboatmen" was given by Captain Cottew, who remarked that a great many years ago he had seen as many as forty sailing ships ashore upon the Black Middens and Herd Sands before the piers were built, and sometimes the lifeboatmen spent the whole day in saving life. The honour of the town had been safe in the keeping of the lifeboatmen all these years. They had done their duty well, and were still doing it. (Applause.) He coupled with the toast the names of the three coxswains present. Mr John Purvis replied, and spoke of the lifeboat at the south side of the pier which had been got into trim again, and which could now be put out by two men. Mr Marshall and Mr Harrison also replied. Mr D. Cameron proposed "The Life Brigade," and said that the record of work was before them and around them in the names of the ships from which they had brought men to life, with credit to themselves. He assured them that the citizens of the town thoroughly appreciated their efforts, and whatever work they did in life-saving, the citizens of South Shields were with them in heart and soul and spirit. They had more than the record he had mentioned with them that night. They had a living witness—Capt. Watson—with them, who was brought off the Blenheim. As regards the officers of the Brigade, they had men capable and willing and earnest to carry out the work.

He coupled with the toast the names of Mr George Robson, Mr Buckland, Mr James Page, Mr Grimes, and Dr Crease. Dr Crease, as the senior officer present, replied, and referred to the work done by the medical profession at the front. In all the criticism that had been made, nothing had been said in the shape of criticism about the medical care which had been bestowed upon the sick and wounded at the war.

Three members of the medical profession had been killed in action, and if they took the army list, they would find that the holders of the Victoria Cross among the medical profession were more in proportion to the general officers of the Army. At the present time, with the exception of a very few men who had joined the South Shields Brigade in the last 12 months, there was not a single man but possessed not only the first-aid certificate, but the medallion as well. He also had the testimony of Sergeant-Major Hutton that he would not be afraid to go into action with the South Shields ambulance. (Applause.) Messrs Robson, Buckland, Jas. Page, and Grimes also responded. Capt. Robson proposed "The Coastguards," to which Chief Officer Williams responded. During the evening a capital programme of songs, glees, and recitations was gone through, those contributing to it including Messrs J. Taylor, J. Page, Herbert, G. Harland, G. Robson, jun., P. Thornton, J. W. Henderson, L. Winston, the latter of whom also officiated at the piano ; and the glee party, consisting Messrs Hails, McDowell, Henderson, Hagan, Ross, and Potts.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 17 January 1900

## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL MEETING 1901

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Last night the annual meeting in connection with the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held in the Watch House, South Pier. Dr J. R. Crease presided. The hon. secretary (Mr S. Malcolm), submitted the annual report, which showed that during the past year there had been no wreck services on the south side of the harbour, and only on two occasions had it been thought necessary to keep a strict look out. Since their last annual meeting, Capt. George Robson had found it necessary to resign his long connection with the Brigade, but he had consented to have his name placed on the list of honorary captains. At a special meeting Mr George Ogilvie was elected a captain in his place. The ambulance class had again had the benefit of Dr Crease's long experience as an instructor, and at the examination under Dr Gibbon nine out of ten candidates were successful. Their financial position was very satisfactory. — Mr J- Page moved and Mr J. Henderson seconded the adoption of the report, which was agreed to.—Mr George Ogilvie was elected a captain for the ensuing twelve months The other officials continuing in office are Messrs J. W. Buckland, Jas. Page, and T. B. Grimes, captains; Mr S. Malcolm, hon. secretary and treasurer; and Dr J. R. Crease hon. surgeon. The election of deputy-captains and committee resulted as follows :—Deputy captains, Messrs J. T. Ross, R. Bell, T. Newby, and F. Oliver; committee, Messrs J. T. Ross, R. O. Middleton, J. W. Buck, Thos. Newby, R. Bell, C. A. Harker, J. Thompson, Jas. Thompson, and R. Terviel- Mr S. Malcolm made a suitable allusion to the valuable work the late Mr John Foster Spence had rendered to the Volunteer Life Brigade movement, and the friendly intercourse which had been maintained between the deceased gentleman and himself as the respective hon. secretaries of the Tynemouth and South Shields Brigades. He suggested that in their name- he should write to the family of the late Mr Spence expressing their sympathy with them in their bereavement. The meeting acquiesced and shortly afterwards the proceedings terminated

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 30 July 1901

SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL  
DINNER 1901

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South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade.—Owing to the critical illness of the Queen, the annual supper of the above brigade will not be held to-morrow (Wednesday) evening as arranged.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 22 January 1901



## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL MEETING 1902

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The annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held last night at the Watch House of the Institution, South Pier. Mr Jas. Page presided, and there was a big beat up of members. Mr S. Malcolm read the annual report, which reviewed the events of the past year; and congratulated the members on the success which attended their efforts in saving life. "The severe and continuous gales (the report stated) will remind older members of former years, notably 1869, '74, '80, '82, during which the force and fury of the elements and numerous wrecks severely tested the endurance of all concerned. It is not within the scope of this report to give a descriptive narrative of the great November gale of last year, strewing as it did our coast with numerous wrecks, and claiming so many valuable lives. Suffice it to say it began on the 12th, and continued more or less for three days." The report then referred in detail to the wrecks of the *Constance Ellen*, the Norwegian barque *Christiane*, the yawl *Golden Lily*, and the ketch *Lord Dufferin*, in the November storm, and to the heroic services of the life brigadesmen and the pilots. During that gale 29 shipwrecked men were received in the Brigade House and their wants attended to, some having received attention previously by kind people Lawe. While they deeply deplored the lamentable loss of life by vessels foundering within sight, it was gratifying to know that no lives were lost within the range of their rocket apparatus. The Board of Trade sent the brigade a special letter of thanks and appreciation of their efforts. The police rendered admirable service on the occasion of these numerous wrecks in keeping back the large crowd of spectators, for which they deserved the special thanks of the brigade. After alluding to other services rendered by the brigade during the year, the report added that the ambulance class had, as usual, been conducted by Dr Crease, and the members were examined by Dr Modlin on Dec. 18th. Eleven candidates presented themselves for examination, viz.:—Eight for first year, two for first re-examination, and one for the medallion, all of whom were successful. The committee were glad to say the funds had been equal to the extra strain on the past year. It was with much regret that the members heard of the death of Hon. Captain Cottew on January 6th last. Mr Cottew was the last survivor of the original captains of the brigade. In conclusion, the committee hoped that the experience of the past year would have enabled the whole of the members, especially the younger portion, to realise the importance of life-saving work.

The financial statement showed that the total income for the year, including a balance of £58 4s 6d, amounted to £145 2s 7d, and the expenditure to £133 14s 9d, leaving a balance in hand of £11 7s 10d. The chief item of outlay was £56 10s 9d for repairs to the brigade house.

On the motion of the chairman, seconded by Mr T. B. Grimes, the report was adopted.

Mr Malcolm presented the certificates of the St. John Ambulance Association to the members of the class who had passed their examination as follows:—First re-examination certificates.—James Mathers and James Cooper. Certificates for first

year:—Thomas Crosbie Thomas Readford, Charles Gentles, Chares Shaw, Henry Howell, Rupert Evans, John Barber and Thomas Grimes.

Mr Shaw proposed a vote of thanks to Dr. Crease, hon. surgeon of the brigade, for the instruction given to the ambulance classes during the year. Mr Gentles seconded and the motion was carried by acclamation. Chief Coastguardsman Williams was also warmly thanked for his services in connection with the rocket drills held during the year.

The election of officers then took place, and the following will constitute the officials for the ensuing year :—Captains, J. W. Buckland, James Page, T. B. Grimes, and G. Ogilvie; house captain, J. Henderson : deputy captains, T. Newby, J. T. Ross, R. Bell, and F. Oliver; committee, Thomas Newby, J, W. Buck, F. Oliver, R. O. Middleton, J. T. Ross, J. M. Middleton, R. Bell, R. Terviel, J. E, Purvis, C. Harker, G. Masson, and B. Heron

Mr D Cook discussed the desirability of some form of recognition for long servitude being established in connection with the institution, and eventually it was decided to leave the matter in the hands of the committee.

The meeting then terminated.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 11 July 1902

## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL DINNER 1902

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The annual dinner of the Volunteer Brigade was held last night in the Brigade House at the South Pier, South Shields and was largely attended. The Mayor (Coun. Geo. Beattie) presided, and among those present were Dr Crease (hon. surgeon of the brigade), Dr F. W. Gibbon, Coun. T. Whitfield, Coun. J. W. Henderson, Mr H. B. Buckland, Captain White, Mr S. Malcolm (hon. secretary and treasurer), Mr Salkeld, Mr G. B. Potts, and Geo. Grey. hon. captains; Mr J. W. Buckland. T. B. Grimes, and Mr Geo. Ogilvie, captains, Mr J. Ross, deputy-capt.; Mr John Purvis, pilot; Messrs T. Young and William Marshall, lifeboat coxswains ; Messrs Herring, captain; and D. Wilkinson and Eggleshaw, deputy captains representing the Sunderland Brigade; Messrs J. Barlow and M. McBeth, deputy captains; and R. S.. Barlow, secretary, representing Roker Brigade and Messrs Thomas Fry, H. W. Fry, Robert Reid, and C. George, Tynemouth Brigade; Captain Harland, Captain Geary, Messrs M. Pearson, J. J. Runciman, J. Carter, F. Coulson, J. Ross, R. J. Kell, and others. The company was excellently catered for Mr J. Petrolino, and after supper an interesting toast list, interspersed with music, was gone through. The Mayor gave "The King," which was loyally drunk, and Councillor Whitfield proposed "The Navy, Army, and Volunteers" to which Coastguardsman Tracey and Surgeon-Major F. W. Gibbon, Durham Engineer Volunteers, replied. Mr Malcolm then read letters of apology for non-attendance from County Ald. J. M. Winter, hon. secretary of the Tynemouth Life Brigade, Mr George Robson, Mr Oliver (sec. Sunderland Brigade), and others; and also explained the absence, through bereavement, of Mr J. Page, captain of the brigade.

