

Christian Endeavour in Basingstoke c1893-1939

Introduction

In seeking to find an effective means of bridging the gap between their Sunday schools and full church membership, from the 1890s onwards many of Basingstoke's Free Churches established a Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour (YPSCE). Having been founded in 1881 by the Revd Francis Edward Clark, the minister of Williston Congregational Church in the state of Maine, the innovation quickly spread. By the last decade of nineteenth century it had been adopted in many countries including Great Britain where it was reported, in November 1894, that 1860 Societies had already been established.¹ The aims of YPSCE were spelt out in its founding constitution as: "To promote an earnest Christian life among its members, to increase their mutual acquaintance, and to make them more useful in the service of God."² These clearly resonated with a large number of church leaders who saw in YPSCE a way of harnessing the idealism, enthusiasm and commitment of the young in the service of the Church. In pursuing such aims there was a very heavy emphasis on young people pledging themselves to follow Christ's example.

Laying Foundations: 1890s

The first of Basingstoke's Free Churches to establish a YPSCE was London Street Congregational Church in November 1893, with Immanuel Church (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion) following suit in January 1895. Within a relatively short space of time, both of these Societies made their presence felt.

Each year the anniversaries of their foundation were celebrated and frequently the *Hants and Berks Gazette* carried a detailed account of the points made by the 'keynote' speakers. For example, at London Street's fourth anniversary in November 1897, the Revd Henry John Perkins, the minister of Albion Congregational Church in Southampton, in 'an earnest and stimulating address' spoke highly of the Christian Endeavour pledge and:

... denied emphatically that ... [it] asked more than a young Christian should be prepared to say and do ... The pledge imposed upon them the responsibility of loyalty and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ in the smaller as well as the larger and more important duties of life. It also included their souls' life and growth, and it imposed a responsibility in connection with the possession and use of their talents.³

At Immanuel's fifth anniversary in 1900, the minister, the Revd Eustace Long explained that:

¹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 17 November 1894. This was the figure given by the Revd W. Knight Chaplin editor of *Christian Endeavour Magazine* and guest speaker at the first anniversary of London Street Congregational Church's YPSCE. According to the Revd Eustace Long, Immanuel's minister, 'the work in England dated from ... 1887 when a Society was established in connection with a church at Chester under the late Mr Potts a Congregational minister.' *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 3 February 1900.

² <http://www.worldsunion.org/files/CE-Americas.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2018).

³ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 20 November 1897. The pledge began: "Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would like to have me do."

Christian Endeavour meetings were religious meetings – meetings for prayer, praise and the study of the word of God – but there was a peculiarity about them which differentiated them from all ordinary meetings of that kind ... There was a brightness about Christian Endeavour meetings which kept them alive from beginning to end. There was nothing slow or humdrum about them.⁴

He went on to explain that while ‘the element of spirituality transcended all other elements in this work’, it acted as both a stimulus and a deterrent. ‘It drew young people whose hearts were burning with enthusiasm for Christ and His work’ but others fell ‘away because they did not feel that same spiritual desire.’⁵

Thus, there were challenges to be faced. Nonetheless, the appeal of Christian Endeavour was such that the London Street and Immanuel Societies were soon joined by one attached to the Primitive Methodist Church. Although the exact year of its foundation is not known, it was certainly in existence by 1899. Similarly, the Wesleyans established their equivalent, a Wesley Guild, before the end of the nineteenth century.⁶

A notable characteristic of Christian Endeavour Societies was their desire to forge close links with each other in order to encourage and share ideas. Indeed, one of the earliest press reports, from 1895, was of the first anniversary of Farnham Congregational Church’s YPSCE which representatives from both London Street and Immanuel attended.⁷ Such networking was formalised in late 1897 with the setting up of the Basingstoke and District Christian Endeavour Union, which, in addition to the Basingstoke Societies, included those from Andover, Whitchurch, Overton, Odiham and Fleet.⁸ Consequently, by 1900 Christian Endeavour has established firm foundations in Basingstoke and the surrounding area.

Moving Forward: 1901-1910

The first decade of the twentieth century saw YPSCE make progress to the extent that it became a greatly valued, and relatively high profile, feature of Basingstoke’s ‘community of dissent’. Anniversaries were celebrated and Christian Endeavourers displayed their initiative by organising entertainments and engaging in ‘good works’. Moreover, there continued to be regular press reports of Christian Endeavour meetings and activities, a clear indication of the interest generated.

