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LIBERAL EDUCATION IN YORK SINCE 1815, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
PROVISION FOR NON-VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION.

A thesis submitted for examination for the degree of Master of
Education in the University of Durham.

Terence Bailey Ashurst, 1972.

I.

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II.

"If ever there was a field of corporate human endeavour in which social and community indebtedness is identified with the individual initiative of a vast company of known and honoured pioneers, it must certainly be in the field of adult education".

A. Joselin.

III.

ABSTRACT

A study of the development of non-vocational education in York during the last century and a half reveals several interesting ventures in liberal adult education. In York as elsewhere, initially most of the experiments in adult education were, perforce, remedial and were usually conducted by philanthropic organisations or individuals from a social class higher than that of the students who attended the schools and institutes. Gradually all the early institutions deviated from their original aims - and in so doing often became successful. The York Mechanics' Institute became a Literary and Scientific Society; the Adult Schools became Temperance Organisations or what amounted to Recreational Clubs; the York Settlement, created to provide a basic education for working men, became a kind of middle class finishing school.

Voluntary organisations remained the sole providers of adult education in York almost until the end of the 19th century. After 1902 the Local Education Authority was legally empowered to provide non-vocational adult education, but what it provided was sparse, drab and uninteresting and the position of the voluntary organisations went unchallenged. There was little alteration in the situation until after the Second World War when, in 1950, a start was made to improve local authority provision for adult education. In 1964, belatedly, York Education Authority created three new Evening Centres to provide a comprehensive system of attractively titled classes and courses. The immediate result was a dramatic increase in enrolments.

The traditional providers of liberal adult education, the voluntary organisations, remain to complement the Education Authority's provision but they are undergoing a process of re-orientation as they seek a new role for themselves. The present provision for non-vocational adult education in York is probably as good as that in any city of comparable size and resources and there now exists a sound basis for future development.

IV.

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FRONTISPIECE -	York Mechanics' Institute new building. From the original drawing by W. G. Penty.		



New Institute of Art Science and Literature York.

WALTER G. PENTY, ARCHT. YORK



INTRODUCTION

LIBERAL EDUCATION - AN INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

LIBERAL EDUCATION - AN INTERPRETATION

Erasmus stated that after sowing the seeds of piety the most important task for education was to ensure that the youthful mind be taught to "love and thoroughly learn the liberal studies."^{1.} At the time when he made this recommendation what he meant by "liberal studies" would, no doubt, have immediately been understood by all who read it.

The main problem with introducing the word "liberal" into educational discussion today, however, is that it tends to become a kind of slogan used to express different meanings according to its immediate context. Even if an acceptable general concept of "liberal" were possible in adult education there is the added difficulty of deciding whether "... the general concept 'liberal' (has) anything to do with the problem of what is to be called 'vocational' and what 'non-vocational', and whether a 'liberal and vocational education' is more or less meaningful than a 'liberal and non-vocational education'."^{2.} Nevertheless, while it would be impossible to attempt a full semantic and philosophical analysis of the word "liberal" here, perhaps the following brief discussion of what might constitute a liberal education will be of some help in arriving at a working definition for the purpose of this study.

In the original Greek conception of a liberal education the seven liberal arts, the quadrivium comprising Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Astronomy and the trivium, Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic, were the basis of a process concerned simply with the pursuit of knowledge and a way of life in which banausic attitudes were held in contempt. There were three main justifications for this belief which were;

1. E.E.Reynolds, Thomas More and Erasmus (London, 1965), p.136.

2. Adult Education, Vol.41, No.3 (September, 1968), p.161.

that such an education was based on what was true and not on uncertain beliefs or temporary values; that as knowledge was a distinctive human virtue, the purpose of a liberal education was the fulfilment of the mind and had nothing to do with utilisation or vocational considerations; and finally, because of the significance of "the good life" as a whole, a liberal education was essential to man's understanding of how he ought to live, both individually and socially. To strive after the good was the Greek ideal and it was held that, as the mind was man's distinguishing characteristic, it was the nature of the mind to pursue knowledge. The quest for knowledge was not only thought to promote the attainment of the mind itself, but was considered the chief means whereby the good life was to be found. By right reasoning the mind could apprehend what was ultimately real and immutable. According to Greek thinking, then, knowledge corresponded to what was ultimately real and had its place in a comprehensive, harmonious scheme hierarchically structured in various levels within the whole of man's understanding. In the Greek conception of a liberal education the mind was seen as freed to function according to its true nature and man's conduct seen as freed from wrong - essentially, therefore also a moral education.

