

# RESTORING HOPE AND THE MAGIC LANTERN

Kate Sandison

I am a professional actor and I joined Hope UK about 10 years ago. I originally heard of them when I visited an exhibition at the Peoples' Palace in Glasgow called *Scotland Sober and Free* in 1981. It was about the Band of Hope (our old name) and other temperance groups of the Victorian era. I assumed they were no longer in existence and only found out that I was wrong when I learned to use the internet many years later. As soon as possible after that I signed up to be an Educator and took the alcohol-free pledge.

Hope UK is devoted to helping young people make drug-free choices – this is facilitated by drug education sessions and workshops. All members have to be alcohol, drug and cigarette free as has always been the case. I had over the years sometimes been shown morsels of our impressive archive including the beautiful magic lantern slides. I asked why we didn't use the lantern anymore and I was told that it had been modernised and ruined by some well-meaning person years before so no longer worked. When I was shown it one day, I could see that there were odd old-fashioned plugs and wiring on it – altogether the lantern looked very dilapidated. However I started to think how wonderful it would be to make some films of our slides and tell people all over the world about Hope UK. By now I had appeared in many films both feature length and short so felt I could put something together.



Richard Rigby and Stan Roberts – and the lantern



Kate with Jan Rigby

see our own magic lantern being operated by Richard and Stan for the first time in probably 50 or 60 years! We were quite emotional as well as awed by the beauty of the slides having never seen them projected before.

Stan brought his scrap books from his upbringing in the Rechabites Temperance Organisation and we looked through them in the all-too-brief lunch break. We were all amazed that both Richard and Stan are teetotalers like all of us at Hope UK, Stan by upbringing and Richard by choice – it seemed they were meant to help us in our work. The two films are almost ready to be screened with their premiere scheduled for our Annual Conference in April – Richard and Stan are invited. Now we are very hopeful that the drug-free message of Hope UK will be broadcast all over the world with the help of our newly restored magic lantern.



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With these hopes in mind I contacted the Magic Lantern Society and was put in touch with members Richard Rigby and then Stan Roberts. Richard very kindly offered to refurbish our magic lantern if it was at all saveable. After some time we finally all met up with the professional camera crew at a pre-production meeting in Latimer Church Stepney Green, where Hope UK is now based. As we talked, Richard picked up our old lantern and I heard a twisting, crunching noise as he manually removed the old bits of wiring! I gulped nervously but in ten minutes all the unnecessary add-ons were in the bin and he showed us the beautiful crystal-like condenser lens inside it. Some young people were in the hall and came over to admire the lantern which already looked far better.

The day of the filming approached and I made more and more lists of things we might need, permits that had to be signed, equipment and props that must be acquired. I typed up the scripts of the shows and added some story dialogue and stage directions for the film makers. A group of young people from our youth branch – Generation Hope – were also going to be there making a film about the film day and helping out, along with Richard's grandson Jonah. Finally the day dawned and everyone started to arrive very promptly. Richard removed the lantern from its protective box and we couldn't believe how brightly it shone after being so dull and dusty. What a transformation – Richard had really worked magic.

My first problem of the day was trying to block out the light in the room we were using for filming so the lantern slides would show up really well. I had prepared black-out fabric to fit the windows of the room adding heavy duty Velcro to stick to the window edges. For two windows this worked well but for the last window the Velcro was obviously past its sell-by date and kept creeping down the glass pane. We eventually found more and persuaded it to stick.

The filming day unfolded very well. Everyone worked hard and it was stunning finally to

