

HOPE UK – A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

Alcohol as a drink that not only relieves thirst but also helps to make a man merry is as old as history. There is archaeological and literary evidence that all the ancient civilisations drank wine – indeed, wine produced locally in Greek and Roman times was probably much safer to drink than their well water, and had a lower alcoholic content than most of the wines on sale today. Beer was also widely used as a basic drink for poorer people, made from local hops and wheat. In fact, locally produced ale and mead (made from fermented honey, water and spices) were almost the only drinks for the ordinary people. In medieval times wine was imported into England from France in huge quantities. In 1273, 8,846 tons of wine (in today's reckoning, 10 million bottles) were imported to Southampton or Bristol from Bordeaux. There are many stories about smuggling casks of brandy into secluded caves on the Dorset and Devon coastline. Nor should we forget the story (supposedly with a basis of truth) of the drowning of the Duke of Clarence in a barrel of Malmsey wine (Richard III- William Shakespeare). Alcohol abuse was also common in English society. Hogarth's paintings of *The Rake's Progress* (1733) and *Gin Lane* (1751) are graphic reminders of the downward path so often followed by those who indulged in too much alcohol. Alcohol abuse, with its destructive results, especially among working class children, has been one of the blots on British society in early Victorian times. Following the passing of the Corn Laws in 1815, bread became a luxury for the poorer people, whereas a penny would buy enough gin to take away the cold.

One of the evils of Victorian society was cheap and grossly abused child labour – small children were regarded as ideal for working in coal mines, in cotton mills and as chimney sweeps. Some children, employed as chimney sweeps, were as young as 8 years. Life, both for them and their parents, was wretched; physical and emotional pain oppressed them all the time, prospects of escaping from this drudgery were nil - and their only solace was in the alehouse. Beer was cheap, spirits were plentiful and there were no restrictions on children visiting alehouses. The Silk-Buckingham Committees of 1834 reported that in 14 public houses in London, 18,391 children entered one of these during one week. Twenty years later, a select committee reported of public houses in Manchester "on a single Sunday in 1854 there were 212,243 visits to drink shops and 22,132 of these were made by children, some of whom went to drink on their own account - some to fetch drink". (*The Hope of the Race -The Centenary History of the Band of Hope*).

For many children, the alehouse was the only place where they could escape from the wretchedness of their environment. Some Sunday schools existed in fashionable churches but most of the prosperous city churches catered for the children of gentry rather than for the scruffy, dirty urchins who frequented the gin palaces, and they would certainly not have been welcomed into these fashionable churches.

It was against this backdrop of juvenile misery and deprivation that the Temperance Movement was born. The earliest temperance associations were founded in Scotland

in 1830, but the movement soon came South and similar groups were established in Preston and other industrial towns.

The pioneer of the Temperance Movement in England was Joseph Livesey, himself from poor surroundings. He was orphaned and worked as a cottage weaver as a child. Livesey was concerned by the excessive drinking he saw in Preston and founded both an adults' and a children's Sunday School in the town. In 1832, he, together with six other men, founded the Preston Temperance Society. The seven men felt that they had to be totally committed to abstinence and on September 1st 1832 they all signed the following pledge; "We agree to abstain from all liquor of an intoxicating quality whether ale, porter, wine or ardent spirits, except as medicines." Others joined them in this pledge and one of the seven, Dicky Turner, blurted out "Nothing but the tee-total will do" - and the expression tee-total stuck.

The idea of total abstinence quickly gained popularity. Mrs Ann Carlile, the widow of a Presbyterian Minister, was challenged by the dreadful conditions of the women in Newgate Prison, Dublin, most of whom blamed cheap whiskey for their downfall. At the mature age of 72, she resolved to devote the rest of her life to total abstinence. She joined forces with the Reverend Jabez Tunnicliff, who in 1842 became minister of the influential South Parade Baptist Church in Leeds. On one occasion he was asked to visit a former Sunday School teacher dying from a sickness brought about by alcohol. Turning to Mr Tunnicliff, he pleaded with him "Warn young people against the danger of the first glass". Jabez Tunnicliff persuaded Ann Carlile to come to Leeds in 1847 to address a number of mass meetings. This was the providential meeting that saw the birth of the 'Band of Hope' (a name for which both Ann Jane and the Rev Tunnicliff took credit), a temperance organisation specifically for children who suffered as much as adults from the consequences of unregulated alcohol consumption. She is supposed to have said, "What a happy Band these children are – they are the Hope for the future."