The Mayor gave the toast of the evening, "The South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade." He said he never had a toast to propose which gave him greater pleasure. Although not a member of the brigade his sincere sympathy was always with them in the arduous and heroic duties which had fallen to their lot to perform during the whole 36 years the brigade had been in existence. He was proud to be a native of the town that produced men such character and goodness heart, men of bravery and such self-denying principle that they will sacrifice all the comforts home on the stormiest nights of the year in order to be readiness to succour those in peril on their coast in the event of any disaster occurring. It required a great deal of self-sacrifice to be a good brigadesman, for they had to learn their drills and make themselves proficient in it, and in these respects they were second to none among brigades in the country. (Applause.) The great community surrounding them were often thrilled by the sounds of guns which told them some vessel was in danger on their coast, but also knew that they could rely upon the members of that brigade to save the lives of those imperilled, if it was within the power of human effort do so. (Applause.) It was for that reason that that brigade was among the proudest and most honoured of their public institutions. In conclusion, he remarked that that was the anniversary of the launching the first lifeboat, that built by Greathead 112 years ago. (Applause.)

The toast having been heartily drunk,

Mr S. Malcolm replied. He said that as a brigade they preferred to allow their actions to speak louder than words. He referred to the early days of the brigade, instead of that cosy house they had to use the blacksmith shop, and such a festive occasion as the present was altogether out of the question. He was not present at the Watch House during the last great gales, but read with great satisfaction the records of their work, and was glad to realise that the younger men who were coming into the places of the old members so nobly fulfilled their duties on that occasion. Financially, the brigade was now in very comfortable circumstances. They did not require to ask the public for money, though they never refused a subscription if it was offered them. They had to exercise much self-denial, but they found their reward in being able to rescue their fellow-creatures in dire distress, and restore them to homes and families, whatever nationality they belonged to. (Applause.) In conclusion, he made a touching allusion to the deaths of Mr A. Whitelaw and Stephen Cottew, formerly captains of the brigade, during the year.

Hon. Captain G. R. Potts and Dr Crease, hon. surgeon, also replied. The latter gentleman spoke in terms of the highest praise of the bravery and the endurance which the members displayed in the late memorable storms. He was particularly struck with the manner which the younger members distinguished themselves, and he was glad that in that terrible night's work no accident or misfortune befell them. (Applause.)

Capt. Geary in an interesting speech gave "Kindred Institutions." They in the north, he said, were proud of the life brigade, for it was there originated. But now the volunteer life brigades were established all over the coast line of the country, and they were among the proudest possessions of the country. May they always be so was their earnest wish. (Applause). Capt. Fry (Tynemouth), and Capt. Barlow (Sunderland) replied. Dr. Crease then proposed "The Tyne Lifeboat Institution " to which Mr John Purvis replied in a characteristic speech. Coxswains Marshall and Young also acknowledged the compliment. "Our Donors" was proposed by Captain Harland.

During the evening songs were rendered by Messrs J. W. Swainston, E. Kennedy, Chapman, Coastguardsman Tracey, Councillors Henderson and Whitfield, Captain Harland and others, T. G. Short was a capital accompanist.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 31 January 1902

## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL MEETING 1903

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The 37th annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held last evening in the Watch House, at the South pier. Dr Crease presided over a large attendance of members.

The hon. secretary (Mr S. Malcolm) presented the annual report, which referred to the occasions during the past year when watch had been kept and services rendered. The last service was at the wreck of the brig Celine of Malmo, on the north side of the pier, when seven of the crew were taken off. This, the report added, brought their total to 300 people landed by the rocket apparatus. The committee had heard with much satisfaction from Mr Williams, chief officer of Coastguard that the class of recruits he had had under instruction in the working of the rocket apparatus had been well attended, and he reported favourably with regard thereto. Mr Williams had kindly offered to continue the class during next winter. The members had shown their appreciation of Mr Williams' efforts by presenting him with a testimonial. Capt. Thomas, R.N., their late inspecting commander, retired in August last, and was succeeded by Capt. Stokes, R.N., who was present at the September drill, and made the acquaintance of the members. In this connection they tendered their thanks to the Coastguard, especially to Chief Officer Williams, for all their efforts to render the brigade efficient. Reference was made to the death of two members, namely, Mr J. Henderson and Mr H. J. Adams. The ambulance class for last winter was begun in October under the instruction of Dr Crease, and was examined by Dr Modlin, of Sunderland, on December 23rd. Seventeen candidates were successful, namely, eight first examination, eight second examination, and one final. In connection with ambulance work, they were glad to note that Captain Ogilvie was able to render efficient "first aid" in the case of a boy who was rescued from drowning on the beach. The funds of the brigade continued in a satisfactory condition. Beginning with a balance in hand of £11 7s 10d, they left off with a balance in the bank of £19 4s 11d. During the year the stock of clothing for shipwrecked crews had been replenished. With reference to the offer of a searchlight from the Northern Press and Engineering Company, the matter was under consideration by the various bodies who had to be consulted.

The Chairman moved the adoption of the report and expressed his pleasure in learning the splendid position in which the brigade stood at the present time.