At London Street’s ninth anniversary in 1902, the speaker was the Revd John Daniel Jones the distinguished minister of Richmond Hill Congregational Church in Bournemouth. It was a considerable coup for the Society to have secured the services of such an eminent speaker and it would seem that he did not disappoint. His theme was “The True Imperialism”. This he considered to be a vital aspect of Christian citizenship – a subject which featured ‘on the programme of every Christian Endeavour Convention.’ In his ‘remarkably fine speech’ he contrasted false

⁴ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 3 February 1900.

⁵ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 3 February 1900.

⁶ This will be the subject of a separate paper.

⁷ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 29 June 1895.

⁸ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 20 November 1897.

Imperialism characterised by ‘a boastful, braggart and arrogant spirit’ with true Imperialism which ‘stood for liberty, justice and religion.’⁹

A few months later, in January 1903 Immanuel’s YPSCE celebrated its eighth anniversary, with nearly ‘sixty members and friends’ partaking of tea in the schoolroom and enjoying ‘a short musical programme.’ In his remarks, the Revd Eustace Long pointed out that of ‘the seventeen active members of the Society, eleven ... [were] Sunday school teachers, and ... six members of the choir.’ This was a clear indication that members were taking their responsibilities for Christian service seriously. Representatives of the London Street and Primitive Methodist Societies were also in attendance and ‘delivered greetings’. The visiting speaker, the Revd Llewellyn J. Parsons, minister of Finsbury Park Congregational Church, gave ‘an exceptionally able and helpful address’ during which he pointed out that ‘the members had banded themselves together for the sole purpose of endeavour ... [which] was to be Christian and ... strenuous.’¹⁰

In November of that year, at celebrations to mark the tenth anniversary of London Street’s YPSCE, it was reported that it now had 83 members. On this occasion, the principal speaker was the editor of *The Christian Endeavour Times* and general secretary of the Christian Endeavour Union of Great Britain. In a ‘telling speech’ he based his remarks on the words ‘evangelise’, ‘demonstrate’, ‘consecrate’ and ‘imitate’.

At Immanuel’s equivalent celebrations in 1905, the speaker was the Revd Leonard Dowsett, a Congregational minister from Margate. ‘With remarkable eloquence and telling oratorical power’ he spoke of the importance of going the “second mile” ‘in the matter of moral purity, sincerity of speech, absence of revenge ... love of the unlovable, in almsgiving, in prayer, in consecration, in trust and in service.’¹¹ What he had to say undoubtedly reflected some of the personal challenges and demands associated with being a Christian Endeavourer.

As previously mentioned, alongside their regular meetings, Christian Endeavourers were also active in organising ‘entertainments’; undertaking ‘good works’; and engaging in enterprising ventures of various kinds. With respect to the first of these, on Thursday 19 February 1903, there was a ‘large attendance’ for an entertainment organised by London Street YPSCE.¹² ‘The programme was of a very varied character’ consisting of live music, recitations and gramophone selections. These were ‘attentively listened to and much appreciated by the audience.’¹³

An example of good works involving London Street’s Christian Endeavourers was the holding of harvest services on the Monday evening following those on the Sunday. At the close of the service in 1902 ‘the flowers and fruit were packed ready to be sent early next morning to the Mansfield Settlement, Canning Town, London, which ... [was] doing a noble work among the dockers and poor of that district.’¹⁴

Another example dates from 1906 when Immanuel’s Christian Endeavourers in ‘a new departure ... provid[ed] a pleasant evening for a number of old folk.’

⁹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 22 November 1902. Jones’ speech is reported in considerable detail and reflects the importance attached to the British Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century.

¹⁰ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 31 January 1903.

¹¹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 4 February 1905.

¹² Although Christian Endeavour was primarily an organisation for young people, it attracted all ages to events of this kind.

¹³ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 21 February 1903. The proceeds were devoted to the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon fund. In March 1904 the same society gave a concert. *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 26 March 1904.

¹⁴ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 18 October 1902.

Members served their guests with a 'meat tea' and entertained them with songs and recitations. The pastor's wife 'gave one of her quiet simple talks', the theme being 'the road of life.' In addition, 'parcels of good things were subsequently distributed' to those unable to attend.¹⁵

Following in Immanuel's footsteps, London Street did something similar at the beginning of 1907, when:

In place of their usual New Year's social the members of the ... Christian Endeavour Society invited nearly a hundred old folks to a tea and entertainment in ... the Schoolroom ... After tea had been disposed of an interesting programme of songs, recitations, etc., was rendered by the members and other friends. For those of the visitors who were unable to walk to the Schoolroom, an omnibus was requisitioned to convey them to and from their homes.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, in seeking to give expression to what might be termed 'practical Christianity', the elderly and the hospitalised were members of the community to whom Christian Endeavourers paid particular attention.

