



Issue 14 June 2013

## The History issue.....

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There is a saying about looking at our past will help us to plan our future. I'm not too sure about that but I do believe in honouring those who have gone before and in this issue I would like to share something of the Girls' Brigade story which has its roots in Dublin, Ireland in 1893.

### The Beginning

It was a Saturday afternoon and the girls of the Sandy mount Presbyterian Bible Class were practicing for an upcoming choral competition. However it was so bitterly cold that the girls were having difficulty singing through their shivers. Their leader, Miss Margaret Lytle, suggested that they should do some physical exercises to help them warm up and this did the trick. The girls so enjoyed this that they asked if physical activities could be included every week. One of the girls had a brother in the Boys' Brigade so suggested that their group should be called the Girls' Brigade.

(It is interesting to note that this was the same year as Women's Suffrage was granted in New Zealand).

Similar Christian organizations' for girls were established in Scotland (The Girls' Guildry) in 1900 and in England (The Girls' Life Brigade) in 1902. In 1964 these three groups amalgamated and became known as the Girls' Brigade.

IFG Ministry  
Team  
Contact Details:

Jennifer Box  
boxes@es.co.nz  
021 2773232

Charmayne  
Johnstone  
charmayne@clear.net.nz  
027 2740601

Christine Brunt  
Christinebrunt@clear.  
net.nz  
021 651180

## GB Comes to New Zealand

The first Girls' Life Brigade Company in New Zealand began at the Caversham Baptist Church in Dunedin 85 years ago, in 1928. The original members are listed along with the name of the Sunday school they attended. There were 2 Presbyterians, 8 Baptists, 10 Methodists, 1 Salvation Army and 1 Brethren. The couples responsible for the founding of this Girls' Brigade Company, known as 1st Dunedin, were Horace and Ada Grocott.

The Grocotts had spent five years as missionaries in Bolivia but the very high altitude and the primitive living conditions had taken a heavy toll on their health. They returned to NZ disappointed but expecting God to open new opportunities for them. Horace had a real heart for providing positive activities for the boys in Caversham which eventually led to the opening of a Boy's Brigade Company. With the boys now sorted Horace put the pressure on his wife to establish a Girls' Brigade Company. Seeing the boys activities the girls were wanting something similar for themselves. You may be surprised to know that the Girls' Brigade leaders had to battle strong prejudice against such an organisation for girls being allowed in a local church!

## The Growth Years

Ada's dream was to have Girls' Brigade Companies in churches throughout NZ and spent much time writing and dispatching leaflets to churches, but it was two long years before a second Company was established. From then on however the network spread and in 1963, on the eve of amalgamation there were 17,256 girls and 1,229 leaders in 368 Companies in NZ. The amalgamation was signed on 10 June 1968 and this date has since been known as:

### **The Girls' Brigade International Day of Prayer.**

By this time the movement was active in 50 countries and later International Girls' Brigade was organised into the five fellowships we have today – Europe, Caribbean Americas, Asia, Africa and Pacific.

## Prayer Wave 2013

To mark the 120<sup>th</sup> year since the start of Girls' Brigade people around the world will be taking part in a global "Prayer Wave" on 10 June 2013. If you would like to be a part of this go to [www.gbworldwide.org](http://www.gbworldwide.org) and download the Prayer Wave flyer. On this website you will also see some of the great projects that GB Worldwide is involved in.

## Where does IFG fit in?

iconz4girlz is a ministry of The Girls' Brigade NZ. Just like the great projects I have mentioned that GB countries globally are involved in, IFG is Girls' Brigade NZ's great project!



So you see you are part of a proud tradition of extending Christ's kingdom amongst girls.

Chris Brunt  
IFG Ministry Team Convenor