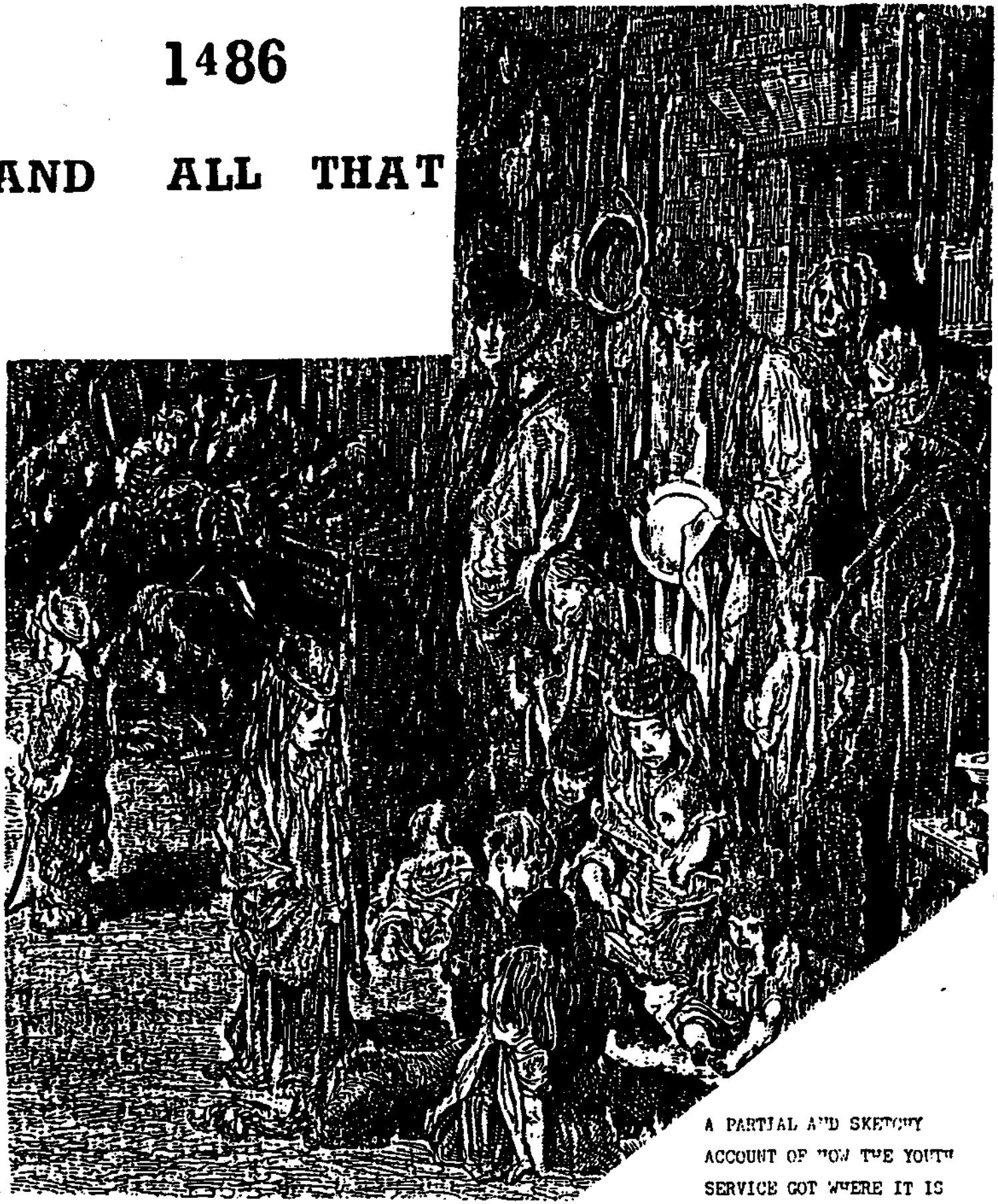
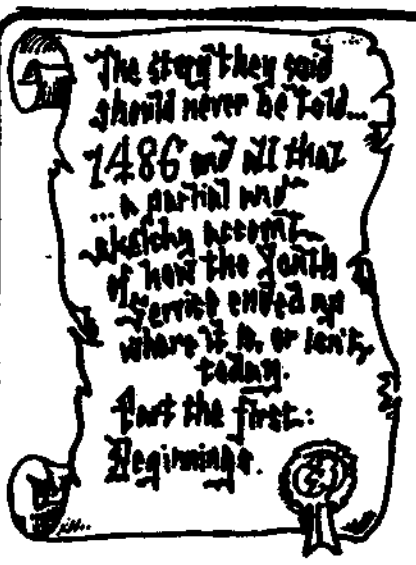
1486