Mr Page seconded the motion, and in doing so said it was fortunate for the brigade that there had been so little work to do in the past year. Referring to signals which were given on the occasion of a wreck, the speaker thought something should be done regarding the guns which were fired from the *Andromache*. He thought it should be brought to the ears of the authority that the guns could not be heard. They were in his opinion absolutely useless for calling the members of that brigade in case of shipwreck.

Mr Malcolm also spoke in support of the reports, and referred to the fact that they acted as escort to Lord Roberts on the occasion of his visit on Race Wednesday, and also to the fact that a letter had been received from Chief Constable Scott, thanking the brigade for the cooperation and valuable assistance which had been rendered on the occasion of the visit of Lord Roberts.

The reports were then unanimously adopted.

Referring to the question raised by Mr Page in regard to the *Andromache's* guns not being heard by the brigadesmen in time of wrecks, Chief Officer Williams pointed out that she only had a certain class of guns to use on such occasions. He would advise the brigade to wait a while before they did anything further in the matter, as in a short period the *Andromache* would be leaving the Tyne and her place would be taken by another vessel carrying heavier guns, which he believed would be more satisfactory.

The members agreed to this suggestion, and the question was allowed to lie in abeyance.

Mr Cook asked if anything had been done in regard to the suggestion which was made at last annual meeting to provide some decoration by the brigade itself for members of long service.

Mr Malcolm, replying, stated that the idea at last annual meeting was for the brigade to confer one star for each five years' service upon the members to be worn on the uniform. He had been in communication with the Board of Trade, and he ascertained that there was no such official decoration conferred by them. He did not think it would be wise for that brigade to adopt such a policy. They were not constituted for self-decoration, and he personally would refuse to wear such a decoration. At Tynemouth it had not met with the unanimous approval of the men, and he did not think it would be at all advisable for them to decorate themselves. That was entirely a question for other people.

The subject was allowed to rest at this.

The result of the voting was made known, and the officials for the ensuing year will be as follows:-Captains, J. W. Buckland, James Page, T. B. Grimes and G. Ogilvie; deputy-captains, Messrs T. Newby, J. T. Ross, R. Bell, and F. Oliver; hon. secretary and treasurer, Mr S. Malcolm; hon. surgeon, Dr J. Robertson Crease; committee, Messrs F. Oliver, R. O. Middleton, J. W. Buck, Thos. Newby, J. M. Middleton, J. T. Ross, C. A. Harker, J. E. Purvis, Robert. Bell, B. Heron. R. Terviel and G. Masson.

Votes of thanks concluded the proceedings.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 4 July 1903

## SOUTH SHIELDS LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL DINNER 1903

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The annual dinner in connection with the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held last night in the Brigade House, South Pier. The Mayor (Coun. J. Grant) presided over an unusually large gathering. He was supported at the head of the table by Coun. T. Whitfield. Mr S. Malcolm, hon. secretary and treasurer of the Brigade; Commander Stokes, R.N., Inspector of Coastguards; Mr G. B. Hodgson, Dr Macdonald, Supt. R. Farmer, River Police; Mr H.B. Buckland, Mr S. T. Todd (Sunderland), D. Cameron, Mr Hunter Blair (Newcastle). Mr C. F. Sutcliffe, Mr Alf. Weellands, Capt. Geary, Mr J. Purvis, Pilots' Superintendent; Mr Alex. Purvis, Capt. Tully, Captain Harland, Mr D. Petrie, Mr C. Newbald, Mr Lucock; Messrs G. R. Potts and G. Robson, hon. captains; Messrs J. W. Buckland, J. Page, T. B. Grimes and Geo. Ogilvie, captains; J. T. Ross, Bell, Newby, and F. Oliver, deputy captains of the brigade ; Mr J. Williams, chief coastguardsman, South Shields ; County-Alderman J. M. Winter, hon. sec; Messrs R. Reid, W. W. Fry, Thos. Fry, J. Sands and J. George, captains of the Tynemouth Brigade, etc. The catering was again in the hands of Mr J. Petrolino, Market Place, who served up an excellent repast to about seventy members and guests. The meal over, the Mayor gave the loyal toasts, which were heartily drunk. "Our Imperial Forces" was also given from the chair, and coupled with the name of Commander Stokes, who replied.

Coun. Whitfield gave the "Tyne Lifeboat, Institutions." He said nothing gave Tynesiders more pride or more pleasure than the thought that they had such excellent means for saving life at the harbour's mouth, and one of the greatest factors in that life-saving work was the lifeboat, the history of which was so dear a subject to the inhabitants of that town. Not only had they the lifeboats but they had the men to man them. Never had the call for the lifeboat been made but brave hearted men were there to man it, and prepared to risk everything in their endeavour to succour the lives of those in peril on our coast. (Applause.) For their services in the past the lifeboat men of the Tyne deserved a warm place in the hearts of the communities on Tyneside. (Applause.);— The toast was enthusiastically drunk and acknowledged by

Mr John Purvis, Pilots' Superintendent. He referred to the early work of the lifeboat on the Tyne, and said the descendants of the old lifeboatmen were still prepared to face the dangers of the storm to save the lives of their fellow mortals. There had not been much work for them to do during the past winter, but the pilots were enabled by prompt service to save the lives of four men in connection with the disastrous collision in Shields Harbour which resulted in the wreck of the Knud. (Applause.)

