

## The Boys' Brigade 1<sup>st</sup> A Birmingham

### “The Other Camps – Winscombe 1956”

Over the years special camps were arranged overseas in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and Ireland. The records of stories, photographs and memorabilia tended to focus on these special camps. Often these camps were restricted to the older members of the company but often another camp was held for the other, mainly younger, members who could not afford or were unable to go to the main, special camp.

In 1956 the main camp was to Denmark to visit our friends in the FDF, the Danish equivalent of the Boys' Brigade.

The other camp in 1956 was to Winscombe in Somerset. This camp became famous in the annals of the 1<sup>st</sup> A because of the noise of the traffic on the adjacent road and the atrocious weather.

One of the lads who attended the camp, Eric Hughes, recalled:

“I remember a couple of memories from the camp.

Sir Donald was with us for the first week prior to him going off with the seniors to Denmark, I remember him telling us that we were effectively at war that week with Egypt. That being the third occasion that he had made a similar declaration to the boys whilst at camp. We had non stop forces traffic that week down the A38, I guess to Plymouth.

After church parade (with a scratch band) arriving back at camp on Sunday from the church we were quickly called to secure tents because of the high winds, which had to be sat on all night with a number of boys going to the cricket pavilion for a break.

Highlights of the camp were probably, the walk across the Mendip's to Cheddar Gorge, and our cricket match against the Private School Team whose swim pool we borrowed (totally freezing water), but good fun had by all.”



Rob Clarke remembered the first Bible Class after this camp when Harold Munton, the officer who had taken over in charge of the camp when Sir Donald left, sharing about the events. He told about high winds and rain bending and breaking tent poles during the night and morale being maintained by everyone singing "We have a tent pole that holds the tent..." to the tune of "We have an anchor..."

The 1<sup>st</sup> A at its best.