

ARCHIVES

Livesey Collection, University of Central Lancashire, Preston

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The Livesey Collection of the British National Temperance League (BNTL) consists of over 5,000 books, journals, manuscripts, tracts, images and other material and objects concentrating on the temperance movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1987 it was transferred from the BNTL's offices in Sheffield¹ to the Library and Learning Resource Services of the University of Central Lancashire in Preston. It is now located in the University Library's Special Collections room. The Collection is named after Joseph Livesey (1794–1884) who was a leading temperance advocate, social reformer, journalist and philanthropist. He was a founder member of the Preston Temperance Society which, on 1 September 1832, was the first to pledge total abstinence from alcohol. The 'Seven Men of Preston', including Livesey, pledged to 'abstain from all liquors of an intoxicating quality, whether ale, porter, wine or ardent sprits, except as medicine'. By 1834 a thousand people had signed the pledge and the movement began to grow across Britain and the Empire. Livesey described Preston as 'the Jerusalem of the teetotal movement'.

The University's link with Livesey is reinforced by his role in the foundation of the Preston Institution for the Diffusion of Knowledge, inaugurated on 7 October 1832. The Institution was the direct antecedent of the University of Central Lancashire which celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2003. Some of the original 1828 Institution records survive – including Livesey's handbill advertising the inaugural meeting – in the University Archives, housed adjacent to the Livesey Collection.

Livesey was a prosperous cheesemonger; his business success helped to finance his journalism and propagandising. He published *The Moral Reformer* (1831–33); *Preston Temperance Advocate* (1834–37); *Livesey's Moral Reformer* (1838–39); *The Struggle* (1842–45), which campaigned for free trade and for the repeal of the Corn Laws (he was a member of a delegation of anti-corn law petitioners who met Sir Robert Peel in 1842); *Livesey's Progressionist* (1832–33); and *The Staunch Teetotaller* (1867–68), which was critical of the temperance establishment. He was a prolific author of pamphlets, tracts and handbills. His

Malt Liquor Lecture (1836) was often reprinted; it was revised in 1870. The collection contains many of his writings. David Hunt, who has compiled a checklist of Livesey's work, writes that,

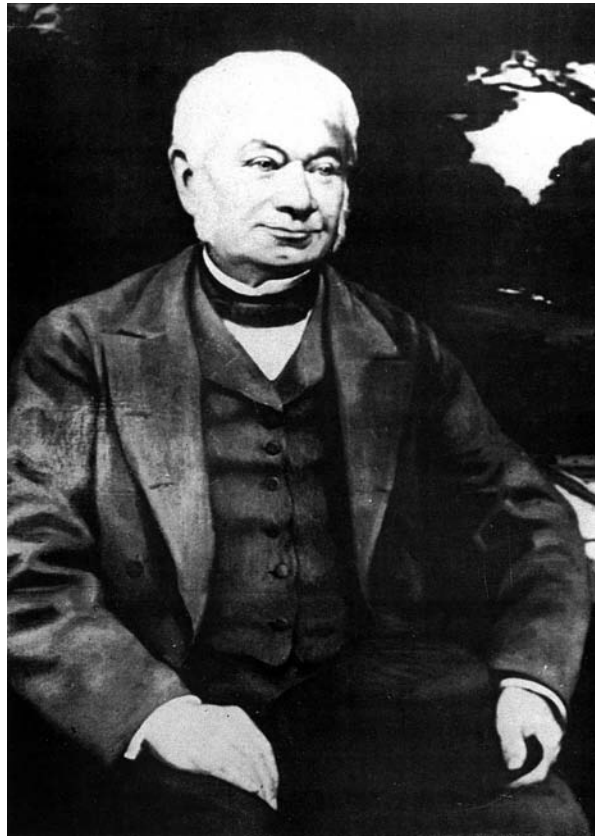
In many respects Livesey is a bibliographer's nightmare. Much of his material is undated. Many of his pamphlets were reprinted over a period of years. Others include pro-temperance material drawn from the work of other authors. Authorship cannot always be ascribed with certainty.²