The enterprising character of London Street's Christian Endeavourers was evident at 'a social gathering and exhibition of Chinese curiosities lent by the London Missionary Society, supplemented by others belonging to local friends' which they held in the schoolroom in 1904. 'Numerous Chinese lanterns hung from the ceiling, brightening the room with their brilliant colours, and several of those present, adults and juveniles, wore Chinese costumes.'¹⁷ In 1906 a garden sale of work, held at "Falconhurst", raised about £12 which was to be used 'to help with the evangelistic work of the Church in its six village stations.'¹⁸ As reported in the re-launched London Street Church Magazine, in December 1907 a sale of work was held:

... for Home and Foreign Mission Work. The Fancy work, Refreshments and Young Men's stalls vied with one another in interest, and several bright items of entertainment were given – Rontgen Rays, Gramophone, Weighing machine, etc., notably a Missionary scene by a group of children trained by ... [Christian Endeavourers]. The Young Men edited a dainty and attractive little Magazine, the articles in which were all written by Endeavourers ... As a result of the Sale £5 5s will be sent to Miss Wallis for her work in Armenia, £6 for our work in Coimbatore, India and the balance has been used to send out our Xmas gifts to some of the poorer members of the Village Congregations.¹⁹

A couple of years later, in the autumn of 1910, the same society organised an Eisteddfod to encourage 'artistic and intellectual pursuits ... [with] prizes being awarded for vocal and instrumental music, impromptu speaking, site reading and essay writing.' As it was put in a summary of memorable incidents from 1910, published in the *Hants and Berks Gazette*: 'Though the competition was not so general as the promoters had hoped, considerable public interest was aroused, and the movement is one which, if taken up on a large scale, might do a great deal of good in

¹⁵ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 17 February 1906.

¹⁶ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 5 January 1907.

¹⁷ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 20 February 1904.

¹⁸ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 7 July 1906.

¹⁹ *Basingstoke Congregational Magazine* (hereafter: *BCM*) vol.1 no.1, January 1908, not paginated.

the town.²⁰ Such events were very much in keeping with the creativity of Christian Endeavours as they sought to make their contribution to the life of the wider community as well as their church.

A further indication of the favourable impression created by existing YPSCE Societies was the establishment of new ones. Thus, at the Railway Mission's annual meeting in 1904, it was reported that a Christian Endeavour Society had been started at the beginning of 1903 and now had 'an average attendance of over 20.'²¹ Another Society was started by the Working Men's Mission in George Street, not long after it was opened in 1905, and this was described as being in 'flourishing condition' at the first anniversary of the Mission.²² Later, in 1908, a Society was begun by the newly established Open Baptist Church on Sarum Hill.²³

However, while individual Societies may have flourished, the Union clearly struggled, since in 1904 it was announced that it had been reborn having been 'in a state of suspended animation for some time.'²⁴ To restart the Union, in December 1904 a united meeting, billed as a 'rally', was held at the Primitive Methodist Church. At this stage there were only four member Societies all in Basingstoke, London Street, Immanuel, Primitive Methodist and the Railway Mission. The President was the Revd John George Tolley, the assistant pastor at the Congregational Church. Although he was a comparative newcomer, what he had seen of the local Societies 'made him feel that the Christian Endeavour Movement in ... [the] neighbourhood was certainly a power.' The visiting speaker, the Revd David John, Winchester's Congregational minister, spoke of the need for a 'spiritual and evangelical revival' as a precursor to 'a social and political revival.' He sought to enthuse his audience by claiming that:

The Christian Endeavour movement was going to do something not only for this nation but for all the peoples of the world. It was they who, by their spiritual ideals and principles, were going to bring in the day when the brotherhood of man would no longer be merely a shibboleth of the political platform or a cant phrase, but a real fundamental principle animating and binding together all those who tried to do the will of God.

These were lofty aspirations that, if they were to be realised, required individual Endeavourers to seek to imitate Christ.²⁵ In using the phrase 'brotherhood of man' John was perhaps alluding to the Men's Own Brotherhood Movement, which like YPSCE was making an impact both locally and nationally.

²⁰ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 31 December 1910. See also *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 1 October 1910 for a detailed report of the Eisteddfod which list each category of competition and naming the winners.