The idea quickly caught on, and numerous Band of Hope groups were established, some attracting several hundred members. On May 13th 1855, the UK Band of Hope Union was established, with a clear declaration of intent and a full constitution. The first secretary was Mr Stephen Shirley.

Clearly, the Band of Hope movement offered a much-needed service to Victorian society; it provided safe centres for children who would otherwise have no place to go after work other than the ale houses. It offered them opportunities for basic education and for sound Bible teaching. Children were also given strong warnings against the dangers of taking alcohol, but with thoughtful reasoning rather than compulsion. By 1887, the Band of Hope movement had over 1.5 million members, and this number increased to 2 million four years later. In 1897, the Jubilee Year, it boasted 3,238,323 members. At one of their Crystal Palace rallies (1886), the Band of Hope summoned 100,000 supporters together with 3 children's choirs numbering 5,000. The movement had as its patron Queen Victoria, with positive support from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

By 1870 the Band of Hope needed central London headquarters, which they found, first in Red Lion Square and finally in Old Bailey. In 1897, the Union was strong enough to finance the building and ownership of a five-storey building on this same site.

Band of Hope meetings used techniques that aimed to press home their strong belief in total abstinence. Their meetings were lively, child-centred (in a Victorian context!), involved much singing, often including the Band of Hope theme song "Come, all ye children, sing a song", Magic Lantern slides were always popular; many a Band of Hope speaker took with him a Magic Lantern carbide for producing a strong beam and a set of slides. The children were shown slides illustrating the dreadful ways in which alcohol could affect their lives and the stability of their family lives, not to mention the damage to their own health, and this would have been accompanied by stirring speeches from the team. The climax of most meetings would have been an invitation to the children to sign the pledge of total abstinence. This part of the Band of Hope service would always be taken very seriously (parents were sometimes asked to sign their permission for this act of public commitment to total abstinence). Other popular activities might have included model making, spelling tests, an annual Temperance Knowledge exam, and a wide circulation of books and pamphlets. Massive public events organised by the Band of Hope Union included annual rallies in the Crystal Palace, London, when massed children's choirs sang excerpts from well-known oratorios.

Twentieth Century Developments – A Period of Decline Followed by Renaissance and Renewal

a) 1918-1945

This was indeed a period of secularism, of growing cynicism, and a time of decline and loss of direction for the Band of Hope. Following the enormous loss of life and property in World War I and the subsequent emergence of totalitarian regimes in a number of countries in mainland Europe, many traditional values and attitudes within society were eroded. The long-established hierarchies within society and accepted areas of authority gave way to a more laissez faire attitude towards organised religion and organisations founded on religious belief. Such values as life-long monogamous marriage where the husband was the breadwinner and the wife stayed at home to bring up the children, and where Sunday churchgoing was an accepted part of the weekly routine, began to be challenged. The war had forced families to live apart as the husband and father went to fight the enemy, often never to return. At the same time, many wives and mothers went out to work in occupations hitherto closed to women. Many women enjoyed their newfound freedom and opted to continue their role as 'working mothers' after the War.

These changes, gradual at first but accelerating in the post-World War II period, inevitably had repercussions on moral and spiritual values. People questioned where was God in the trenches or in the bombing of London and the indiscriminate loss of civilian lives in World War II. Liberal and modernist theologians questioned the literal

interpretation of parts of the Bible, and the Church overall seemed to have lost its way. Free thinking, secularism and sexual equality were the new goals for post-war Britain, and the high moral ground initially established and subsequently championed by the Church seemed outdated and irrelevant.