AND ALL THAT



A PARTIAL AND SKETCHY ACCOUNT OF HOW THE YOUTH SERVICE GOT WHERE IT IS TODAY



LAST century this country was very young. Until 1859 Britain (or the world as the British called it) was an immature 6,000 years old. Only after Darwin had a bestseller with *Origin of Species* did it grow suddenly to its present great age..

Did this universal youthfulness lead to a special regard for young people? Not especially. In fact it was nearly a *hundred years after Darwin* that our species developed sufficiently for anyone to put the two words 'youth' and 'service' together.

So this history must begin, not with youth work, but with young people themselves. Who were these children of the industrial revolution? What was the transition from school (or as we shall see, cot) to work like? Where could you hire a minibus from?

Infancy, for those few who lived that long, was quite a happy time. This was due to the widespread use of laudanum or opium as an infant quietener. Drugging small children was necessary because everyone else in the house, or slum as it was called, old enough to toddle was at work, generally for about 14 hours a day.

Some time before you were five you threw away your opium pipe and began the diet that would sustain you (or more likely not) for the rest of your life. This was weak tea, made with used teabags, bread and treacle. Of course, some people didn't give up opium and wrote books like *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* — so starting the rash of confessions books and films that came to plague later generations.

As well as pickpocketing and general thieving, there were any number of Saturday and weekend jobs for the young Victorians — technically known as ragamuffins and street urchins. You could earn a farthing carrying jugs of beer home from the pub or your parents home from the gin-palace.

Another earner, no longer available, came from the number of horses — and sheep, dogs and oxen — in towns. The gentry (another technical term) had a strange aversion to squelching through the rotting, or even the fresh, manure left in the roads. This meant work as crossing sweepers for street urchins not afraid of getting more than their hands dirty.

When it came to pastimes, cock-fighting was highly popular, though ragamuffins tended to have a size and weight disadvantage and seldom won.

But of those who survived, most settled down to their chosen career between the ages of five and eight. This might be in the mill, the mine, the factory or the farm, depending on family tradition and advice from the local careers office.

There was some dispute (the Victorians liked a good argument) over the usefulness of starting work so early. One farmer reported to a royal commission on agricultural employment that 'a boy taken to work at five would be worth twice as much when he was 12, as a boy not taken to work before ten'.

This view was not universally held (though the Manpower Services Commission is now expected to study it seriously before extending the Youth Training Scheme to cover all five to 17 year olds). Others found fault with the system, as work performance was often affected by ill-health and death.

Most young Victorians were suffering from scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, typhoid, tuberculosis and rickets, as well as a slight feeling of queasiness at the thought of having to get up to go to work.

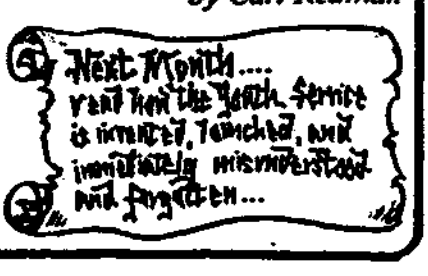
Economic necessity won out in the end. Someone had to buy the goods produced by an expanding industry. This was a problem because no-one could get to the shops as everyone was at work all day and most of the night.