²¹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 6 February 1904. For a brief history of the Railway Mission, see Roger Ottewill, 'Basingstoke's Railway Mission: 1893-c1911/12', *Basingstoke History and Archaeological Society Newsletter*, No. 218, Feb 2017, pp. 13-5

²² *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 24 February 1906. At the 1909 annual meeting of the George Street Mission it was reported that the Christian Endeavour Society had 34 members and a junior society 36. *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 27 February 1909. For a short history of the Mission see Roger Ottewill, 'Working Men's Mission Hall, Basingstoke, 1905-1928', *Basingstoke History and Archaeological Society Newsletter*, No. 223, May 2018, pp.13-7.

²³ This Society celebrated its first anniversary in October 1909. *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 30 October 1909.

²⁴ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 18 June 1904.

²⁵ The theme of John's address was *Imitatio Christi*. *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 18 June 1904.

From the talks given at equivalent meetings in later years something of the priorities and preoccupations of Christian Endeavourers at this time and how they viewed themselves can be gained. At the 1906 annual meeting there was an address on the theme of Christian citizenship²⁶ which reinforced the argument referenced earlier in relation to the talk given by the Revd John Daniel Jones. While at the 1907 meeting, the point was made that ‘the genius and spirit of the movement was not self-satisfaction or self-preservation but rather aggression.’ The latter was needed because ‘indifference was killing the Churches.’ In his ‘brilliant and poetic address’ the Revd Herbert Arnold from London, emphasised the multi-faceted nature of the ‘Christian Endeavour diamond’. It was, he said:

a Bible Society; a charity organisation society ministering to the sick and the poor through its sunshine and other committees; a mutual improvement society, a training ground for the most illiterate and nervous of its members; a church aid society whose object was not rivalry but reinforcement; an interdenominational society, bringing different denominations into touch with one another; a patriotic society, not fostering that spurious patriotism of the jingo sort that chiefly showed itself in plundering the public purse, that was always spreading its peacock’s tails, but was not so ready to do its work, but a patriotism that recognised that character settled the destiny of nations as well as of individuals; and, lastly, a missionary society which realised there was no Empire as grand and glorious as the Empire of Jesus.

This serves as a very helpful checklist of the different ways in which YPSCE engaged with the Church and wider society. The report of this meeting also contains some useful statistics with there being a total of ‘99 active, 24 associate and 30 honorary members’ in the Societies which constituted the Union.²⁷ By 1909, the numbers had increased to 152, 37 and 34 respectively. The grand total of 223 was 10 more than the previous year.²⁸ It is intriguing that at this meeting reference was made to some unspecified ‘hostile criticism ... [that] had lately been passed’ on the Christian Endeavour Movement. However, this did not prevent further growth in numbers with the figures reported in 1910 being 148 active, 43 associates, 46 honorary, and 30 juniors, an overall total of 267. On this occasion the Revd Nicholas Richards, a successor to the Revd David John as Winchester’s Congregational minister, ‘gave a most clear and striking address on Christian love and Christian service.’²⁹

With respect to the Movement at county level a notable event at Eastertide 1908 was the holding in Basingstoke of the Annual Convention of the Hampshire Christian Endeavour Union. This incorporated papers on subjects as diverse as ‘how to work a junior society’ and ‘Christianity and Socialism’; a public luncheon; a ramble; ‘a forceful and witty speech’ from the President; and a contribution from the Revd J. Morgan Gibbon in which, *inter alia*, he sought to encourage Christian Endeavourers ‘to attend with all ... [their] power to the cultivation of the intellectual side of ... [their] nature.’³⁰

Thus, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, YPSCE in Basingstoke had made considerable progress, although perhaps not as much as some

²⁶ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 17 March 1906.

²⁷ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 9 March 1907.

²⁸ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 6 March 1909.

²⁹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 5 March 1910

³⁰ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 25 April 1908.

ministers and lay advocates of the Movement would have liked. Various concerns were articulated by the Revd Reginald Thompson minister of London Street Congregational Church, and an Endeavourer of 14 years experience, in an article published in the July 1908 edition of his church's magazine. Entitled "The Christian Endeavour Outlook", he began by observing that:

... in many parts of the country [there was] a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the present state of Christian Endeavour. Some societies have turned into guilds, others have watered down the pledge, others are listless and decaying.