Drinking became much more acceptable for both men and women as part of fashionable behaviour, and total abstinence was no longer regarded as part of Christian behaviour or, indeed, necessary. The Church overall was not prepared to support the cause of total abstinence. During the 1920s a number of mainstream groups, including the Baptist Union, had passed resolutions urging its members to adopt total abstinence, but these made little impression upon church members. Maybe this lack of clear leading on the part of the Church was in part a reflection of the spiritual state of the English church during the inter-war period; it seemed to have lost its way as 'the light set upon the hill' and lacked Biblical teaching and popular appeal. The world began to impinge upon the life of the Church. Good sincere folk were rather bewildered and fearful. They began to feel they were strangers but not pilgrims on the earth. They found themselves in a world which seemed not only to challenge but also to threaten them.

Other factors hastened the decline of the once massively popular Band of Hope. Other church-based organisations, firstly the rise of the Christian Endeavour Movement, the Boys' and Girls' Scouts organisations and later young people's groups like the Campaigners and Boys' and Girls' Brigades offered a more varied and sophisticated programme for a clientele looking for new and interesting ways of 'doing church'.

Homework, a post 1918 phenomenon, demanded children's time and the other choices and pressures upon children's free time inevitably took its toll - Band of Hope meetings became less popular and in some cases ceased to meet, while the central administrative support was less able to provide the necessary momentum to keep the local groups going. To quote 'Hope of the Race' (pg. 61), "The Band of Hope became old-fashioned, unnecessary, an anachronism in an enlightened and civilised age." Outside the boundaries of the church, of course, the cinema and later the TV were more exciting than the Magic Lantern show.

The Second World War, with its indiscriminate bombings and loss of life in many of our towns and cities, made it very difficult to hold regular Band of Hope meetings. Not all Band of Hope work ceased, however. A report from 1944 from Bermondsey, South East London reads thus: "All our front windows were broken in the first night of the rocket menace – our Band of Hope has met regularly". Hope House itself was subject to a delayed action bomb dropped in the basement, and this had to be removed by the Royal Engineers. Wartime restrictions and lack of available personnel took their toll on the Band of Hope movement, and they were without leadership from September 1944 to 1946, when Robert Tayler was appointed. The new Chairman, Sir Cyril Black, appealed at the end of 1944 Annual Meeting for the

launching of a Victory Fund; some new initiatives were proposed and attempts were made to increase the number of Band of Hope groups for children.

The decline was not uniform and areas such as the Vale of Eden and Kingswood and District near Bristol continued with significant numbers of weekly groups. The practice of appointing Band of Hope Queens continued.

b) 1945-1985 A Period of Adjustment to Post-War Society

The decline of the Band of Hope structure increased after the Second World War as volunteers were harder to find and, perhaps, the Band of Hope did not move with the times. Whilst trying to hold onto its core children's work in local groups there was an inevitable drift to providing literature and working in schools (with paid schools' lecturers) which reflected the decline in volunteer numbers.

- i) The Band of Hope's Literature Programme** In an age when information is more immediately transmitted by TV or even more recently by e-mail and the internet, it is easy to forget the enormous contribution to Christian organisations and missionary movements like the Band of Hope of the printed word. First published during the Second World War, the 'Wide Awake Zone' monthly leaflet gained enormous circulation, informing and encouraging both evacuated children and Sunday School groups that continued to meet. Popular titles included 'No Booze for Bowzer', 'Why I enjoy being a tee-totaller', 'Looking at addiction as a Christian', 'The Invader', 'a Straight Look at Alcohol', 'Hot Shot', and 'What Every Teenager Ought to Know' sold 50,000 copies, all under the aegis of Hope Press.

It was literature that began the reversal of Band of Hope decline. A new General Secretary, Andrew C Page, introduced the UK Band of Hope to a Christian artist called John Pickering whose cartoon style transformed the literature. The Booze Book brought alcohol education into the cartoon age and became one of the best sellers amongst Hope UK literature.