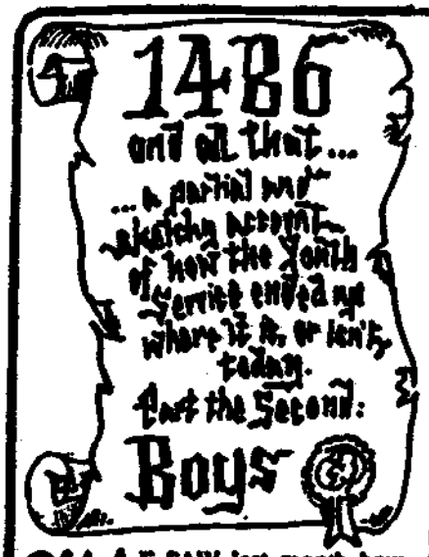
So the difficulty was solved by a reformer called Tenhour Bill who introduced a number of factory acts, education acts and inspectors who forced young people to work part-time (eight hours a day) and spend their free time shopping.

This was an enormous step forward for the pioneers (yet another technical term) of the Youth Service as it invented leisure time in a serious way. It soon became clear that young workers preferred not to go home after compulsory shopping because their slums tended to be dank, squalid, oppressive, fetid and full of hallucinating babies.

It was for these reasons that later that same century these very pioneers developed a vision of a youth movement, united by common and heroic ideals like social education and personal development, which would eventually force young people to play video games and pool while trying to think of reasons for not joining the members' committee.

by Carl Redman





WE SAW last month how the early Victorian reformers invented leisure. The next step in the grand march of civilisation was to invent things for young people to do with it.

Social and political education was an immediate nonstarter. Amazingly, there were fewer people then who understood what it might mean than there are now.

So the flounders of the Youth Service turned instead to more tangible abstractions like cold showers, religion, discipline, duty, boxing and more cold showers.

These were made available in three main forms: boys' clubs, Boys' Brigade and Boy Scouts. Sociolinguistic experts are agreed that a common feature of these was the word boy. This shows that the tendency to reserve Youth Service resources for the almost exclusive use of males has a long and shameful history. (Watch out next month for the herstory.)

Junior clerks, errand boys and apprentices needed some recreation of an evening. They wanted, wrote one worker, to be led 'upward and onward, socially and morally'.

Or to put it another way, giving them unrestricted access to gin-palaces and low theatres was a threat to the internal security of the nation.

This concern — known as philanthropy — led to the formation of boys' clubs. They were an immediate attraction, presumably because of the boys' overpowering curiosity to know who would offer them chess, cocoa and cake as an alternative to beer and ballads.

They did catch on though, adapting their programme to include character-building and bagatelle (an early non-electronic electronic game).

The Boys' Brigade was quite different, being militaristic, religious and heavily into drill. It was discovered in Glasgow in 1883 by William Smith, of whom three things are known.

He was interested in true Christian manliness and had difficulty spelling steadfast. But he is mainly remembered for being forgotten by posterity. To begin with he was constantly confused in the popular mind with his brothers Wilbur (who wrote block-busting adventure yarns) and W.H. (who ran a chain of newsagents). Worse, he was overshadowed by Robert Baden-Powell and his vastly superior image makers and media advisers.

B-P first became a popular hero as a grown up soldier. *The Times* had run a splash front page headline calling him the Rambo of Mafeking.

From then on he could do no wrong. He had noticed at Mafeking how much more useful boys were as messengers than pigeons (or was it better as pigeons than messengers?). So he came back to England and scouted round for some.

He was interested in Wilbur Smith and BB but found drill boring (this sparked off an idea for Black and Decker who quickly cornered the market).

At the top of B-P's youth work agenda were loyalty and pluck. Luckily these were also flavour of the month with the youth of the day. So it wasn't long — 1907 to be exact — before his scouting around paid off and he stumbled across a group of holidaymakers on Brownsea Island who were committed loyalty and pluck freaks.

