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# **Brief statement as to the working of the Boys' Refuge and Industrial Brigade, 16 Quay Street (1870)**

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BRIEF STATEMENT  
 AS TO THE WORKING  
 OF THE  
**BOYS' REFUGE**  
 AND  
 INDUSTRIAL BRIGADE,

16, QUAY STREET.

Managing Committee:

- Mr. R. B. TAYLOR, King Street.
- Mr. JAMES CHAPMAN, Westwood, Broughton Park.
- Mr. L. K. SHAW, Athol Place, Higher Broughton, Hon Sec.

Master:

Mr. W. T. BROWNE.

Matron:

Mrs. W. T. BROWNE.

MANCHESTER:

CAVE AND SEVER, PRINTERS BY STEAM POWER, HUNT'S BANK.  
 1870. K

THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THE  
BOYS' REFUGE.

This Institution, which was established early in the present year, affords to the homeless and destitute lads of our city, whose cases are proved to be genuine, a night refuge and temporary home until permanent employment for them is obtained. Its need had long been felt by Ragged School Teachers, City Missionaries, and others who care for the homeless lads that roam about our streets. They have often looked for some refuge that could open its doors to such, and by a little timely help and Christian sympathy, save them in their hour of need.

The result of much careful inquiry at the close of last year was the resolve to establish a "Boys' Refuge" for Manchester, and to try the experiment for twelve months.

It opened its doors on the 4th January last, and the Committee of Management who then undertook to carry on this work desire now, at the end of the first six months of its existence, to lay before those who have helped them a brief statement as to its working.

From the commencement we desired to avoid two evils in the admission of lads; we resolved that we would neither encourage the professional vagrant or interfere with the rightful duty of the parent. These rules have never been lost sight of. An extract from the "Objects" of our Institution is as follows:—

"We desire in no case to interfere with the duty of

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“the parent, and therefore consider boys who have “parents living in Manchester ineligible, except under “very special circumstances. *As we propose to help “those only who try to help themselves*, boys who from “physical infirmity cannot, or from confirmed vagrant “habits will not do so, are not eligible.”

Each case presenting itself therefore has been most carefully investigated, and those not really homeless and destitute have been refused admission.

Having taken suitable premises, which though not all that could be desired, were certainly the best that could be obtained, and fitted them up with all the requisites for such an Institution—which was no light task considering the condition of houses in this locality—and having secured what was of still more importance, the services of an efficient Master and Matron, we opened the doors of our Institution on the 4th January last. On that night 10 lads presented themselves; by the end of the week our numbers were 20; on the 1st February they reached 36; and by the 1st March we had 40, the full number our house could accommodate. During this month we had to turn away from the door each night one or more truly destitute cases. It was hard to do so, but every bed in our house was occupied. We then sought, if possible, to increase our accommodation. The garret of our house had never been occupied, indeed was unfit for human habitation; but we saw that by making the roof proof against the weather it might give us another dormitory. This was

done; twelve new iron bedsteads were placed in it, and we were thus able to accommodate 52. At this time the front cellar, not hitherto in our occupation, was added and fitted up as a day room. This increased accommodation was soon availed of. During April our numbers ranged from 48 to 54, many deserving cases having still to be refused for want of room; but more room was impossible, as every foot of space from cellar to garret was now occupied. During May the warm weather began to affect our numbers, which for this month and June averaged about 40, and this number remains in the Institution at the time at which we write. We have no doubt that with the cold dark nights of winter will come probably larger numbers than any we have yet had, and for this we feel we ought to prepare.

#### *Industrial Department.*

We did not at first contemplate any Industrial Department, intending that our Refuge should simply provide a comfortable supper, bed, and breakfast; but we soon felt that for these poor lads especially idleness would be the parent of crime, and it caused us no small anxiety during the first month to organise some employment for the large number we had gathered together. After much consideration, we resolved upon two means of employment, viz.,—

- A Shoeblock Brigade for the streets, and
- A Messenger Brigade for railway stations and hotels.