In this country in the mediæval institutions of learning the classical curriculum prevailed. Latin - the medium of instruction - was needed by prospective priests, lawyers, and doctors, so that it was basically vocational. The classical subjects, however, came to be regarded as intrinsically educative rather than a means to an end because they "mirrored a civilisation envied and revered for its erudition and logical pursuit of answers to metaphysical questions." The discipline of the Latin and Greek language structure, was seen as character-forming, of encouraging mind over matter and reason over passion. The content of education became equated with education

itself and the means to a vocational end was regarded as a desirable education. The nurturing of the "right" kind of human being, capable of abstract thought and sophisticated reasoning was valued as the best kind of education and became enshrined in the English public school system. Later it was adapted with ease to the 19th century stress on moral rectitude and social responsibility.^{1.}

After the Industrial Revolution there arose in the realm of science a definite distinction between pure and applied science, between the research worker in his laboratory and the technologist who applied skills and knowledge on the job. In the study of the arts there was implicit the snob appeal of a contemplative life unsullied by the material world. Thus there arose the gap which separated what C. P. Snow has called "the two cultures."^{2.}

According to Raymond Williams, in fact, the words "culture" and "art" first began to be used with their present meaning only after the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.³ General acknowledgement that such a gap between the two cultures existed meant that after 1945 there was a growing concern to produce more "cultured", more broadly educated scientists, engineers, technologists and technicians and during the last twenty-five years the term "liberal education" has been used increasingly in the spheres of Higher and Further Education in this country and in America. During this period the thinking was that the scientific man should emerge not as a man restricted by his education to one mode of thought, but as one capable of grasping the historical, social and aesthetic significance of his work and much else besides.

1. See The Schoolmaster, December, 1971. Article entitled "The Teacher as Guru." p.7.
2. C.P.Snow, The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution, (Cambridge, 1959)
3. R.Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950, (Edinburgh, 1958), pp.13-16.

There is also an interpretation of "liberal" where liberal is nearest to its original Latin meaning of "free", and where it is used as the social and political opposite of authoritarian. In educational terms this means that impediments which inhibit what the individual freely wants to do, or confine education to the service of some extrinsic end such as the production of material goods, obtaining a job, or manning a profession, should be removed. By this interpretation a liberal education would not, however, be a special kind of education as opposed to a vocational - or any other kind of education - but simply one where trammelling side issues had been removed.

It may be coincidental, but during the period covered by this study the enthusiasm for such a liberal education seems to have been at its keenest in times of rapid industrial expansion and appears to have functioned as a kind of antidote to an excess of pragmatism. The development of a cultural antidote may therefore be considered to have played some part in the ethos of liberal adult education through the creation and rapid spreading of literary societies, university extension work, certain parts of the adult schools' programmes and the Workers' Educational Association lectures during the second half of the 19th and the early 20th century. Today a similar kind of reaction may be a part of the current trend away from the high-powered technology of our own era towards the humanities which has manifested itself in the universities.

In trying to arrive at a working definition of liberal education applicable to adult education today, because of historical and traditional influences on our civilisation it is, perhaps, at this juncture useful to compare our provision with that in America where there is not the same kind of academic root and

tradition to the educational system as there is in England, and where the end product of the system of education tends to be much less an intellectual elite. After the second world war it was felt that there was an almost overwhelmingly practical approach to education in the typical American university, which was not so much an academic stronghold, but rather a service station for the local community. Concern over this utilitarian emphasis in America caused a select Harvard Committee in 1946 to issue a report on the state of liberal education. The report questioned the basic premises of the classical conception of a liberal education by asking:

- (1) If knowledge is no longer seen as the understanding of reality, but merely as the understanding of experience, what is to replace the harmonious, hierarchical scheme of knowledge that gave pattern and order to the education?
- (2) If knowledge is no longer rooted in reality and its significance for the good life is questioned, what is the justification for an education defined in terms of knowledge alone?

The committee equated liberal education with "General Studies", (terminology still much used here too in, for example, many technical colleges, text-books and examination papers)^{1.} because it considered that a more general education, in view of the extremely rapid changes already happening, was more important than a specific training.

In its version of a "general education" the committee outlined two main considerations:-

- (1) The qualities of mind it ought to produce.
- (2) The forms of knowledge with which it ought to be concerned.

The committee went on to say that there ought to be a definite attempt to cultivate certain aptitudes and attitudes of mind, importance being placed on the abilities to communicate thought, to

1.

See Adult Education, Vol.40. No.1. (1967) p.19.

1.
make relevant judgements and to discriminate among values. It is interesting then that, despite having quite different backgrounds, a comparison reveals that such enquiry about what basis liberal education ought to be founded on has much in common on both sides of the Atlantic.