Mr G. B. Hodgson proposed the toast of the evening, "Success to the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade and Kindred Institutions." He said they had many things on Tyneside to be proud of, and among them were the invention of the lifeboat, and the institution of Volunteer Life Brigades. Their claim to the invention of the lifeboat had been disputed, not, he thought, on very sound grounds, but no one could dispute the fact that the first voluntary organisation for saving life, the Tyne Lifeboat Institution, was formed on Tyneside. It was their proud boast, perhaps their proudest, that that



institution was supported by local effort, and without outside aid. No one could dispute the claim, either, of Tyneside as the pioneers of the Volunteer Life Brigade, a movement which had studded the whole of our coast line with these institutions. In that matter Tynemouth was before South Shields in the establishment of their Brigade by a short head, but South Shields was not long behind, and it was with the two pioneer Brigades a friendly and generous rivalry which should earliest render succour to the distressed sailor. (Applause.) He believed it was now a well-known fact that South Shields were really the first to save life, but that was, of course, no discredit to Tynemouth; it was simply that the opportunity came first to South Shields. (Applause.) From that time to this, for 37 years, the two Brigades had always worked not only harmoniously, but with a healthy and noble spirit of rivalry as to who should be most prompt in responding to the call of duty, and most efficient in the carrying out of that duty. It was a truly noble service—not only that so many men should give up their time and their home comforts voluntarily whenever called upon to pursue their night watches in stormy weather, but that they should be also prepared to devote so much more time to making themselves efficient in drill. He asked them for a little indulgence to mention a matter of some interest to that Brigade. They had always tried on Tyneside to keep their volunteer brigades fully and thoroughly equipped for any call that might be made upon them. As science had advanced, they had always been ready on Tyneside to avail themselves of any new methods that were available, but one of the great drawbacks to the work of the Brigades was the difficulty of working effectively in the thick dark nights in which wrecks so often occurred. That was brought pretty forcibly to their minds by an old member of that Brigade, Mr Cay, who referred to the occasion of a wreck when the brigadesmen were greatly hampered in their work during the black darkness of the night. (Hear, hear.) He (Mr Cay), suggested at that time, a few years ago, the possibility of utilising the local electric light for a searchlight as an auxiliary to the work of the Brigade. The question was discussed at some length in the columns of the Shields Gazette, but nothing practical seemed to come out of it; it was at that time possibly rather premature. The question was revived again after that disastrous gale of November twelve months, when that Brigade responded so nobly to the calls made upon them. The Knud disaster a few months ago, when that vessel was run down near the Black Middens, and seven or eight lives were lost, served once more to bring the question to the front. He thought there was no doubt that if some powerful artificial light had been available to aid the lifeboat on that sad occasion it would have been possible to save more, if not the whole of the lives of those who belonged to the Knud. The outcome of that disaster was an offer by Mr Roland Philipson to equip the Tynemouth Life Brigade with a searchlight, for use on all such future occasions. (Applause ) That of course, was subject to the approval of the powers that be—the Tyne Commissioners and the Board of Trade. The Tyne Commissioners, he understood, had carried out a series of experiments as to the practicability of using such a light, and were satisfied it would not interfere with the navigation of the harbour. The Board of Trade had not yet given its formal sanction to the use of the light, but enquiries made on their behalf, he understood, were also satisfactory. As far therefore as it was possible to predict it seemed very probable that the searchlight at Tynemouth would be sanctioned by the Board of Trade and be an accomplished fact at no distant date. When he saw how that matter was developing it occurred to his mind that such an apparatus would be equally useful

and valuable on the South side of the harbour. (Applause.) One light could not be utilized by both Brigades, if only for the fact that both Brigades might require it at the same time. He made some private enquiries as to ways and means, and afterwards, quite in a casual way, he heard a conversation between some practical and experienced members of the Brigade on the subject. Their opinion was that such a light would be of great value to their work, and upon that lie began to think whether it was not possible to bring such a scheme to a successful issue. He mentioned the matter to the proprietors of the *Shields Gazette*, on which paper he had the honour to be engaged, with the view simply of getting a subscription towards the cost of it, but they told him at once that if such a light was likely to be of any practical value to the Brigade, and the brigades were prepared to accept it, they, the (proprietors of the *Shields Gazette*), were prepared to defray the cost of providing a suitable searchlight. (Loud applause.) The light would be one such as would be of utility to the Brigade, one capable of being easily and quickly handled, and capable of being supplied from the town's mains. It was no use having a light which, before it could be requisitioned, would require them to get up steam, or start an engine. It should be a light that could be brought into use at once, and if such a light as that would, in the opinion of the officers of that Brigade, be helpful to the lifesaving work at South Shields, the proprietors of the *Shields Gazette* would provide it for them. (Loud applause.) That, of course, was purely an informal statement. In the course of a few days the matter would be formally laid before their committee in a letter. (Applause.)