Besides containing a comprehensive, although not complete, collection of Livesey's writings, the Livesey Collection includes family portraits, including a handsome portrait of his wife Jane, translated works, biographies, his

family bible, and a table constructed with timber from his weaving loom and so inscribed by his executors. The table, which is the largest object in the collection, occupied pride of place on the platform of Preston Temperance Hall. Today, the table is sometimes visited by members of the Livesay Historical Society, tracing the Livesey family roots in Lancashire.³

Livesey had an enquiring mind and a keenness for self-development which is reflected in the collection. His cranium was read by the phrenologist L. N. Fowler, whose manuscript character reading is preserved. At the age of 73, Livesey experimented for a year with a meatless diet and became a vegetarian. He was also an enthusiast for hydropathy (indeed he invested in the Hydro at Bowness-on-Windermere). For modern researchers, this means that the scope of the collection is wider than just teetotalism; it is interested in vegetarianism, diet, healthy exercise and 'social health': we have copies of the discreet sex education booklets sent, under plain cover, to inquiring and perplexed youths.

When the library was based in Sheffield it occupied a large and pleasantly old fashioned room in Livesey-Clegg House, near the Town



Portrait of Joseph Livesey (1794–1884) in middle age. This image is taken from a lantern slide in the Livesey Collection

Hall. Books, journals and other materials were arranged in fixed locations in Victorian bookcases around the walls of the library. It was decided to keep this arrangement, rather than reclassify, and so the Livesey Collection has its own classification.

Dame Agnes
Weston
(1840–1918),
'the Sailor's
Friend' and
author of
*My Life among
the Bluejackets*
(1910). She is
said to be the
first woman to
be honoured
with a full naval
funeral

It is especially strong in temperance biography, such as Agnes Weston's *My Life Among the Bluejackets* (1910) and Sir Wilfrid Lawson's *Memoir* (1909). Weston's work survives today as 'Aggie Westons' Royal Sailors Rest social centres in naval towns, mentioned in Charles Causley's poetry.⁴ Lawson (1829–1906) was a Cumberland landowner and MP who campaigned for local control of the liquor trade. He was a keen huntsman and promoter of agricultural education. The collection thus has unexpected riches, for example, for naval, social, imperial and literary historians. Students of women's history have found the collection especially useful. Women had much to lose if male breadwinners were drunkards and the temperance movement had many examples of energetic and determined women campaigners.

Family historians will also find much of interest. Scarcely a week passes without an email query about an ancestor who may have been active in the temperance movement. Some of these queries can be

answered by checking Peter Winskill's detailed *The Temperance Movement and its Workers* (1891, 4 vols). Because of the many enquiries from Livesey family historians, the Collection's web pages include a guide on researching 'your Livesey ancestors'.⁵

The Collection is also rich in literature and music: novels, poetry, recitations, hymns, songs and children's literature. The temperance movement was good at staging popular entertainment to promote its message. One classic example of Victorian temperance melodrama is *The Trial of Sir Jasper: A Temperance Tale in Verse* by S. C. Hall, editor of the *Art Journal* and a barrister.⁶ Sir Jasper was a brewer whose greed condemns the families of drunkards to poverty, misery and death. The poetry of poverty is



well represented. Manchester historians may be interested in William Axon's *The Ancoats Skylark*,⁷ a touching collection of poems and writings. It begins:

The day was hot, the summer sun
Pierced through the city gloom;
It touched the teacher's anxious face,
It brightened all the room.
Around him children of the poor,
Ill fed, with clothing scant,
The flotsam of the social wreck,
The heirs of work and want.