Paul Hirst, professor of educational philosophy, while in general agreement with the Harvard Committee viewpoint would develop the Committee's argument further. Hirst feels that a liberal education should consist of at least paradigm examples of all the various forms of knowledge, also that a planned liberal education can only be attained when distinctions in the forms of knowledge are clearly understood - and that is only possible when the students themselves have some grasp of the other disciplines. He maintains that inter-personal exchanges of knowledge are essential to his concept of liberal education and that the aim of studying any individual discipline ought not to be only to restrict it to a specialist or technical course, but should serve to put the
2.
specialism into a wider context.

Sir Eric Ashby does not agree with this point of view. He contended that a technology could itself become the core of a new humanism if only it were apprehended in its completeness. In his now famous brewing example he stated, "the path to culture should be through a man's specialism not by by-passing it." In this way, he said, brewing could lead to the study of beer-marketing, the social effects of beer-drinking, the design of public houses and even to religion and ethics. He further claimed that "a student who can weave his technology into the fabric of society can claim a liberal education," for, if successful, this would enable the

1.
The Harvard Committee, Report on General Education in a Free Society, (London, 1946.)

2.
See P. H. Hirst in Philosophical Analysis and Education, Ed. R.D.Archambault, (London, 1965), p.133.

student to see his particular technology in the wider context of industrial activity and economy where he would also be brought face to face with moral problems and cultural issues.^{1.} On this point, although Hirst and Ashby hold basically different views on the issue of what constitutes a liberal education, there is nevertheless some common ground. Hirst, however, would not accept the final development of Ashby's argument, because aspects of the student's personal development become implicit at this stage and emotional and moral issues would arise which might be desirable but which could not be justified in terms of knowledge.

It is evident that it would be extremely difficult if indeed at all possible to apply the criteria of a liberal education laid down by Hirst, Ashby or any other educational philosopher to the history of adult education in England and then to say with certainty where liberal education had taken place. What then is liberal adult education? A worker in the field of adult education, has written:-

"If the concept is so wide and vague that it means what we make it mean according to the desires we have to promote this or that, or according to the field in which as adult educationists, we happen to earn our bread and butter, it had better be dispensed with for eschatology is all that it then aspires to."

He went on to say that, in his opinion,

"the root meaning of the concept of 'liberal' in adult education refers to the many activities in the teaching and learning that go to produce an understanding of the principles of a subject or process so that these principles can be recognised in other than the immediate situation."^{2.}

It is clear that if such a definition were accepted, a vocational education (it might be more appropriate to attach adjectives such as 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' to student motives rather than subject areas) could also afford a liberal education but, in this

1.

Sir Eric Ashby, Technology and the Academics (London, 1958) pp.84-85.

2.

See A. Champion in Adult Education, Vol.41 No.3 (1968) op.cit., p.162-163.

study, there is space only to investigate the agencies which provided adult education and which come within the generally accepted category of non-vocational education.

In the foregoing brief discussion of what might constitute a liberal education one salient fact is prevalent throughout. Knowledge, however understood, is an indispensable requirement to education - but knowledge was the commodity hardest to come by for the often illiterate working class during most of the 19th century. At the time the restrictions on adult education in this country were many and often seemingly insuperable. Until almost the end of the century there was no national, state financed system to provide the basic education which is so necessary as a fundamental pre-requisite to further study of any kind no matter how it is motivated. Evidence that there was no lack of desire to learn is provided by the existence of numerous institutions for the purpose of adult education which were often founded by workers who, denied an education as children, had formed themselves into an organisation to promote learning. Usually the facilities and teachers they required were provided by philanthropic employers or other influential persons. The difficulties inherent in the learning situation for the often illiterate or barely literate adult forced most of these societies, which began life with high hopes and even higher ideals, to founder or alter radically their original function and caused them to cater largely for the middle class, a class for which they had not been intended. York's history since 1815 contains several of these interesting experiments in the field of adult education which were sometimes more than mere microcosmic reflections of national developments. A brief account of some other York educational establishments in existence during the period studied, especially those of the 19th century, is also included here as progress made in

other departments of education in the city inevitably, if not always directly, stimulated liberal adult education.

This study, then, is primarily concerned with non-vocational adult education and is an attempt to record the evolution in the city of York of the kind of liberal education the spirit of which is exemplified by the following quotation from the Ministry of Reconstruction, Adult Education Committee Final Report, 1919:

" that adult education must not be regarded as a luxury for a few exceptional persons here and there, not as a thing which concerns only a short span of early manhood, but that adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable act of citizenship and therefore should be universal and lifelong."