Mr S. Malcolm, in responding to the toast, said he was sure the members of the Brigade were deeply indebted to the proprietors of the *Gazette* for the handsome and noble offer they had made through Mr Hodgson, the editor of the paper. (Applause) He could assure Mr Hodgson that when that matter came formally before them they should give it their most earnest and serious consideration, and bring to bear upon it their practical experience of lifesaving work in the dark stormy nights of the year, and if the authorities concerned agreed to it, and it could be seen to be of practical utility and would help them in saving life, they should as a Brigade be most happy to take advantage of the generous offer. (Applause.)

Ald. J. M. Winter also replied to the toast, and referred to the excellent feeling which had always existed between the twin institutions. He said he was delighted to hear of their prospect of getting a searchlight at South Shields. They at Tynemouth, of course, had cut the ground out for them, as they had done it for them before — (laughter)—and he did not think they would find any real difficulties in the way. They at Tynemouth had done all the hard work. (Laughter.) Mr Stokes, the Board of Trade representative present, was at the helm, and he had conducted them over troubled waters so far as the Board of Trade was concerned. He thought it was now an open secret that the reports on the matter were satisfactory, and they were only waiting for the formal consent of the Board of Trade and the work would be begun. It was a real pleasure to them to learn that South Shields would be placed on the same footing, thanks to the generous offer which had been made to them that night, and they could mutually congratulate themselves upon acquiring something which would undoubtedly be of great service to them in life saving on dark nights. (Applause.)

Other toasts followed, including "Our Donors," proposed by Mr D. Cameron; "The Coastguards," given by Mr C. F. Sutcliffe and replied to by Mr Williams, etc.

During the evening a programme of songs and glees was rendered by the Hilda quartette party, consisting of Messrs W. H. Leach, W. G. Coates, T. C. Dawson, and G. P. Bell, and by Capt. Harland, J. W. Swainston, and others. Mr Short presided at the piano.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 6 February 1903

## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL MEETING 1904

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The annual meeting of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade was held in the Brigade House, South Pier, last night, under the chairmanship of Dr. Crease, hon. surgeon of the institution. There were also present Messrs S. Malcolm, hon. secretary; J. W. Buckland, Jas. Page, T. B. Grimes, and Geo. Ogilvie, captains; T. Newby and J. T. Ross, deputy-captains; G. R. Potts, hon. captain; W. E. Moffett, T. S. Blues, R. O. Middleton, J. Williams (chief of the coastguards), and others.

### ANNUAL REPORTS

The thirty-eighth annual report was read by Mr Malcolm.

The committee were glad to say there had been no wrecks requiring the services of the Brigade during the past year. It had only been necessary to keep a watch on two occasions. Capt. Freeland, R.N., Inspector General of Life-Saving Apparatus, visited the station in October, and was pleased to find everything in a satisfactory order. They regretted to report the death of Mr J. E. Purvis, who was connected with the brigade for some years and at the time of his decease was member of the committee. Deputy-Captain Bell had felt it necessary to resign his active connection with the Brigade, owing to business engagements. In consideration of his services his name had been placed on the list of honorary members. The Brigade was at present below its normal strength, and there were several vacancies which they should be glad to see speedily filled up by suitable men. The committee regretted to report they were about to lose the valuable services of Mr Williams, the officer in charge of the coastguard at this station, on his promotion to chief officer in another district. Mr Williams had proved himself to be one of the most attentive and efficient officers the coastguard that they had had attached the Brigade, and they were much indebted to him, especially the recruits, during the last three years, for the trouble he had taken in conducting the "dummy drill" class. The ambulance class examination took place in December, the result being that six passed the first year, five the first examination, and eight the final. The detachment of the Brigade connected with the St. John Ambulance Brigade was inspected in September.

The inspecting officer complimented the division on the smart manner in which the work had been done. With regard to the suggestion, in the interests of economy, of the Board of Trade that the drills should be held once a quarter instead of once a month the officers and committee were unanimously opposed it, and letter was written accordingly. They were glad to say that the Board of Trade had abandoned the idea, and desired their thanks should be given to the Brigade for their efficient services in the past.

The balance sheet showed a balance in hand of £6 14s.

The Chairman moved the adoption of the reports. He said it was a matter for congratulation that the report had not to deal with anything in connection with loss of

life. He also complimented the Brigade on the fact that the ambulance department had kept up its full strength. (Applause)

Mr J. A. Page seconded. He said the efficiency of the Brigade was due very largely to the services of Mr Williams, whom they were sorry to lose. (Applause)

The motion was agreed to.

## PRESENTATIONS

The Chairman then distributed medallions to the following members:—C. E. Shaw, T. Crosby, G. R. Briggs, Henry Rowell, R. Evans, T. E. Readford, T. E. Grimes, and J. Barbour. Second year certificates—J. Whittaker, Chas. Fleming, J. W. Mitchell, J. L. Fitzpatrick, and J. Watt. First year certificates—J. Prior, J. Crosby, J. E. Matthews, D. Reid, A. Aldred and C. Raines.—The Chairman spoke of the value of ambulance work and of the progress it had made, in proof of which he mentioned the fact that one of their number present, Mr G. R. Potts, held a medallion, numbered 1,635, and one he had presented that night was numbered 85,000. What a great saving of life and pain that represented, he thought the figures themselves might be allowed to speak for (Applause.)