The poem continues with the teacher's talking about the countryside to the children. He asks them if they have ever heard a skylark:

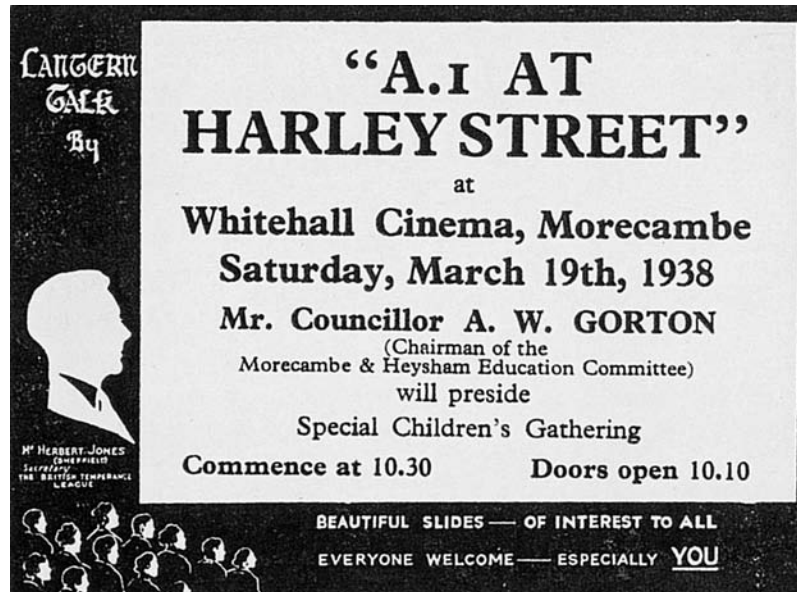
A silence fell upon the class,
On all the listening ring,
Then one said, 'Sir, I've seen a lark,
'And heard him loudly sing.'
'And where, my little Ancoats lad,
'Did you the laycock see?'
'T'was in a wooden cage that hung
'Outside the "Cotton Tree".'

The poem continues to hope for the time when 'the bonny laycock's song shall thrill/ Through all the Ancoats skies.' The national politics of Edwardian Britain were also criticised in verse. Sir Wilfrid Lawson and F. Carruthers Gould's *Cartoons in Rhyme and Line* (1905) provide a lively and witty commentary on 'John Morley at Manchester', Boer War jingoism, the Church's attitudes to the brewing trade and the hypocrisies of British imperialism. Children were well provided for in temperance literature. The Band of Hope, especially, focused on recitations, hymns and verse for children. '*Only Now and Then*' is a robust example for youths tempted by a glass of beer or worse:

When you have a habit
That is wrong, you know,
KNOCK IT OFF AT ONCE, LADS,
WITH A SUDDEN BLOW.
Think it no excuse, boys,
Merging into men,
That you do a wrong act,
ONLY NOW AND THEN!⁸

Hymn-singing was a popular and cheap way for the movement to spread the word and provide wholesome entertainment. The standard

Admission ticket to British National Temperance League lantern slide talk, 'A. 1 at Harley Street', Morecambe, 1938. The time of the talk – on a Saturday morning – suggests that children would be shown vivid images of the diseased internal organs of dead alcoholics. A large collection of BNTL slides has survived