While the earliest organised education for adults was, of necessity functional and remedial (and unavoidably, therefore, in a sense also vocational), nevertheless out of these modest beginnings was born the philosophy later made manifest in the above quotation. Discussed herein are some of the attempts to provide an education for adults in the city of York which would be relatively free from the restriction and impediment of vocational motives and which would range from courses aimed at the development of the mind through knowledge to classes provided for purely recreational purposes which, it is contended, may also be considered part of a liberal education if only because of their contribution to individual and social life in the community.

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN YORK IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN YORK IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

A visitor to the "well regulated" city of York at the time of Waterloo would have found himself in a place which had once been the social capital of Yorkshire, but had then declined and been by-passed by the wave of industrialisation which had engulfed much of the North. "York is the second City in point of rank in the Kingdom", stated a guide published in 1814, "and has always been styled the capital of the North, although now left behind in wealth and population by many of the newer trading towns; yet it still supports a considerable degree of consequence, and is inhabited by numerous genteel families."¹ The lack of industry and trade was to concern the citizens of York right up to the railway era, for York was not to become industrialised and it remained more or less in the situation it was in when the Napoleonic wars ended, until the coming of the railways gave trade and general prosperity in the city a much needed fillip.

At this time it could justifiably have been said of York that it was under-developed and over-represented for, decaying, unindustrialised and living on its past glories, it was represented in Parliament by two members. With a population of approximately 20,000, York was the centre of political activity for the whole county of Yorkshire and its inhabitants were often able to take part in large meetings of protest held in the Castle Yard. These crowds have been recorded as being between 6,000 and 8,000 strong, so that if there was a lack of general education there was at least some awareness of political events. So much so that in April, 1816, a local learned society was created and died within a few months because of political animosities. The New Guide for Strangers and Residents in the City, 1838, states -

1.
Description of York containing some Account of its Antiquities, Public Buildings, etc., (4th ed. York, 1814) p.2.

"A society was created for the public discussion of literary subjects. It was called the "York Scientific Society", and caused great interest, and the discussions were numerously attended: but the Society did not continue long on account of political rancour running high at the time."

In the future the city was to see some Chartism, some Unionism, from which adult education was to gain part of its inspiration, and a great deal of riotous behaviour - mostly stemming from such "political rancour."

With a population living in conditions like those prevailing at the time "..... from the Foss Bridge on both sides of Walmgate as far as the bar, scarcely anything is seen but ill-built houses and gardens,"^{1.} it is not surprising that the working class in York was brutalised, prone to riot, and that the crime rate was high - although it is not contended that "life in York was rougher, dirtier or more brutal than in other English towns of a comparable size."^{2.} There were for the most part only two alternatives, outside the home, available to the working-class adult in his freetime at this period. Either he attended classes of a completely religious nature or he indulged in the entertainment provided by society. Needless to say, working class amusements and diversions in York were like those in fashion in any other city at the time - mostly cruel, sordid and callous. "Red light" districts were notorious along the waterfront. There was a cockpit at St. Giles. The brutal sport of dog fighting was a popular pastime, freaks were regular objects of amusement and people flocked to see General Tom Thumb and Chang and Eng the Siamese twins when they visited York. Bear-baiting and pugilism were well-attended sports and the public executions attracted

1. J. Bigland, Topographical and Historical Development of the County of York, (London, 1819) pp.239-240.

2. The City of York, Victoria County History, p.247.

enormous crowds, as did other forms of public punishment, in particular, flogging. Another, rather bizarre, form of entertainment was the eating competitions which, held in public houses throughout the city, also attracted large crowds.^{1.} There was little real manufacturing carried on in York at this time, and only a small amount of river trade - though there was considerable business carried on in gloves, drugs, printing and bookselling - otherwise York was then "chiefly supported by its numerous and well-frequented fairs, the assizes for the county, the races and the residence of many of the gentry."^{2.} Although the standard of education of the greater part of York's population cannot have been high the city was well endowed with newspapers. Among them were the York Herald, the Courant, The Yorkshireman, York Gazette and York Chronicle. These organs acted as a kind of barometer recording political argument, local public opinion and early reports of a scientific, philosophical and literary nature. There were also accounts of the philanthropic origins of the first schools for the working classes as well as

1.
The local newspapers have many hilarious reports of these exhibitions although the sport of eating competitions had its fatalities such as when "Mutton Eating Bandy Billy", a famous gourmandizer of Newlington, killed himself as a result of gorging ten pounds of mutton, two bunches of turnips, bread and a gallon of porter. William Cork, "Bacon Billy", "the most delicate professor of mastication", was a regular attraction, and on one occasion was "backed to eat a nicely roasted sucking pig, which, when served up, weighed nine pounds and a half. He finished his labour in grand style in forty-two minutes. He qualified his pig with a penny roll, and washed down the whole with half-a-pint of ale, and when he had concluded this moderate meal, he appeared able instantly to put another pig out of sight had one so been provided for him." Courant, 4 July, 1826.