Complaints included the fact that young people did not participate freely; there was little opportunity to discuss 'subjects more closely allied to ... modern social and theological problems'; and societies achieved 'no great tangible results'. Thompson responded by reminding his readers that YPSCE was essentially a bridge for 'young people on the way from [Sunday] School to Church who ... [were] willing to train themselves for more serious work for the Church.' He did not have a remedy for the complaints raised by critics of YPSCE but was convinced of its value since progress depended upon 'the energy and enthusiasm that should mark youthful work.'³¹

Regardless of the criticisms and concerns, there can be little doubt that few, if any, church members would have been unaware of the contribution made by Christian Endeavourers. It was indeed recognised that their zeal was vital for the future wellbeing of churches.

Consolidation: 1911-1919

During the next decade, traces of individual Societies, in the form of press reports, are by no means as extensive as they had been. However, from what is available it would seem that they continued to provide a spiritual home for those young people and others who took their Christian discipleship seriously, both from a spiritual and a practical point of view.

Many of these traces, from the years leading up to the First World War, were in the form of reports of the annual meetings of the Basingstoke and District Christian Endeavour Union. Although relatively brief, these do include some statistics. Thus, at the 1911 meeting, which was held at Immanuel Church, it was reported that there were '135 active, 47 associate, 38 honorary and 30 junior members making a total of 250 members' compared with 267 in the previous year.³²

Two years later, at the equivalent meeting held at Sarum Hill Baptist Church, the corresponding figures were '158 active, 63 associate, and 31 honorary members making a total of 252, an increase of 30.' Of the 8 Societies that were now members of the Union, five were from Basingstoke – London Street Congregational Church, Immanuel Church, Sarum Hill Primitive Methodist Church, Sarum Hill Baptist Church and George Street Working Men's Mission.³³ It was explained that there were a number of junior societies in the district covered by the Union, but only George Street with 24 members was affiliated. In an address given by the Revd Humphrey Lucas, the minister of Andover Congregational Church, and President elect of the County Federation, spoke of the difference that a Society should make to the Church with which it was associated:

³¹ *BCM*, vol.1 no.7, July 1908, 2-4.

³² *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 4 March 1911.

³³ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 15 March 1913. The other three were at Tadley, Overton and Baughurst.

One of the first things it should contribute was the sunshine of the Church. The Sunshine Committee had not fulfilled its obligation merely by placing flowers on the pulpit and carrying them afterwards to sick folk. It ought to be possible for the Christian Endeavour Society to produce such an atmosphere in the church that everyone who entered it should feel its glow and warmth and gladness. He was not speaking of the happy times which Christian Endeavourers enjoyed in their own meetings, but of the influence they ought to carry into the Church. They must recognise the fact that they were part of the Church, and it remained for them to make their contribution to the life of the church, its energy, its enthusiasm, its vim, its go. They must bring a progressive image into the Church, especially in regard to mission work.³⁴

The extent to which these ideals were put into practice is not known. However, given the involvement of ministers in promoting the Movement it is clear that they appreciated the worth of Christian Endeavour for their church.

Throughout the War Years there are no press reports of Christian Endeavour activities. However, this was probably due more to the limitations of space in the newspaper than to the absence of anything of note. One casualty, however, appears to have been the collapse of the Union. Another was the closure of individual Societies, such as the one attached to Sarum Hill Baptist Church.

The Inter-War Years: 1920s and 1930s

Once the War was over, however, some individual Societies were re-established. The reconstituted Sarum Hill Baptist YPSCE, for example, celebrated its second anniversary in 1922. 'Both afternoon and evening meetings were well attended, and about 100 friends some from Whitchurch sat down to tea.' The Secretary's report was described as 'encouraging' with there being a 75 per cent increase in membership.³⁵

At the corresponding event in 1931 it was reported 'that the Society numbered 35 members (17 active and 18 associate), being an increase of four' on the previous year. Meetings were held weekly with 'an average attendance of 17 or 18'. There were four active committees, namely 'executive, sick visiting, musical, and lookout which had done excellent service.' On this occasion about 130 sat down to 'a sumptuous repast.'³⁶

The report of the Society attached to Sarum Hill Methodist Church presented at its anniversary in 1935 indicates some of the 'good works' with which Christian Endeavourers were associated. These included helping 'sick members and friends of the church ... [taking] flowers, fruit and eggs where necessary'; arranging a meeting on the lawn at Essex Lodge with music and addresses 'for the benefit of some of the older folk at the church'; following the Harvest services, distributing gifts 'to needy members of the church and the Hospital'; and sending money collected at a carol service organised by Endeavourers 'to the Orphanage Home at Alresford.'³⁷

With respect to networking, the earlier Christian Endeavour Union had clearly collapsed since in 1926 it was reported that 'at a meeting of representatives of Christian Endeavour Societies in the town, held in the Immanuel Church school room, the formation of a Union was decided upon.' Officers were appointed with the

³⁴ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 15 March 1913.