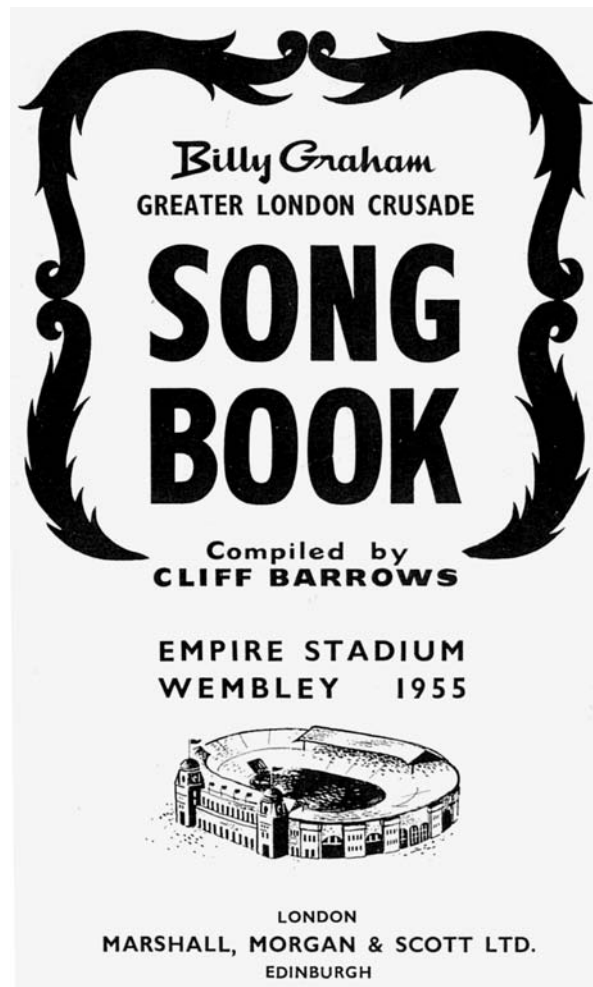
temperance hymn book was *Hoyle's Hymns and Songs for Temperance Societies and Bands of Hope* (189-). William Hoyle was the conductor of the Manchester Free Trade Hall festivals for twenty years in late Victorian times. He collected the best and most popular temperance hymns such as *We are a Band of Young Abstainers*; *Tell me the Old, Old Story*; *Water is Best*; and *Where is my Boy Tonight?* Temperance hymnals were early users of the tonic-sol-fa musical notation (because congregations were unable to read music) and, as a result, the collection has attracted researchers in musicology, even from the USA. We are regularly asked to verify the words or music of hymns and songs and to suggest melodramatic texts for theatre producers, television researchers and literary editors. D. H. Lawrence, whose letters are being edited, was fond of the sturdy temperance hymns of his youth such as *There's a Serpent in the Glass – Dash it Down!* The hymn collection continues into the twentieth century: the *Billy Graham Song Book*, compiled for his crusade at the Empire Stadium Wembley in 1955, is a good example.

Like modern pressure groups, the temperance societies lobbied governments and provided evidence for official enquiries and Royal Commissions. The collection has many blue books, minutes of evidence, and detailed statistics used in this work. One source, popular with social historians, is the 1904 *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* (HMSO, Cd. 2175). This was produced when the Government was alarmed by the poor health of many recruits during the South African War. The temperance movement saw this as an opportunity to press the point that inebriety was

a contributing factor to poverty and ill health. Social conditions locally were also the concern of the movement. Local historians will be interested in John Clay's *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Borough of Preston* (HMSO, 1845) and his *Reports on the Preston House of Correction* (1846–51/55). Clay was the chaplain at Preston Gaol and he is an important primary source on living conditions in the Lancashire industrial revolution.⁹

The distribution of tracts and handbills was an important way to promote the temperance message. As a result, the collection has many locally-printed tracts. Some of these are not recorded in the British Library catalogues; the Livesey Collection may be a unique resource for historians of printing and bibliography.

A strength of the collection is its long runs of national temperance journals; these include *The British Temperance Advocate*, *The Alliance News* and *The Temperance Record*. There are runs of rarer journal titles such as *Abkari: The Quarterly Organ of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association*. 'Abkari' is a Hindi word derived from Persian, meaning 'strong water', specifically the business of selling and distributing alcoholic liquors and taxing them. There appears to be an ambivalence in British imperial attitudes to the consumption of alcoholic drink by the Empire's subjects. The colonised are seen as lowly 'natives' and, in many cases, 'heathens', but there is often in temperance literature an explicit admiration for teetotal Muslims and Hindus when compared to their beer-drinking, mainly Christian, masters. This is clearly shown in Cruickshank's elaborate narrative painting *The Worship of Bacchus*, recently restored by Tate Britain.¹⁰ The alcohol history of the British Empire seems to be a neglected area for scholarship. Many very localised titles are also held, for example, *The York Visitor* and *The Bristol Temperance Herald*, although these are usually in