2.
J. Bigland, op.cit., p.239. A list of fairs is given in E. Hargrove The Yorkshire Gazetteer, 1806, p.8.

1.

advertisements for the private ones of a commercial nature.

Edwin Benson, a local educational historian, commenting on the forces which shaped education in York, wrote that the historical peculiarities deciding their destiny were threefold.² One, the exceptional charitable endowment, two the strong ecclesiastical tradition and three the absence of an early and large proletariat. This strong ecclesiastical tradition meant that the citizens of York were well supplied with places of worship, despite the fact that the Church of England had lost some of its attraction and various vicars were complaining that their churches were empty, but educational provision was sadly lacking. It was into this exceptionally fertile soil that the Sunday Schools put down roots in York as part of an organised plan by the Church of England as early as 1786. Later, schools were provided by most denominations, though particularly, perhaps, by the nonconformists. These Sunday Schools, although a characteristic of their time being founded on charity in an attempt to teach humility and submission and thus repress potential barbarians, nevertheless made some contribution to the education available in the city. Even if the view were held that in terms of the education necessary at the time, despite being vigorous and well promoted, these schools were but a palliative, few would deny that their real value lay in the fact that they made prominent men aware of the desperate need for a national system of elementary education.

Towards the end of the first quarter of the 19th century a number of private schools existed in York, along with Sunday Schools and some 'British' and some 'National' Schools, one of which latter

1.

See Yorkshire Gazette, 28 May, 1836.

2.

E. Benson, A History of Education in York 1780-1902.
Unpublished Ph.D. thesis accepted at London University, 1936.
Copy held in York Public Library.

denomination was housed in the King's Manor. The slight effect they were having was shown in the returns "obtained by a committee of gentlemen, chiefly of the Society of Friends." Of the children of York between the ages of six and ten they found "one-fourth did not attend any day-school: between twelve and fourteen one-ninth part could not read; and..... two-fifths of the children who did not go to day-schools went to Sunday Schools."^{1.} The following year, the Nonconformist "friends of education" in York met to hear from Captain Bromley, an agent of the British and Foreign School Society. William Alexander, the Rev. James Parsons and Joseph Rowntree were appointed to a committee "to correspond with the Society and receive subscriptions in aid of its funds."^{2.} Joseph Rowntree was also instrumental in promoting a house-to-house canvass by the Quakers that resulted in the opening of a day school for boys in 1828 which, one year later, was being attended by two hundred boys. During this same period the Endowed and Charity Schools also carried on their work with considerable beneficial effect to the city. While some working-class parents might have been dilatory and deficient in a sense of duty towards their children, the majority were extremely poor and the cost of an adequate schooling was prohibitive to these poor parents. Under the guidance of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (founded 1698) a large number of Charity Schools had been established in the course of the 18th century and as early as 1711 the Society had issued a circular recommending the establishment of evening schools for adults. York had, by 1818, about 290 places for entirely free endowed accommodation in the Charity Schools. Some of these schools were known under the name

1.

Quoted in The City of York: A New Guide for Strangers and Visitors, (York, 1843).op.cit., p.183.

2.

The Herald, 5 May, 1827.

of the original patron, some, later developments of the early schools of industry, were known by the colour of their coats - blue for boys and grey for girls - and yet others by the religious body which had founded them. At the other end of the scale many children of reasonably well-off parents in York were also educated in the numerous private schools which existed. While the standard of instruction varied, for there were no formal qualifications necessary to set up such a school, most of these schools were reasonably efficient. One of York's most famous public schools today, Bootham School, had its origins in just such a school, which was first owned by a William Simpson and later taken over by the Quakers.

Several other institutions and foundations may also be considered to have contributed variously to the development of liberal education in the city at this time. One of these foundations was Manchester College which moved from Manchester to York in 1803. Primarily a Unitarian school of "university learning" for students intending to become preachers, law students were also admitted to a shorter three years' course. Subjects taught at the College included divinity, classics, mathematics, natural and experimental philosophy. Its Unitarian principal was a minister, the Rev. Charles Wellbeloved, a man of great energy and wide interests. In an age of religious bigotry he was liberal and tolerant and unfailingly courteous to his opponents, even when this was not reciprocated. Wellbeloved had been offered the post of principal some years earlier, but had refused to move from York and after its move from Manchester to York the College was first housed in Wellbeloved's private house - and subsidised out of his private income - before moving to larger premises in Monkgate. The loss of this private income made it difficult for him to continue to subsidise the College and was the main reason for his giving up the Principalship. In 1840 the College moved back to Manchester and later acquired the

1.
right to present its students for London University degrees.
After several other moves, Manchester College was established in Oxford where it remained.