³⁵ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 25 February 1922.

³⁶ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 21 February 1931.

³⁷ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 1 February 1935.

President being the Revd Edwin Tully, Immanuel's minister. The other appointees were 'Vice-President, the Rev S.H. Wing (Baptist); Secretary – Mr W. Houghton (Congregational); Treasurer - Mr Telling (Baptist); Extension Secretary – Miss Cole (Primitive Methodist).'³⁸ Thus, all the major Free Church denominations were represented and it is assumed that they continued to be ardent supporters of YPSCE.

It would seem that by 1930 the London Street Society has been superseded by that attached to Sarum Hill (Primitive) Methodist Church³⁹ as the leading YPSCE in the town. During the following decade the anniversary services and follow up rally on Monday Evening of the Sarum Hill Society were faithfully reported in the *Hants and Berks Gazette*. During the proceedings a roll call of other societies was taken. Taking that of 1936 as an example:

The roll call was conducted by the Rev W. Briggs [the minister], and responses in the form of a hymn or verse of Scripture were made by representatives of numerous societies present or in the form of written messages which had been communicated by societies who were not represented in person. Among the societies who responded in one form or another were: Farnham Methodist, Basingstoke Wesley Guild, Hannington Methodist, Oakley Methodist, Basingstoke Immanuel Church, Basingstoke Baptist Church, May Street Congregational Church (seniors and juniors), Sutton Scotney, Overton Congregational, Whitchurch Methodist, Tadley Methodist, Andover, Newbury, Micheldever, Steventon, Southampton (Polygon), Miss Dear (Bournemouth) and the senior and junior members at Sarum Hill.⁴⁰

The geographical spread and variety of societies was confirmation of the extensive networking that was still in evidence within the Christian Endeavour Movement.

At the corresponding event in 1939, of the Basingstoke Societies, apart from the Sarum Hill Methodists, only the Baptist Society and the Wesley Guild responded to the roll call. Although the number of Primitive Methodist Christian Endeavourers was relatively small with there being 24 active, 5 associate and 4 honorary members, as the Secretary's annual report indicated they had participated in wide variety of activities. These included the holding of an egg service at which 10s 3d was raised for the local hospital and 'gifts brought to the service were distributed to Church members and sick friends'; attendance at the county wide Annual Convention held in Portsmouth; talks on "Harmony in Music, Life and Religion" and "The Making of the English Bible"; and a meeting arranged by the Floating Committee with the speaker from Southampton taking 'back with him items which had been made and purchased for our sailors, besides a sum of £2 2s.'⁴¹

Conclusion

Although the Second World War by no means marked the end of Christian Endeavour, it serves as a convenient point at which to terminate this narrative. Looking back over the previous 30 to 40 years, there can be little doubt that Christian

³⁸ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 30 October 1926.

³⁹ Following the Methodist Reunion in 1932, the title "Primitive" was dropped and the Church was known simply as Sarum Hill Methodist Church.

⁴⁰ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 31 January 1936.

⁴¹ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 3 February 1939.

Endeavourers made their mark both within their churches and the wider community. As it was put by Mr J.B. Holmes the speaker at London Street's seventeenth anniversary in 1910:

He believed in the Christian Endeavour Society because it recognised the young life in ... [the] churches and gave them their opportunity of witnessing for Jesus Christ; and next because it did not despise their humble efforts ... which perhaps most people looked down upon ... [but] were accepted and blessed by Jesus Christ.⁴²

As has been shown, these 'humble efforts' included visiting the sick and elderly, fund raising and organising entertainments. Such contributions to the well-being of others instilled in young people the values of Christian service. However, Societies did face challenges, such as securing an acceptable balance between these practical aspects of Christianity and their spiritual underpinning and ensuring that as memberships aged their target group of young people did not feel marginalised. It would also seem that some Societies lost their momentum and eventually closed, perhaps losing out to youth clubs and institutes which were seen as more appealing to the less spiritually minded. That said, as the Sarum Hill Methodist Society demonstrates with effective leadership YPSCE was able to survive by filling a particular niche in the church's ministry. Moreover, whether or not churches persevered with Christian Endeavour, they remained committed to work with young people.

⁴² *Hants and Berks Gazette*, 19 November 1910.