- ii) Other Band of Hope initiatives that declined in this period** Another initiative was an annual examination testing both the dangerous effects of alcohol on the body and the scriptural basis for abstinence. In 1978, 6,400 scripts were submitted, but the idea of a written examination as part of the work of a Christian youth organisation was out of sympathy with the prevailing culture of that time. In any case, Sunday Schools were in sharp decline in the 1970s and 1980s, and other scripture exams were also unable to continue. The Band of Hope scripture exam was finally discontinued in the late 1980s.

Another Victorian initiative that became a victim of the change in contemporary thinking was the crowning of the National Band of Hope

Queens. This had been very popular in Victorian times and girls considered it a great honour to be selected for the role of Queen. The last National Queen was elected in 1988.

Glenis Ruston was National Queen for two years (1974-6). She described her crowning ceremony as "quite simple". She thoroughly enjoyed her 'reign' – it took her to many places she would otherwise not have visited, and gave her opportunities to speak about the Band of Hope in public – a skill she would find very useful in her future role as a primary school teacher. But she agreed that by the 70s the idea of Queens and processions was becoming 'uncool' and irrelevant to the culture of the time. Glenis was brought up in Bermondsey, and told me that the Band of Hope and its aims and methods of working with children were 'in her blood'. She enjoyed going to their weekly meetings, made friends and having fun.

The Band of Hope used a residential centre, Eastwood Grange, in Derbyshire, which was owned by the British National Temperance League. The idea had been that Eastwood Grange would be a catalyst for training new leaders and the Band of Hope, and its youth organisation, the National Youth Temperance Council, ran two summer schools. However, these were more like a holiday with a difference – lots of social and sporting activities combined with lectures about alcohol and other drugs. Falling numbers necessitated the closure and selling of Eastwood Grange in 1991 – again, the decline of Christian holiday events was not uncommon in this period.

On the other hand, the Band of Hope was represented at a number of post-war new and bigger holiday events at Filey, Skegness, Greenbelt and Spring Harvest. (It is significant to note that Hope UK has recently renewed this area of public awareness and has been represented in 2008 with Educators in attendance at Spring Harvest and Keswick Convention. The only limiting factor is the cost of representing Hope UK.)

By the mid-1970s, the Band of Hope understood it had to do some radical thinking if it was to respond effectively to the rapidly changing culture of the 1980s. A working party was set up in 1978 – aware that these changes in society's attitudes towards alcohol were not being appropriately responded to by the Band of Hope's existing programmes and strategies. More and more Unions were doing less and less, some were closing down completely and real child contact was very poor indeed.

The working party took its responsibilities very seriously. Existing programmes together with current needs were carefully identified and the success or otherwise of existing programmes assessed. However, perhaps

there were still too many remnants of the existing structure because the recommendations of the working party focused on structural activities, although there was a clear recommendation that a regional officer should be appointed in the North of England based in Cumbria. Yet even this saw shared accountability between local and national people with the result that there was a lack of clarity in objectives. The time was not yet right for serious change – society had not yet come to terms with the rising interest in illegal drug use and although the dangers of tobacco were being recognised, alcohol was not seen as an issue.

c) Recapturing the Vision – Community-based Drug Education

As General Secretary, Andrew Page had given the Band of Hope what proved to be its turning point with his literature innovation. Yet actual face-to-face work with young people continued to diminish and, in 1985, a new General Secretary was appointed. George Ruston, a man with proven management skills from the National Health Service. Two years into his post he was instrumental in drawing up a five-year development plan and for making overtures for financial help from the European Union and Westminster Government. He made it a priority to put the work of Hope UK onto the national education agenda, and in 1989 the first EU grant was achieved, followed in 1993 by the first DES grant being awarded. This grant from the Youth Service Unit enabled Hope UK to start training voluntary Drug Educators with its current CEO, Sarah Brighton, being appointed to develop the scheme. Hope UK was able to convince the Government to fund this training scheme because it had successfully appointed local workers to work in partnership with organisations in Kingswood (near Bristol), Southampton, Bexley and Greenwich and Londonderry.