## THE SEARCHLIGHT PROJECT

### THE OBSTACLE TO THE SEARCHLIGHT

Mr Potts asked what progress was being made with the proposed searchlight. Since the matter was brought forward the electric cable had been extended much nearer to the pier and the Piers now the use of it. He thought the cost would very small as compared to the originally estimated, cost.

Mr Malcolm said they had not arrived at that point yet when the cost of bringing the cable down to the house was before them. He had noticed the cable was now much nearer them than when the proposal was first made. But there was another obstacle they would have to clear away before considering that matter, and that was one of the conditions which the Tyne Commissioners had imposed upon them. There had been considerable correspondence with the Tyne Commissioners and the Board of Trade with regard to the conditions under which the light would have to be worked if it was fixed. They sought to impose that the Life Brigade must be solely responsible for any accident that might occur from the use of the light, and the committee had come to the conclusion that they could not take that responsibility. They did not know where it might land them in the future. Until they got over that obstacle the search light scheme would remain in a state of suspension.

A member asked if the Tynemouth Brigade were placed in the same predicament and if so how they got out of it.

Mr Malcolm: Tynemouth has accepted the responsibility.

Mr James Page said he didn't think there was any responsibility they could not accept. It would be a great pity if that was allowed to stand in the way. (Applause)

There could be no responsibility if they carried out a duty that was legal and authorised. He hoped the committee would reconsider their decision. (Hear, hear.).

#### A VACANCY

The election of a deputy captain in the place of Mr R. Bell, resigned, resulted in a tie between Mr Harker and Mr Buck. It was decided to take a fresh ballot among the whole of the members.

#### A LEAVE TAKING

Mr Williams, chief of the coastguard, took that opportunity of taking his leave of the members of the Brigade, among whom, he said, he had worked for four years and nine months with much cordiality and gratification. (Applause) He thanked them heartily for the manner in which they had assisted the coastguard both in the occasions of shipwreck and in the monthly drills. He was exceedingly sorry to leave South Shields because it had been the pleasantest part his career in the coastguard. He had five years yet to serve, and he hoped after that to be able to come amongst them again. (Applause)

Mr Malcolm and several members spoke the excellent relations existing between the coastguard and the Brigade, and particularly of Mr Williams' assiduous attention to duty, his knowledge of the work, and the valuable services he had rendered to them.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 9 July 1904

## SOUTH SHIELDS VOLUNTEER LIFE BRIGADE ANNUAL DINNER 1904

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Once a year the members of the South Shields Volunteer Life Brigade, and invited guests, meet round the festive board in the Brigade House, South Pier, and spend the night in speech and conviviality. Last night the gathering was invested with unusual interest, in which neighbouring brigades shared, by reason of the presence of Inspector General Woods, R.N., M.D., C.B., C.V.O., etc., who is visiting this district in connection with the movement for the extension of the Ambulance Brigade, the objects and work of which he will explain in detail at a public meeting to-night. The gathering was the largest that has taken place on these occasions for many years.

The chair was occupied by Commander Stokes, R.N., inspecting of Coastguards and Life Brigades for the Sunderland Division, which includes South Shields. He was supported by Inspector-General Woods, Dr. J. Robertson Crease, hon. surgeon of the Brigade; Mr S. Malcolm, hon. secretary; Ald. J. M. Winter, hon. secretary of the Tynemouth V.L.B., Mr W. J. Oliver, hon. secretary, Sunderland V.L.B.; Capt. Marshall, Marsden Life-Saving Co.; Hon.-Capt. G. R. Potts and Geo. Robson, Mr G. B. Hodgson, Mr T. N. Alexander, W. G. Scott (Chief Constable), Capt. Geary, Capt. Harland, Dr. Goudie, and D. Cameron; Messrs J. Walter Buckland, Jas. Page, T. B. Grimes, and Geo. Ogilvie, Captains of the Brigade; Messrs J. T. Ross and F. Oliver, Deputy Captains; Capt. R. Tully, Mr Geo. Smith, and Mr D. Petrie; Messrs J. H. Walker, John Herring, Captains of Sunderland Brigade; Mr M. Pearson, Messrs J. Landers Burn and W. Marshall, coxswains of the lifeboat; and others. In keeping with custom, the officers of the Brigade provided the supper, the catering being again excellently carried out by Mr W. Curry, Restaurant Metropole.

The chairman gave the loyal toasts, and then proposed the "Navy, Army, and Volunteers," taking the opportunity to extend a cordial welcome to Insp.-Gen. Woods, who he said, had come down to speak to them on a subject which appealed strongly to them as brigadesmen.