The former of these had been previously tried in our city without success; but our master, fresh from London, where they are an established institution, was sanguine that, if properly conducted, it would succeed. The latter, though not hitherto attempted, we felt was worth the trial. Having obtained the sanction of the Watch Committee of the City Council for our Shoeblocks to occupy suitable positions, and having also obtained permission of the authorities at London-road and Victoria Stations to place two parcel messengers at the former and one at the latter, we commenced our experiment of training to steady and honest labour, those of whom the majority at least were growing up to love a life of idleness and crime. We say "our experiment," for any one acquainted with the class of lads we were trying to help will fully appreciate the difficulty of getting them to obey any organization, or to settle down to anything like steady work; and though the difficulty remains and meets us continually, and at times completely baffles all our efforts, still we are thankful that the experiment has been tried.

During the five months—February to June their earnings have been as follows:—

February, with 20 Boys in the Brigades...	£32.
March, " 26 " " "	£35.
April, " 27 " " "	£50.
May, " 28 " " "	£52.
June, " 30 " " "	£60.

or an average of about 8s. per week for each boy.

We always hoped, if our Institution prospered, to obtain situations for those lads whose steadiness and good conduct in the Brigade warranted us in recommending them. During the last six months twenty lads have thus been placed in positions where we trust they will learn a useful trade, and grow up to be respectable members of society. Of these, one is learning to be a barber; another is employed by a chemist and druggist; two by the South Parade Finishing Company; one is learning the ironmongery trade; one is employed by a fruiterer; one is learning the clothes-cleaning trade, and so on. Their wages range from 5s. to 10s. per week. We naturally regard these lads with the most interest, as we feel that in their case the Institution has accomplished the end for which it was established.

These three divisions—The Shoeblock Brigade, the Messenger Brigade, and the lads in situations include all the inmates of our Institution.

On admission each boy goes first into the Shoeblock Brigade, and then, if steady and deserving, he is advanced either into the Messenger Brigade, or provided with a situation as occasion offers.

The Shoeblock Brigade thus provides that *temporary* means of employment so much needed while the boy is in a probationary state. This branch of our work we believe may be extended, and if our Manchester men would patronize these lads just to make the movement popular, it may become a most useful means

of reclaiming the outcast. The Parcel Messenger Brigade is also capable of extension; they are now felt to be a public convenience at the railway stations. Their fare, "3d. per mile," painted on their caps, prevents imposition, is reasonable to the public, and sufficient for the lads.

The following table will show the earnings of all the boys during the last six months, and the amount they have been paid towards their own support:—

*Table of Boys' Earnings, &c.*

Months.	Average No. of Inmates.	Total Earnings.			Amount paid by Lads towards their own support.		
		£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
January .....	28	21	0	1	7	16	2
February.....	39	41	8	7½	24	13	0½
March .....	45	43	11	5	33	5	0
April .....	46	64	12	11½	41	2	8½
May .....	38	69	19	7	38	16	1½
June .....	39	71	3	4	41	3	1
		311	16	0	186	16	1½

We venture to think these figures are very instructive, and will repay attentive perusal. Leaving the month of January out, when there was no organised work for the boys, and when, therefore, their earnings and payments were small, they show the following results:— That their average earnings have been nearly £60. per

month; that their average payments each month towards their own support has been £36. The difference between the earnings and payments *belongs to the lads*, and is either spent in buying Sunday clothes for themselves, or is lodged in the Bank on their account. During the six months, in addition to what they have paid for their board, &c., they have bought clothing to the amount of £39. 6s. 4d., and have lodged in the Penny Bank £33. 17s. 4½d.; besides which many of them have been helping their poor relations.

These pecuniary results are more than we expected, but we believe they may be still further developed. At the end of the year we shall publish a full balance sheet, showing the exact position of the Refuge financially. Meanwhile, we may state that at present, and for three months past, the lads' payments have met every expense excepting master and matron's salary, and rent. An examination of the above table will show that since April the boys have been earning at the rate of £800. per annum, and paying for their board, &c. at the rate of nearly £500. per annum.

*Boys' Payments.*

The payments are regulated as follows:—Each boy pays from 6d. to 1s. per day for full board and lodging, use of uniform, materials, &c., according to the position he occupies in the brigade, or the wages he earns, if in a situation. This sum he knows he has to pay. If he does not earn it his account is debited with the

amount short, which he pays from the earnings of a good day. All he earns above this fixed sum *is his own*, and may be lodged in the penny bank to his account. This system stimulates the lads to work hard, knowing that any debts they incur must be repaid; at the same time it offers no encouragement to keep back or understate the full amount of their earnings, seeing that all they earn above what they have to pay is their own.