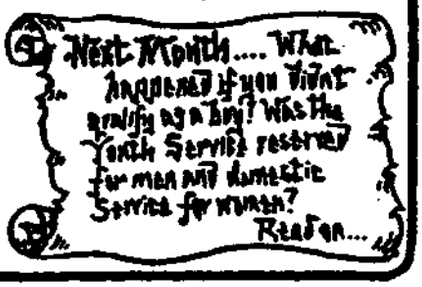
They proved their loyalty to B-P by agreeing to wear silly pointed hats, shorts and woggles. Their pluck was evident from the way they slept outside without a Don Whillans sleeping bag or even a sewn-in groundsheet.

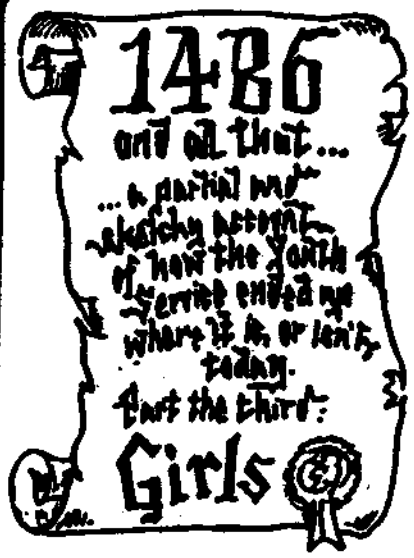
So Scouting spread. Before long it was enormous. So big that B-P was able to make an offer of a merger to W.H. Smith and BB.

Plans were well-advanced for the creation of a massive Youth Service organisation with the motto 'be prepared to be sure and stedfast'. But then the Monopolies Commission got wind of it and blocked the proposal. This pleased William Smith as he thought the bottom was about to drop out of loyalty and pluck anyway.

In fact it didn't. B-P built up a thriving family business before exporting his products around most of the rest of the world through international trade fairs known as jamborees. Still later he diversified into petroleum, being the only youth worker to be made a peer and have an oil company named after him.

by Carl Redman





WHO SAID 'Men who study history think that history is the study of great men'? Aristotle? Thucydides? A. J. P. Taylor? Well it was none of these — it was me. And it was the inescapable conclusion of examining the recorded history of the Youth Service.

We saw how last century scouting and boys' clubs became really popular because boys were so unpopular with the well-to-do philanthropists of the day. But while the lads were away camping or enjoying cold showers, what were the girls doing?

A lot of them were doing domestic service which was like national service but with smaller boots and no drill. Unlike boys in industry, who worked a mere ten hour day, girls in service had no leisure time. Some got one Sunday afternoon a year off, which, being mothering Sunday, they spent sending flowers to their mums. This took all day because Interflora hadn't got its act together.

Girls who did other things were discovered by historians only when the streets had been emptied of boys by Baden-Powell and co. Unfortunately for these girls their discovery coincided with the worst ever epidemic of pioneering. Among the first women to catch it were Lily Montague and Maude Stanley — the symptoms, an overwhelming compulsion to start clubs for girls.

Girls needed clubs for the same reasons as boys did. After all, they had the same behaviour problems. According to Maude, girls could make a policeman blush with their colourful language, while their colourful punch-ups all but provoked baton charges. They also upset their youth workers a lot:

> 'We have seen, in a club, ladies coming in who were frequent visitors, received with such exclamations as these: "Well, Lady James, what have you brought for us this evening? Something worth having we hope", a free and easy style which does not mean confidence or affection but merely ill-bred familiarity.'

As if this was not bad enough girls would insist on being a different sex from boys — with the result that boys needed to be protected from them. Their major malign influence was to distract boys from billiards, boxing and, most worryingly, from cold showers.

We know this because the men who write history books agree about it. Frank Dawes, a modern day historian, puts the case succinctly:

> 'Mixed clubs for boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 18 had been tried and failed. Mixed classes in evening schools had failed too because the girls' innate tendency to flirt interrupted serious study. Since women far outnumbered men in Britain, girls were forced to chase after boys if they wanted to get a husband.'