In 1837 the Collegiate School was established in Clifton, a village very near to the city. Set up as a commercial proposition its curriculum included classics, mathematics, modern languages
2.
"and all usual branches of a finished education." Its staff comprised besides Principal and Vice-Principal, a commercial and writing master, a French and German master, a drawing master, and a dancing master.
3.
When it was subsequently bought out by the Dean and Chapter of York Minster this school was amalgamated with, and brought a new lease of life to, the now well known public school, St. Peter's. In 1842 the School of Art or School of Design, as it was earlier called, found its first home in Little Blake Street as a result of an advertisement in the Yorkshire Observer. There was also an abortive attempt to establish a School of Music in 1845, by a Mr. John Robinson of Stonegate, which failed owing to lack of support. However the great need of the time obviously, was to secure the provision of sufficient elementary school places. The Sunday School Movement had helped to open men's minds to the question of education and later the experience of these schools proved beyond argument the need for a general system of education for the people. Until 1833, an important date in the history of English education, for it marked the beginning of direct governmental interest in the country's elementary education, education had depended entirely on endowment, charity and the direct payment of school fees in the form of private schools.

1.
H. McLachlan, English Education under the Test Acts, 1662-1820, (Manchester, 1931) pp.266-267.
2.
Yorkshire Gazette, 28 May, 1836. Advertisement.
3.
The Yorkshireman, 27 June, 1840. Advertisement.

By 1833 the beginning of what was to be a long, uphill struggle began to be apparent, for considerable changes were taking place both in the appearance and size of the city and in the attitude of its civic leaders. In 1835 the Municipal Reform Act was passed, which led to the reformation of York's municipal government under a popularly elected council.

Nevertheless, in spite of extensive demolition and rebuilding, the city's centre with its crowded old houses, narrow streets and passages and lack of adequate drainage remained an extremely unhealthy and unattractive place to live. James Smith^{1.} reported that the city centre was -

"a great mass of very confined and filthy streets and courts. The chief slaughter houses are in the very middle of this division, and a more confined and filthy locality I have never seen. The division of the city on the western side is far less extensive, with narrow and confined streets and very many damp and filthy alleys and courts. In the southern corner of this division is the locality where the plague and other pestilences of former ages generally made their first appearance; here also the cholera first appeared in 1832; and at the present day fever is seldom absent."

At this time, of course, the problem of making a healthy town with a large population was an entirely new one, but according to Smith the city authorities were "generally careless and inefficient" and therefore not equipped to even begin to deal with the problem. Such were the living conditions caused by the poor drainage system - the moats around the city walls were standing full of stagnant water as late as 1832 - the overfull burial grounds, the enormous quantities of soot in the atmosphere, that the average age at death of all who died in York in the period 1821 - 1826 was 32.56 years, and in 1839 - 1841 it was 32.21 years. "The average age of all dying in

1.
James Smith, Report on the Condition of the City of York. (made to the Commission appointed for enquiring into the state of large towns and Populous Districts in England and Wales.) 1845, pp.135-136.

York was $6\frac{1}{4}$ less than that of those dying in the country, and the deaths from epidemics were numerous," reported Dr. T. Laycock.^{1.}

York's geographical position aggravated the problems mentioned and these ills and the epidemic diseases resulting from them were removed only when the work of enforcing cleanliness and supplying the public means of attaining it was done, first by the City Commissioner, and later by the reformed City Council which became the public health authority.

However, if York's geographical position aggravated social ills yet York owes a great deal to its location, for in 1839 it became the arterial centre of a network of railway lines and a site for the manufacture of railway material. As a result the population increased rapidly and York's city boundaries were extended in several directions as new suburbs were established. The coming of the railway was to provide a necessary jolt to York's sluggish system and to bring it great prosperity in the remainder of the 19th century.

There was little co-ordination, direction or purpose among civic authorities in the provision and a similar lack of co-ordination of effort among the providers of schools, so that some parishes with considerable populations had no schools or needed more school places - and practically every school in the city was handicapped by lack of funds.

The institutions offering adult education followed much the same pattern in coming into existence independently of each other and not being a part of any co-ordinated plan. Moreover, owing to the absence of heavy industries employing thousands of workers, the need for education was hardly as urgent in York as in other areas of the country. While a few of these institutions were designed to

1.
T. Laycock, M.D., Report on the State of York, (in reply to the Questions circulated by the Commissioners for inquiring into the State of large Towns and Populous Districts) p.4. Extract from a letter written by the Rev. W. Harcourt, dated 8 May, 1833.

supply technical instruction of some kind, most of the others owed their origin to the defective condition of elementary day school education in the city, some impression of which may be gained from the following statistics.