Other significant changes included the sale of Hope House in 1989. The trust purchased the freehold of this property from Westminster Council for £733,000 and subsequently sold the property for £3,350,000. The Trust was wound up. A new property was purchased from the proceeds of the sale – 25(e & f) Copperfield Street SE1, and the remaining capital accruing from the sale has been invested in securities, providing a monthly income for the new trust, Hope UK.

Another significant change concerned the size and meeting arrangements of the Board of Trustees. Originally 43 in number they met at the American Church in Tottenham Court Road on Fridays. This excluded many working men and women who were unable to take regular days off from work to travel to London to attend meetings. The number of Trustees was reduced to 17 and met on Saturdays. This pattern has continued to the present and the number of Board Trustee meetings has recently been reduced to three or four a year with an additional meeting as part of the Annual Conference in April.

Fundraising remains a significant priority for the movement. Funding comes largely from Government sources (most of the income from Government grants are earmarked for educational purposes), a number of Christian charities and trusts, churches and individuals. Withdrawals are made from Hope UK's investment funds if

they have any shortfall and there have been three occasions in the last four years when staff redundancies have been necessary to balance the books.

In 1993, a planning process was started to look at the image of the Band of Hope and consultation was carried out with a wide range of stakeholders. The result was that the new name of Hope UK was adopted at the AGM in 1994 with permission given by the Charity Commission in 1995.

New ideas for the 21st Century – the Voluntary Drug Educator Training Programme

The most significant development in the late 20th Century has been the Educator Programme (now the Volunteer Programme). Designed to increase considerably the awareness of Hope UK's message, the Scheme started with ten Educators in 1994 and it has proved to be the most effective tool of the charity. In 2008, there were 200 Educators trained or in training, by means of distance learning and three residential training weekends, and accredited by the Open College Network. Educators speak to hundreds of groups, schools, churches and youth groups. In 2008, Educators and staff carried out 2,400 sessions on drug and alcohol issues, offering a Christian response to these matters and encouraging young people to think these issues through for themselves. 100,000 children and young people were reached.

Another interesting and effective initiative was the thirst for life campaign. This presented individuals with an opportunity to express their concern about binge and underage drinking by going alcohol-free for a period of 40 days in the Spring of 2006 and 2007. In 2008, it was rolled out as a year-round resource that groups could adapt to their own use.

A further initiative designed to maximise the church's awareness of Hope UK has been representation at a number of major Christian events such as Spring Harvest, Soul Survivor and the Keswick Convention. The Band of Hope had been represented at some of the earlier post-war Christian events, but Hope UK believes that they provide an excellent shop window for its contributions to the church's teaching agenda to be made public.

As the author wrote the final draft of this walk through history programme, GMTV beamed a documentary programme, 'The Truth about Binge Drinking'. A young singer, Michelle, from Newcastle, agreed to take part in a controlled experiment whereby for 21 days she increased her normal alcohol consumption (14-15 units per week) to 60 units. This meant that for 21 days she consumed the equivalent of 39 bottles of wine or 349 units of alcohol. Tests showed that at the end of the experimental period, 86% of her liver cells were malfunctioning. Her prowess as a popular singer suffered considerably. She became inefficient in her stage work and her domestic situation deteriorated. She quickly concluded that it wasn't worth it.

This is why Hope UK exists – Educators are only too well aware of the dangers of binge drinking and are doing all they can to help young people to think through

these issues for themselves and to reach their own conclusions, hopefully based on scriptural teaching.

Can we learn from history?

As can clearly be noted from this historical résumé, Band of Hope events were enormously successful in Victorian and Edwardian England. The programmes offered both Biblical teaching and opportunities for basic education, gave the children who attended their meetings a sense of identity and worth, challenged them to think about the dangers of alcohol and to make their own decisions with regard to abstinence. Maybe some of the methods they used may appear quaint to us in the 21st century, but undoubtedly they worked very successfully at the time.