Powerful and reasoned historical evidence of this kind proved the point conclusively. Men who study history think that history is the study of great men.

On the uniformed front, it had become clear that Baden-Powell had no time for girls and wouldn't let them join in all his games. Some girls were mightily unimpressed by this and when B-P organised the first big scout rally at Crystal Palace in 1909 they decided to turn up whether he liked it or not.

This they did, wearing scout hats and shorts and carrying staves. Staves were standard scout issue so this does not necessarily mean that the girls went prepared for trouble.

B-P had to admit defeat. Along with his sister Agnes he set up the girl guides. B-P had a remarkable talent for getting organisations going just by writing a book. This time it was *Girl Guides: a suggestion for character training for girls*. In it were dire warnings of the moral and physical decadence which threatened the nation, and observations about how difficult it was to get good servants in such a crisis. Girl guides would counteract such evils and were asked if they could start straight away.

The guides were not the immediate box office hit that the boy scouts had been. This, of course, was not the maestro's fault. It was Agnes that was letting the side down. She was on the verge of accepting a takeover bid from the YWCA when B-P stepped in and promoted Agnes out of harm's way and, this being a family business, gave the top job to his wife Olave.

She was an instant success and stayed Chief of the guides for more than 50 years. Olave's name, of course, was Scandanavian in origin, though documentary evidence shows that she didn't look a bit like a norse.

by Carl Redman

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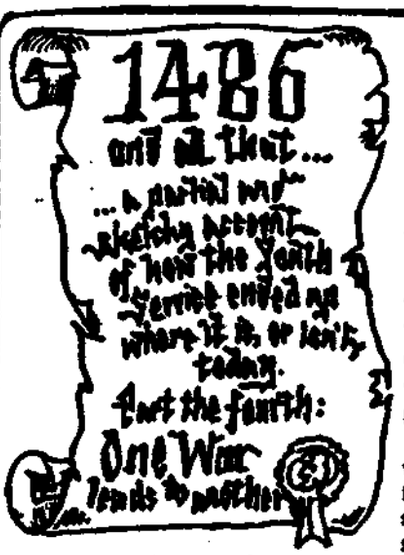

YOUTH unemployment was solved by the First World War. With the adult male workforce away in the trenches, the demand for labour was met by lowering the school leaving age — a technique more often used in reverse later in the century.

However the Great War, or the war to end all wars as it was commonly known (though it didn't), also coincided with a nasty outbreak of juvenile lawlessness. Primary symptoms being drunkenness and vandalism.

The National Council of Public Morals made many recommendations to the Government — this being in the days when the Council of Public Morals and the Government were separate organisations.

The Government's answer to delinquency was to restrict the availability of alcohol, encourage magistrates to deal severely with offenders, and empower local authorities to support and encourage youth provision (but without giving them any money to do it). This answer must have been a good one because its popularity has not declined, even up to the present day.

In this case LEAs were told to set up Juvenile Organisation Committees, or JOCs. This they did, so beginning a period of fierce rivalry, mutual suspicion and mistrust — known as the voluntary-statutory partnership — which has lasted more or less intact to the present day.

JOCs were not to be confused with JICs, which were Juvenile Instruction Centres. These, run by the Ministry of Labour for unemployed 18 year olds, were needed because the war had fizzled out, throwing thousands of men back into work and thousands of young men back out of it.

JICs thrived on a voluntary basis until the 1934 Unemployment Act, which forced everyone who was not at work or school to attend. JOCs, though, withered away, having been starved of cash. This phenomenon was quickly recognised and became one of the first principles of youth work — if you see a good idea, don't give it any money and it will eventually go away. (Note that when the JIC-JOC saga was remade in the 1980s the main parts were played by YTS and the Youth Service.)