In 1836, the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Education of the Poorer Classes, made the following statement¹ regarding York:

Scholars of the working classes at day and dame schools	1,494
Scholars of better schools	2,697
Attending Sunday Schools in connection with Dissenters	1,655
Attending Sunday Schools in connection with Established Church.	1,708

One third of the children between the age of five and fifteen² (2,300) received no instruction at all, the York Courant calculated. Out of a population of approximately 25,000

7.96 per cent attended day or evening schools only	=	2,228
9.00 per cent attended day and Sunday Schools	=	2,521
3.01 per cent attended Sunday Schools only	=	842
<u>19.97</u>	Total	<u>5,591</u>

Of the 5,591 attending schools, 891 were under the age of five.

Between 1831 and the national census of 1851, York's population rose from approximately 26,000 to approximately 36,000. Although, as it provided school places for about one-sixth of the population, York was doing reasonably well in comparison with other areas of comparable and even larger size, there was no central authority and no organisation to consider the city as an educational whole.

1. Quoted in The City of York: A New Guide for Strangers and Visitors, op. cit., p.184.

2. York Courant: 28 September, 1837. The Courant is quoting from The Report of the Manchester Statistical Society on the State of Education in the City of York in 1838 - 1837 (London, 1837) in which a comprehensive survey of school fees, curricula and methods of instruction etc., is contained.

From about 1850 the pace of change in York accelerated. Many of the changes in the style of architecture and the setting up of new societies such as the York Architectural Society (1841) the Yorkshire Naturalists' Club (1849) The York Antiquarian Club and the York Entomological Society were symptomatic of a quickening movement and brought a welcome expansion of civic amenities.

CHAPTER TWO

YORK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

YORK MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Dr. Mabel Tylecote has dealt at great length with the ideas that lay in the minds of the creators of the Mechanics' Institutes. 1. These ideas were based on the desire to produce better workmen and an educated class of artisans. There was also the attempt, often thinly disguised, to subject the workers attending lectures to ideological pressure with a view to inculcating selected information on political economy concerning, for example, the moral improvement of workers, sound economic ideas, fewer strikes and the under-lying principles of their daily work. Moreover, Peterloo was a recent occurrence and politically astute Whigs from Lord Brougham downwards could see immense political advantage in gaining the goodwill of a class that might soon be emancipated (in fact, it was, of course, a long cry from emancipation.) The pent up energies of non-conformists like the Unitarians were seeking outlets for release. During the war years the dissenters in York, as elsewhere, had done little for education. In the decades following Waterloo the foundations of nonconformist education in the city were laid. Their interest in the Mechanics' Institutes was a reflection of the interest of people such as Charles Wellbeloved (1769 - 1858) the minister of St. Saviourgate Chapel, York, and principal of Manchester College. The Rev. Charles Wellbeloved was a Whig and prominent in reform causes in the city. He had helped found a subscription library, when such places were being denounced as "heretical and Jacobinical"; he was a member of the group which supported Godfrey Higgins, a West Riding magistrate, in his attempt to reform the administration of the York Lunatic Asylum, and was prominent in the founding of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. Wellbeloved was

1.
M. Tylecote, The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851, (Manchester, 1957).

also a scholar with wide interests who gained a considerable reputation in his lifetime as an archaeologist and antiquarian and who, without fee, gave lectures at the Mechanics' Institute on a variety of subjects - 'Robert Boyle' in 1831 for example, 'Popular Education' in 1834, 'The Moon' in 1836.

Several of Wellbeloved's Unitarian colleagues were also associated with the York Mechanics' Institute. The Rev. J. Turner was one, William Hincks, Professor of Natural Philosophy and John Kenrick, Wellbeloved's biographer, were others.¹ Hincks and Kenrick both appear among those lecturers of the early years who gave their services free of charge. Both, of course, were Whigs and active in the political life of the city in the thirties. Out of the four lecturers who gave their services freely in 1831, three were from Manchester College - Wellbeloved, Kenrick (Lecturing upon English History) and Hincks (who gave a series of four lectures on political economy.)² Three other prominent Whigs associated with the Institute were Eustachius Strickland, Sir George Cayley, and William Hargrove. The latter was proprietor and editor of two Whig papers circulating in York - the Courant and the Herald.