Inspector-General Woods had a cordial welcome in rising to respond. He corrected the local impression that he was an Army General. He was a Medical Officer of His Majesty's Navy. For that branch of the service he need say nothing; their motto was deeds not words. (Applause.) With regard to the Army they would agree with him that at the Cape they did their duty under great difficulty. He had particularly to refer to the reserve forces on whom, he thought, they would have to depend in the future to a far greater extent than they had done in the past. (Applause.) It was perfectly clear, unless they had conscription, that every man must his duty in this old country and our colonies if our Empire was to be maintained. (Hear, hear.) He was proud to be present that night because he was told that every member of that brigade must be qualified in first aid. He was a very old examiner for the St. John Ambulance Association, and he found that men forgot their work unless they kept it up; therefore he urged that they become members of the mercantile branch of the St. John Ambulance brigade which had just been started. The 2,000 ambulance brigadesmen who went out to South Africa to help in the hospitals during the campaign there

proved absolutely useful and reliable. They wanted the mercantile brigade to do exactly the same thing for the navy. They wanted the ambulance men to come forward and help them in the in times of war, and so he was entrusted about two years ago with the task of trying to arrange a scheme to secure men for that particular work. The St. John Brigade promised to do their level- best to assist them. They required men to come forward and help them in their men-of-war. These would be the young fellows who wanted to win their medals and honours, because they could not expect the married men with families to go to the front in case of war. Then they wanted men to help them in their hospital ships, to which the wounded would be brought. They also wanted help in their hospitals and establishments abroad and at home; so they had arranged that there should be four classes of service, and desired men put down their names for one or the other. They wanted them to do so in order that they might be ready for duty at any minute, because if war broke out, there might be no time for preparation, as there was in the case of the South African campaign. He explained the conditions under which the service would be rendered, and the pay that would be given during service, and asked the brigade men to take the work because they regularly drilled and would be ready for duty. There would also be a sort of coast ambulance branch. At each of the principal towns around the coast- of which South Shields would be one-they should form a good group of life-saving men to go off and bring the sick and wounded ashore from men-of-war signalling for help, and let the ship go on her way and do her duty. He thought the brigade could be of material help in that respect. He hoped, if they could do it, they would form a mercantile division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and then put their names down for the auxiliary Royal Naval sick berth reserve, and help the navy in time of need. (Applause.) Dr. Crease, the hon. secretary, would give them any information with regard to this.

"The Tyne Lifeboat Institution" was proposed by the Chairman, coupled with the names of the coxswains present, who replied.

Mr G. B. Hodgson then gave the South Shields V.L.B., Kindred Brigades, and the Coastguard." He was glad to hear from Inspector-General Woods the recognition of the fact that it was upon the Volunteer Service we must rely for defence. But the volunteer spirit shewn in England was not by any means confined to naval or military service. We could claim that the British Empire was the only Empire in the world where voluntary service in every department of public life was rendered on such a generous scale, whether it was in Parliament, in our local authorities, or in our volunteer service; and they had just heard from Inspector-General Woods of a further splendid development of volunteer works. (Applause.) What was least heard of all, but which was no less useful a service, was that of the Life Brigade. They on Tyneside had special reason to be proud, not only of the fact that Volunteer Life-saving Brigades were founded there, but that there they had found their highest development. (Applause.) They never heard of vacancies in the ranks of brigades, or of lack of workers when work was to be done. It was rather the other way about. They were proud of the South Shields Brigade for many reasons. They were, he believed, practically the pioneers in introducing the system of ambulance drill and ambulance examination in connection with Brigades. They went one step further and made the passing of this examination compulsory qualification for membership of



their own brigade. (Applause.) Speaking of various other developments, Mr Hodgson referred to the introduction of the electric searchlight, for life-saving, and congratulated the Tynemouth Brigade on having been able to lead the way. He was sorry that various technical difficulties had intervened to delay the accomplishment of the scheme in South Shields. There had been, he thought, on the part of the Corporation some little misunderstanding, which might have tended to delay, as to what was required. Judging from the official report of the Council the public might conclude that the Brigade were asking the Council to undertake a heavy expenditure solely for the supply of the searchlight. He thought he was right in saying that all that the Brigade were asking, or expecting, was that the Corporation should carry out, perhaps a little in advance of the time, work they would be compelled to do shortly in connection with the development of the tramways, the lighting of the Sea Road, and various seaside improvements, and work, moreover, which was scheduled as compulsory in their own Act of Parliament. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that the difficulties in the way would be overcome before next year, and that they would be as well equipped as their friends at Tynemouth. (Applause.)

The toast was acknowledged by Mr S. Malcolm (South Shields V.L.B.), Ald. Winter (Tynemouth), Mr Oliver (Sunderland), and the Chairman. Ald. Winter referred to experiments which had been tried from Tynemouth as to the efficacy of the searchlight, and said those experiments had revealed one more thing, and that was that instead of being a danger to navigation, it was rather an assistance. (Applause.) He complimented the South Shields Brigade for the lead they had taken in regard to ambulance training— Mr Oliver in his reply, said he should like to see the authorities recognise long service in Life Brigades, as they recognised it in the Volunteers. (Applause.)

Capt. Geary proposed a vote of thanks to the donors of the supper, which was acknowledged by Capt, Geo. Robson, and others.

Mr Malcolm proposed the health of the Chairman, and Capt. Stokes having replied, the proceedings ended.

During the evening songs were rendered Mr R. Elliott, Mr L. Brown, Capt. Harland, Mr T. Smith, and recitations were given by Capt. James Page, Dr Goudie, and Dr Beattie, Mr T. Swainston being the pianist.

Source: Shields Daily Gazette 2 March 1904