Youth provision at this time was dominated by the church, uniformed and paramilitary organisations that had been formed before the war. These were joined in the 1920s by the Young Farmers' Clubs and Urdd Gobaith Cymru — the first youth work agency to be mistaken for a typesetting error.

More generally, the 1920s and '30s were characterised by suffragettes, flappers, the general strike, depression, bodyline bowling, cobblestones, brown bread, James Bolam, tin baths, clogs, the rise of fascism and Lord Reith.

It was also a time of great adolescent unhealthiness. Some tried to draw attention to their condition on demonstrations like the Jarrow hunger marches. Eventually the point was taken and the physique of the nation's youth went straight to the top of the youth work agenda.

The army was also troubled by pale and sickly youth. In 1933 no fewer than 23,582 potential recruits were rejected on sight because they looked so awful. Another 66,429 who managed to get as far as the medical failed it.

The Physical Training and Recreation Act and the setting up of the National Fitness Council helped a bit. But when the Second World War broke out so did a rash of Government circulars, including the historic circular 1486 *In the Service of Youth*.

Like Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, the circular's significance, if not its very words, are etched indelibly on the hearts and minds of all right thinking adherents of life, liberty and the pursuit of ping-pong. Or to put it another way, some have a dim recollection of it once being important for some long forgotten reason.

By the end of the war it was evident to everyone that the Youth Service may or may not be around for quite some time. It had done such a good job in making everyone fit that the Government very nearly mentioned it in its 1944 Education Act. (The butler did it.)

This close encounter made it even more or less uncertain that the Service was here to stay.

PS: Girls, of course, were entirely forgotten during this period.

by Carl Redman

AFTER THE Second World War youth work lost direction. Keeping the nation's youth fit and healthy for battle was just about justifiable when there was a war on. But a bit pointless in peacetime.

New aims and objectives had to be agreed for social education. They were a long time coming.

Unfortunately the Youth Service could not have chosen a worse time to appear unclothed by principles and purposes. The chill winds of austerity blew all over it and it caught an extremely bad cold.

Rationing was still fully operational and clothes could only be had by producing clothing coupons. There seemed no hope. The Youth Service was, in the words of a government report, 'dying on its feet'.

In 1948 there were 1,800 full-time leaders (leader was an old fashioned term for an old fashioned youth worker). This number dwindled steadfastly until in 1960 there were just 700. At this rate of decline the last full-time youth worker would disappear sometime in February 1969. And then . . . something happened.

To understand what happened it is necessary to take a broad sociological, anthropological, ethnographical, cultural and socio-economic perspective. The answer — teds.

Or to put it another way, the familiar scapegoating by politicians and the media of young people as hooligans, vandals and delinquents (by now commonly known as teds) had returned yet again.

But this time with an added ingredient guaranteed to send even the most balanced *Daily Mail* reader (no oxymoron intended) into new paroxysms of terror and moral indignation. This was youth culture.

Much could be said — and has been — about youth subculture. The important thing to remember is that it involved young people doing things that their elders didn't like.

It had been imported from America. Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley and James Dean being mostly to blame. Rebellion was easier in the States though. Being mean, moody and inarticulate while cruising around LA in a Cadillac or Ford Mustang was one thing. Trying it on a wet evening in Romford in a borrowed Morris Minor or Ford Pop was another.

Tommy Steele didn't really compare with Elvis either — any more than Cliff Richard did with Jimmy Dean (though they both came to tragic ends).

The realisation that UK teen culture simply didn't have the financial backing of the rampant opulent consumerism of the Americans led to frustration. This wasn't helped by being told you've never had it so good. In reality things were so bad that even something as depressing as watching Bill Haley rock around the clock seemed attractive.

Violence was the result. And not just to cinema seats. Afraid of having their premises smashed up from within, many youth clubs banned teds. This provoked revenge attacks — so the clubs were smashed up from the outside.

This behaviour coincided with an outbreak of flick-knives, brothel creepers, drainpipe trousers, DAs, velvet collared jackets and greasy cuffs. This in turn led to the creation of sociology.