Can we learn anything about ways of communicating our message to young people in 2006 from these success stories? Professor Victoria Berridge has written a very thoughtful paper for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'Temperance – its history and impact on current and future alcohol policy', pursuing this question. She makes a number of extremely valuable points. In the first place, she reminds us that the Temperance movement was never monolithic – some groups opposed drinking spirits but not beer. The Temperance movement later became more closely associated with total abstinence. Indeed, for some today, the word 'temperance' has pejorative connotations, standing for killjoy attitudes to drinking. Culture and attitudes to certain social norms have changed. Today, binge drinking, particularly among young people, is linked with a move towards hedonism – "Let's go out and get drunk tonight" - but on the other hand there is also a greater concern on the part of the general public towards the anti-social behaviour caused by binge drinking. The police and local authorities, as well as non-governmental organisations, are concerned about binge drinking. Virginia Berridge suggests that today the role of the media is crucial in encouraging temperance and more thought should be given to a varied public message. She also points out that whereas in the 19th century the Church had a much greater influence on social issues, today the Church has less influence on public opinion, but maybe it should have! The Church needs to take alcohol and drug abuse on board. Perhaps drug and alcohol education, both in its formal schools' context and in more informal styles like church youth groups, may have a more immediate influence on young people's attitude towards alcohol.

Hope UK has indeed learned from history; it has learned to change its methods – yet its goals remain the same - to help young people to be able to make responsible decisions on issues of alcohol and illicit drugs for themselves, and, most importantly, to help them to think through these issues. How should a young person respond to the suggestion from colleagues that they might like to go on a binge drinking night, or what should they do when they know that to get drunk may lower their resistance to casual/unprotected sex?

Hope UK's Christian foundation means that it should be able to tap into the potential that is represented by 50,000 local churches and 4 million people who will go to one

of them at least once a week. History has shown that personal example (a clear result of pledge signing) and role modelling are important factors in reducing the problems related to alcohol use. The core principles of a Christian lifestyle include keeping one's self fit and healthy and caring for others. Perhaps, not surprisingly, these are also at the heart of positive health promotion.

As Hope UK targets the UK church (amongst others) for greater involvement in preventing the harm related to alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, its members could be forgiven that sometimes it seems that they are going back to the future. The levels of alcohol-related harm in the first few years of the 21st century have their parallels in the early decades of the 19th Century and, without using Victorian methods, there are parallels with human behaviour that make Hope UK's recent successes look as if the charity is going 'back to the future' to relearn lessons that have been forgotten. Professor Virginia Berridge's report identifies clearly that there are historical approaches which, if updated, could help the country significantly.

During 2007 and 2008, Hope UK received support from the Pilotlight Charity. Pilotlight provides the expertise of senior business people to charities to help them with strategic planning, governance, financial planning and anything that will improve an organisation's ability to achieve its mission.

Their involvement led to a plan that would see 1,000 Educators trained and 500,000 children and young people reached each year by the end of 2011. Sadly, the recession of late 2008 and 2009 meant that this target had to be extended. But the process served to clarify our goals and refine the ways in which we achieve them, pointing to the need to localise our approach to Educator training and support.

Hope UK, in seeking to be at the cutting edge of alcohol and drug education, and harm prevention, has equipped itself to play its part in helping children and young people everywhere to live their lives to the full.

Working through the recession and the Coalition Government's austerity measures

In common with many Christian charities and churches, the current economic recession has had its effects upon the financial situation of Hope UK. Although the Treasurer reports that individuals' giving has not declined, significant grants from the Department for Children, Schools and Families were not replaced when they came to an end in early 2008 and 2009 respectively and this situation will continue for at the foreseeable future.

Trustees decided to restructure Hope UK, changing staff roles and concentrating on making the most of our existing voluntary workforce, while developing new opportunities for young people.

David Edgington, 2010.