The sum charged for board and lodging has been fixed after much thought. It does not burthen the lads, but rather stimulates them; it destroys any pauper feeling, by teaching them thus early to provide for themselves; it learns them careful and provident habits, which may be a blessing to them through life; and it wonderfully lightens the burdens of the Institution.

Our master records that, as a rule, the boys show great anxiety to pay their way, and their joy when enabled to pay off a debt that may have stood against them, is very cheering.

#### *Education and Recreation.*

The column of our admission book that records the education of the lads when admitted is a very sad one; while the education of all is more or less defective, the *majority* are entirely ignorant when they come to us, many lads of 12, 14, and 16 years not even knowing their letters. We have, therefore, set apart three nights each week for instruction in reading, writing, and

arithmetic. The evenings of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday are so spent, and already with the happiest results; many lads who came in entirely ignorant can now read and write fairly. This branch of our work we feel the importance of deeply. The lads also evidently appreciate its importance by their anxiety to improve.

There is no distinctive religious teaching in the Refuge. While *we ask no question as to the boy's religion on admission*—(Is he destitute and homeless being the *only* question we require to be satisfied about)—yet we know there must be some of all churches; we therefore exclude all catechisms and creeds. There is prayer morning and evening, conducted by the master, which is preceded by reading a portion of Scripture, and on Sundays the boys go to church in the morning accompanied by the Master. The afternoon they have at their own disposal.

Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings are for recreation. The fife-and-drum band is very popular; others play draughts—several boards having been kindly sent by a friend—while others of the boys use the library so kindly provided by Mr. Blacklock and Mr. Rylands. In recreation the boys need change, and any innocent means of amusement our friends could send us would be thankfully received.

We endeavour to impart to our Refuge as much of the *Home* and as little of the *Institution* as possible. We therefore do not burden the lads with rules and

regulations beyond the few simple words of advice and encouragement which hang on the walls of each room. One fact we try to impress on them above all others—*that we only help boys who try to help themselves*. Each lad is made to feel that *whatever* his past life may have been, if *now* he is resolved, by God's help, to be honest and industrious, we will help him; but that if he will not make an effort so to be, the Refuge is no place for him.

This is fully and fairly put before him on his admission, and kept before him continually.

#### *Conclusion.*

Respecting the future, we believe the work will grow and increase. The short experience of six months has convinced us that had we more accommodation—more of those necessary requirements which all institutions of this kind need—we should have been able to retain some who have left us. The most pressing need at present is a play-ground or gymnasium. It is too much to expect 40 lads, who have hitherto not known any restraint, to be happy and contented shut up in a small house these fine summer evenings. As a matter of health, too, this is urgent.

Then a second home of some kind, where we could draft off those boys who are in permanent work, is also much needed. In a short time we shall probably have more applications than we can meet; and unless something of the kind is done, we fear our work will be seriously crippled.

The Committee cannot conclude without bearing

their testimony to the self-denying labours of Mr. and Mrs. Browne. To have the constant care and oversight of so large a number of such lads is no slight responsibility. Nothing but the highest motives could have sustained them. Everything possible is done to make the lads comfortable and happy. Their meals are such as any of our readers might be thankful to partake of, and the general influence surrounding them in the Refuge cannot but be beneficial.

Our thanks are also due to Dr. Blackmore, for much attention to our sick lads, gratuitously bestowed.

To the many friends, both known and unknown, who have aided us with funds and sent many useful gifts, such as four dozen of day shirts, a box of soap, a barrel of treacle, several parcels of cast-off clothing (of which latter needful commodity we are now entirely out), we offer our heartfelt thanks. Above all, our thanks are due to Him to whose care we have committed our Refuge day by day, whose help in times of difficulty (and they have not been few) has never been sought in vain, and to Whose good hand upon us we owe whatsoever beneficial results have been obtained.

Contributions towards providing increased accommodation and play-ground for the lads may be paid into Messrs. HEYWOOD Brothers and Co.'s Bank, St. Ann's-street.