Something Had To Be Done. Marlon, Elvis and Jimmy were all unavailable so the government turned to the nearest UK equivalent — Lady Albemarle.

The Albemarle report is the most famous document in the entire history of the Youth Service. This is not because its contents were well thought out and backed by objective evidence. They were badly thought out and impressionistic.

Nor is it because they put young people's needs first — they patronised and belittled young people. Nor is it because of the debate the report triggered — there was hardly any discussion of it.

The report's importance stems from one simple fact — money was available for implementing its recommendations.

This policy was reversed for all subsequent governmental reports. They tended to be starved of cash, though widely debated and welcomed.

Implementing the report meant building a lot more youth clubs. This means that the logic of developments is highly interesting. It goes: teds are a social problem. So we give money to the Youth Service. The Youth Service spends the money on youth clubs. But the teds are barred from youth clubs. So . . . [space for reader to complete logic].

The report also meant more full-time workers, who were to be trained as well. It meant a negotiating committee for salaries and conditions. And it meant a ten year development programme. This was really two five year plans stuck together but it was important to avoid anything that looked like a Soviet five year plan. That, after all, would be political.

IN THE 1950s there was really only one youth culture. Teds. But like any other culture (provided you kept penicillin away from it) its growth rate was phenomenal. The 1960s saw youth cultures multiplying at such a rate that entire university sociology departments couldn't keep up with them. Polytechnics had to be introduced to try to keep tabs on it all.

Mods and rockers were the first to appear. Why did thousands of young people gather in Hastings and Margate for a day's fun and games? A spontaneous and natural enthusiasm for community service projects with the town's elderly? No. A desire to cause a moral panic and so guarantee a livelihood to hopeful sociologists? Yes.

The white heat of the technological revolution assisted the growth of weird and unnatural young people (as defined by weird and unnatural old people). New breeding grounds were discovered — particularly Liverpool where every nook and cavern was crawling with silver beatles and their fans.

* * *

New vocabulary appeared in which fab meant the opposite of grotty and in the opposite of out.

Hippies too had their own language which was both far out and cool. No-one knew what skinheads said since not even sociologists were brave enough to go near them. It was known that they wore big boots, braces and jeans handed up from a younger brother.

Two large questions arise about these cultures. How did they grow? And what was the Youth Service doing about them?

The first is easy. Money. Fullish employment meant that considerable numbers of young people had between them considerable amounts of money. They constituted a market and since the exploitation of overseas markets was past its heyday new markets were always welcome. So was born a new meaning of teenage consumption. Last century it had meant TB and was fatal — now it meant spending and was frivolous.

The consumption was mainly of clothes, music and bikes. But consumption also occurred of uppers, downers, pot, hash, acid, purple hearts and skins. As advertised in *Oz* and *IT*. And sold by Mandy and Bennie.

So what was the Youth Service doing? The focus was on association — not football but a plank of the Albemarle report. This meant large areas in modern youth clubs with easy chairs and served by gleaming new purpose-built espresso coffee bars.

So while young people were popping, dropping and toking youth workers counted their Kit-Kats, arranged their seating to promote meaningful social interaction and waited for the avalanche of new clients.

When they didn't arrive detached workers went looking for them. The Scouts also sent out an advance party to explore. Their report did away with pointed hats and baggy shorts — but this made little difference as everyone was now wearing kaftans and Afghan coats.

The Youth Service didn't know Mandy or Bennie though it did know Bessey. Bessey reported on part-time worker training but got it wrong first time and had to do it again.

* * *

Full-time worker training went on in the National College. According to historians Albemarle put the Youth Service on the map. The National College put Leicester on the map. Before this Leicester had only been a 13th century earl active in national politics and a bad tempered jockey.

The College was famous because it produced trained professional youth workers who thought, spoke and acted differently from anybody else. They rejected character building as a main youth work approach.

It was replaced by analyses best described as cultural pluralist and structural functionalist — which, obviously, involved cultural adjustment or community development approaches respectively.