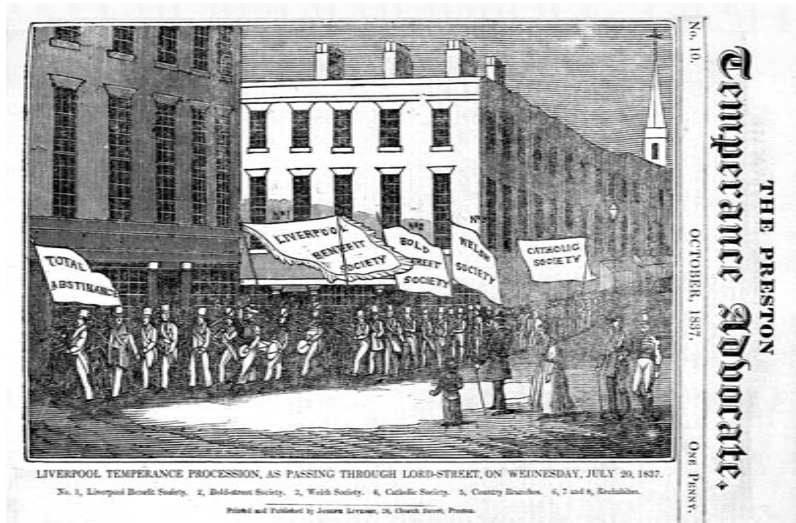
Billy Graham
International
Crusade Song
Book, 1955.
The Livesey
Collection
includes
Christian
Evangelical
material from
the 1950s.
Billy Graham
(b. 1918)
conducted huge
evangelical
meetings in
Wembley
Stadium,
involving mass
hymn singing,
praying and
demonstrative
public
conversions

very short runs. Joseph Livesey's journal publications feature strongly. The journal holdings also reflect the wider ranging nature of the collection. Health issues are covered by *The British Journal of Inebriety* and *The Medical Temperance Journal* among others. Nineteenth-century radical politics are represented by short runs of *The Black Dwarf* and *The White Dwarf*.

Advertisements in the journals illustrate the wide scope of the temperance life style. One could stay in temperance hotels, be entertained in temperance billiard halls and cocoa rooms, travel on Thomas Cooks's tours, drink Fry's cocoa and a wide range of non-alcoholic beverages, attend concerts by temperance bands such the Wingates or the Rothwell, visit hydropathic establishments and, of course, buy many tracts, song books and other improving literature. It may not be realised today how many products had their origins in the temperance movement: Cooks's first tour was for a temperance society and Manchester's Vimto was a temperance drink. The local history of temperance is often neglected by local historians, as indeed is local food history generally.

There are some manuscripts in the collection. They include the records of local and national organisations. Local records held are the minutes of the Preston Temperance Society from 1887 to 1914, and those of the Halifax Temperance Society from 1909 to 1967. National records include the annual conferences of the British Temperance League, 1835–1940, and the proceedings of the Executive / General Committee of the National Temperance League, 1856–1928. These records are seldom consulted by historians; they may suggest an opportunity for new areas of research, especially in the alcohol and temperance history of the twentieth century, which has received little attention compared to the nineteenth century. A range of pledge books, unfortunately the majority blank, is also held, together with the diary of Samuel Sims, an agent of the National Temperance League in the 1880s. He was an energetic campaigner, using the efficient and extensive railway network of Victorian Britain for his business travels.

The visual material in the collection is impressive in its variety and content. There is a large collection of lantern slides with a magic lantern projector. The slides illustrate temperance and religious themes, with the occasional uplifting tale for light relief. Some of the slides are purely for entertainment. Some are important in photographic history such as Herbert Ponting's pictures of the Scott Polar Expedition. There are also many pledge cards and books, rather like cheque books from which a pledge slip was signed and returned to the pledger, while his or her details were kept in the stub book. There are also many tickets, advertisements, badges, medals and



Liverpool temperance procession, Lord Street, Liverpool, on 20 July 1837, in the *Preston Temperance Advocate*, No. 10, October 1837. Temperance groups processing were (left to right) the Liverpool Benefit Society, Bold Street Society, Welsh Society, Catholic Society, 'country branches' with the Rechabites at the rear

other ephemera, often in the temperance colours of blue and white.¹¹ The temperance movement enjoyed commemorative ceramics, such as a cup and saucer of the Preston Temperance Society with the words 'Put no rum in me' inscribed inside the cup. We have been offered processional banners – similar to trade union banners – but their conservation is so daunting that these offers have been declined.