The Committee invite all interested in this movement to visit the Refuge.

*Manchester, 4th July, 1870.*

[OVER.]



*The following cases will show the class of Boys who avail themselves of the help of THE REFUGE:—*

*Case No. 1*—Was the first boy admitted. When he presented himself he was in a state of utter destitution, and covered with vermin. For some time he had been the companion of thieves. His father had been committed to prison for burglary, and his whole surroundings were of the most disreputable character. He was taken in, and the next day sent out to sweep crossings, and returned in the evening with 8½d. After paying for supper, bed, and breakfast, the 5½d. balance was placed to his account in the bank. He continued at this employment for a few days, until prevented by the authorities. Soon after he became a shoebblack, and in that capacity he succeeded fairly, yet there was some difficulty to keep him at his work. A fortnight afterwards regular employment was obtained for him at a wage of 6s. 6d. per week. His conduct being good, in a short time his employers gave him 8s. 6d. per week, and he is now earning 9s. 6d. weekly. His employer states he is the best boy on the premises. His whole conduct in the Institution is worthy of the highest praise; and for some time he has been assisting his sister, who is in needy circumstances.

*Case 2*—Was admitted a short time afterwards. This lad was in a worse state than No. 1. He had only a pair of ragged trousers and an apology for a shirt on. His body was covered with sores and bruises, caused by the cruelty of a drunken mother. He stated that his father was a convict in Portland Prison; and the boy was known as “a market lurcher” and one of the worst of thieves. With many misgivings he was admitted for the night, and in the morning sent out to pick up odd jobs in the streets. He came home at night with 3½d. Two days after he was sent out as a shoebblack to occupy the station at the corner of Corporation-street. We gave him a pair of trousers, jacket, and a sorry pair of shoes. Mr. Howard, jeweller, took an interest in the lad, and gave him money to purchase clogs. After about two months in the Refuge, an application was made for a boy to fill up a vacant situation at a hairdresser’s, and he was selected. Since that time he has conducted himself with great propriety, purchased a new suit of clothes, and still more noteworthy, has given his mother 6d. per week out of his weekly earning of 1s. 6d. He frequently visits the Refuge. The change in him is something marvellous.

The above cases are simply given as specimens of the general character of the boys admitted to the Refuge.

*The First Annual Meeting of the BOYS' REFUGE AND INDUSTRIAL BRIGADE was held in the Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, on January 4th, 1871.*

JOHN RYLANDS, Esq., took the Chair at Twelve o'clock.

There was a large attendance, including the Lord Bishop of Manchester, Richard Haworth, Esq., J. A. Bremner, Esq., J.P., William Gibb, Esq., J.P., Alderman Grundy, William Birch, jun., Esq., Rev. James Bardsley, Rev. J. E. Jones, Captain Weston, Thomas Lings, Esq., Charles Sever, Esq., Thomas Lloyd, Esq., D. O. Evans, Esq., R. B. Crankshaw, Esq., Charles Swallow, Esq., Thomas Geldart, Esq., James Chapman, Esq., R. B. Taylor, Esq., L. K. Shaw, Hon. Sec., &c. &c. Letters regretting their non-attendance had been received from Herbert Phillips, Esq., Sam Mendel, Esq., David Harris, Esq., of Edinburgh, and others.

The Report having been read—

*It was moved by The LORD BISHOP OF MANCHESTER, seconded by RICHARD HAWORTH, Esq., and supported by WILLIAM BIRCH, jun., Esq.,—*

“That the Report be adopted, printed, and circulated under the direction of the Managing Committee.”

*It was moved by Rev. JAMES BARDSLEY, seconded by Rev. J. EMMETT JONES, and supported by WILLIAM GIBB, Esq., J.P.,—*

“That this Meeting rejoices at the formation in Manchester of a home for destitute homeless boys, and sees in the Industrial Brigade, which provides employment for those hitherto living in idleness, an important principle capable of still wider extension.”

These Resolutions were adopted unanimously; after which the Bishop pronounced the benediction.

A very warm interest was manifested in the proceedings, and at the close of the Meeting several gentlemen came forward and put down their names for various sums towards providing larger premises.