Or to put it another way people were fab and institutions grotty. Or to put it another way nobody knew what was happening or why but there were many words to describe it.

New ideas in the 1960s were therefore social education, political education, person-centred, group work, the psychology of the adolescent, participation and non-directive.

None of these had the prominence of *community*. This word was invented in yet another report, this one written by a vicar and an education officer. It was so important that the Youth Service was immediately renamed the Youth and Community Service. From now on we were all in it together.

IN THE early days the purpose of youth work had been quite simple. It was ignored, misunderstood, abused and misrepresented — but all very simply. By the 1970s the business had grown much more complicated. It was still ignored, misunderstood, etc — but, with great complexity.

So when the Milson-Fairbairn report *Youth and Community Work in the '70s* was published the Youth Service gratefully avoided reading it, simply took the hint in the title and renamed itself the Youth and Community Service.

Youth officers became youth and community officers and youth workers became youth and community workers. One way or another it became apparent that community was a new buzzword. Buzzword was a new buzzword meaning trendy, which was no longer trendy.

Some time later youth work discovered that community was not just a word — but an IDEA. The next step was to work out what it meant.

The answer lay, it was thought, in the report. Simple. 'We are concerned to help young people to create their place in a changing society and it is their critical involvement in their community which is the goal.' Whatever could this mean?

* * *

The Youth Service's main role was now seen as education and experience for membership of the active society. Its task was to complement the role of the school in educating young people for this active, participating role. Whatever could *this* mean?

In the midst of this uncertainty came the reassuring and dependable intervention of government. Its decisive and clear response to the report was to abolish the Youth Service Development Council which had commissioned it.

Next to go was the Youth Service Information Centre (YSIC). Partly because sophisticated people couldn't be expected to continue saying why sick for much longer and partly because its purpose and function was too easily understood. It was renamed the National Youth Bureau, which became a much more baffling body.

The launch of NYB in 1973 coincided with the establishment of the Manpower Services Commission. So a major contribution to youth work was assured, one way or another.

In youth work circles efforts were being made to take on board a new buzzword: take on board. This was achieved with alarming success. Attention then moved to take on board the concept of a community context.

Group work and increasing amounts of technical and psychological jargon then had to be taken on board alongside other bits of contemporary cargo (flotsam and jetsam) like IT, and counselling, and provision for black youth, and work with girls, and community service, and links with schools and social services departments...

Clearly this meant that some other things would have to be thrown overboard to make room. Equally clearly this never happened. Past youth work agendas just got pushed below decks for a while. Being all on the same boat left us all in the same boat. Complex and confused.

* * *

Poking about in the community brought some youth workers into contact with the needs of the disadvantaged. In fact, in some areas it was impossible to put your head out of the youth club door without noticing that the inner city was falling apart. This even dampened commitment to the five-a-side football tournament.

So the DES had to think what to do. Its considered judgment was that facilities for recreation and social education were still top priority, but it allowed a little bit of social work provided it didn't get out of hand. The Youth Service could offer its skills and resources to assist with a co-operative and co-ordinated approach to the problems of the disadvantaged. Yes minister.

Further confusion and complexity (not really necessary) was added by local government reorganisation. And to cap it all a talking shop called the Youth Service Forum chatted among itself for three years ensuring, in the words of a later government report, 'that there was no consensus as to what the Youth Service should be doing or how it should be doing it'.

Soon all young people were to qualify as disadvantaged. The age of job creation programmes had arrived. By the time the pundits had finished blaming the oil crisis, the world inflationary spiral, the post-war baby boom or punk groups mouthing profanities at Bill Grundy, the Queen had been on the throne for 25 years. It was street party time.

Prince Charles organised a whip round and the millions collected were put in a fund which gave cash to young people who were doing good things for — you guessed it — the community.

At last it was becoming clear what playing a critical part in your community was to mean. Unemployment was soaring — and young people were to participate in it more than anyone else.