Recent uncatalogued additions to the collection include papers and photographs from the BNTL's Conference Centre at Eastwood Grange in Derbyshire. They show temperance work in the later twentieth century, and images of the innocent-seeming social life of young



Band of Hope pledge card, 1886. Ornate cards, signed by the pledge taker, would be framed and hung on the parlour wall as a public display of teetotalism



National
 Temperance
 Summer School,
 Eastwood
 Grange, 1948.
 Photographer,
 T. Sanders of
 Chesterfield.
 The BNTL ran a
 conference
 centre in the
 Peak District,
 near
 Chesterfield,
 where young
 teetotallers
 could meet and
 socialise at
 Schloer fruit
 juice parties

teetotallers in the 1960s. While some of their contemporaries indulged in drugs and drink, the Eastwood Grange young people enjoyed Schloer (apple juice) parties: a long way from modern binge-drinking students. This material would be useful for a long-overdue serious history of alcohol and drink in twentieth-century Britain.

The Livesey Collection is in the City Campus Library of the University of Central Lancashire, in St. Peter's Square, Preston, Lancashire. It can be visited most easily during the week, not normally at weekends. It is sensible to make an appointment with the librarian/information officer, such as myself. Telephone 01772-892285 or email aturner-bishop@uclan.ac.uk. The collection is catalogued on the web at http://llrs.uclan.ac.uk/www-bin/www_talis. It is important to select the 'Joseph Livesey' collection in the drop-down menu.

For more details of the collection, please check www.uclan.ac.uk/library/usersupport/lrs/collections/livesey/index.htm.

Notes

1. The British National Temperance League is still active in campaigning against alcohol and drug abuse. See www.bntl.org for details of the BNTL's current activities. The former UK Alliance, now known as the Institute of Alcohol Studies, has some historical temperance material in

the IAS Library at 12 Caxton Street, London SW1 (see www.ias.org.uk). The Band of Hope, 25f Copperfield Street, London SE1, is now called HopeUK (www.hopeuk.org) and the Rechabites, based at 14 Byrom Street, Manchester, recently rebranded themselves as Healthy Investment (www.healthyinvestment.co.uk), welcoming funds from non-teetotalers. HopeUK and Healthy Investment have small collections of historic temperance material. The serious student of alcohol history should check the Alcohol and Drugs History Society (<http://historyofalcoholand-drugs.typepad.com>), publisher of the *Social History of Alcohol Review*.

2. D. Hunt, 'The writings of Joseph Livesey: a provisional checklist', in I. Levitt (ed.), *Joseph Livesey of Preston: Business, Temperance and Moral Reform*, Harris papers No. 1 (Preston, 1996), pp. 78–82.
3. Family history is an important part of the collection's current use. The Livesay Historical Society (the name can be spelt as Livesay or Livesey) was founded in 1957 in Cloverdale, Virginia, USA, and it now has over 800 members (see www.lhscociety.org). The Society holds family meetings and conducts and circulates research, publishing the *Livesay Bulletin*. The records of the Society are lodged in Allen County Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA. There are also some Livesey papers in the Lancashire Record Office, Preston.
4. See www.rsr.org.uk and C. Causley, *Farewell Aggie Weston* (Aldington, 1951).
5. 'Researching your Livesey ancestors' is at www.uclan.ac.uk/library/usersupport/lrs/collections/livesey/researching.htm.
6. S. C. Hall, *The Trial of Sir Jasper* (London, 1873).
7. W. E. A. Axon, *The Ancoats Skylark and Other Verses* (Manchester, 1894).
8. J. W. Kirton (ed.), *The Standard Young Abstainers' Reciter* (London, 1893).
9. Clay's work on prison reform is well described in W. L. Clay's *The Prison Chaplain: A Memoir of the Rev. John Clay B.D., Late Chaplain of Preston Gaol* (Cambridge, 1861).
10. The Livesey Collection has a large print of *The Worship of Bacchus*. Cruickshank, the illustrator of Dickens's novels, was a temperance advocate and he travelled about the Home Counties explaining his elaborate painting to public audiences. The collection also has his manuscript *carte-de-visite*.
11. Based on the Bible verse Numbers 15:38: 'Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue'.