York was an unindustrialised town and its Mechanics' Institute, while having many of the same problems as those in, say, Huddersfield and Bradford, differed in certain respects. While there was general recognition of the appalling lack of opportunities for the "lower orders" (soon to be given statistical definition by Samuel Tuke and his friends) York's Institute conformed to the general pattern in being an object of suspicion to Tories and Church of England

1. On Wellbeloved see C.G.Bolam, J. Goring, K. L. Short and R.Thomas. The English Presbyterians (London, 1968) passim, J. Kenrick, A Biographical Memoir of the late Rev. Charles Wellbeloved (London, 1960.) Both Hincks and Wellbeloved are listed in the Dictionary of Natural Biography.

2. Details of the activities of the York Mechanics' Institute taken mainly from a collection of documents gathered by Arthur H.Furnish entitled York Institute Reports, Vols.I & II held in the York Reference Library.

dignitaries - at least in its early years. The Yorkshire Gazette the official mouthpiece of York Conservatism, ignored the Institute in its very early days, and the vicar of Askham Bryan, a village near York, was a noted critic of it.¹ There was, nowever, at least one exceptional and atypical Tory in York who was an enthusiastic supporter of the Mechanics' Institute, namely Jonathan Gray. A member of the management committee of the Gazette, under-sheriff of Yorkshire at the time of the great election of 1807 and solicitor to the See of York, Gray favoured Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation and had been a colleague of Wellbeloved in some trouble over the York Lunatic Asylum. Typical of the Tory attitude to the Institute was the opposition revealed in an article in the Courant,

"there are many," it said, "who would not greet the new Institute with the same pleasurable feelings under which we record it. There are some who will view the work with suspicion; there are some who will behold it with alarm; and it maybe, there are others who will contemplate the labour with jealousy. Some will suspect, that extensive efforts to awaken the dormant powers of the mind in the middling, but more especially in the lower classes of society will be to disorganise the machine of social order, and to disarrange the routine of civil society."²

In fact the "routine of civil society" was already in considerable disarray, rioting, illegal gaming and drunken brawling were widespread in the city. The Herald, in June, 1827, reported what the city, recently deprived of an effective police force as an economy measure, was like.

"..... on Saturday night," it said, "and on one or two nights subsequently, our most recent public streets were converted into thronged promenades of vicious characters - and the stillness of the midnith hour was superseded by the noisy clamour of the wanton reprobate and the dreadful imprecations of the 'sons of Belial'. They were observed to be particularly eloquent when in the vicinity of their worships, the Commissioners or any of the patrol."

1. He was answered by Wellbeloved. See The Large Extent of Knowledge. An address delivered to the members of the York Mechanics' Institute, 27 March (York, 1828). Also see York Courant. 1 April, 1828.

2. Ibid.

The fact that York was quite late (1827) in acquiring a Mechanics' Institute was no doubt largely due to lack of industry in the city but might also have reflected the strength of local political opposition and the social conditions prevailing at the time. It appears that there had been an attempt to start one in conjunction with the York Select Library but that the attempt had failed.^{1.} Then one of the Hargrove newspapers had carried an article on the London Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and this had aroused interest. (It had also encouraged some private enterprise ventures, as when the Rev. J. B. Emmett advertised a series of 15 lectures on "The Science of Chemistry".^{2.} A number of letters urging the formation of a Mechanics' Institute appeared in the Herald. Why was York dragging its feet a correspondent asked - "mental exertion seems to slumber as if under the influence of some unaccountable narcotic."^{3.} It is true that the city had only recently seen the creation of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, but that according to some was "a fountain sealed In the work of dissemination it is a nullity."^{4.}

A preparatory meeting to create a Mechanics' Institute was held at which Hargrove was appointed secretary and treasurer pro tem.^{5.} The use of a building in Bedern - a decayed part of the city that was notorious already and was to become even more so when the Irish settled there in the 1840's - was obtained, and the public was appealed to for donations of books to form a library. The response

1. York Herald, 19 May, 1827. See Appendix No.XI also.

2. Ibid, 22 June, 1827.

3. Ibid, 5 and 12 May, 1827.

4. Ibid, 5 May, 1827.

5. Courant, 26 June, 1827.

was excellent, Archdeacon Wrangham, Jonathan Gray and Lord Milton being among the donors. (Milton was going through a tremendous phase of enthusiasm for Mechanics' Institutes, so much so that he and Lady Milton engaged J. H. Abraham to lecture on pneumatics at Wentworth House.)¹ By the end of 1827 the library of the Institute consisted of over 500 volumes. Sir George Cayley (who was also president of the York Whig Club) was made President of the Institute, and Gray and Wellbeloved were among the Vice-Presidents. These patrons and committee members attempted to control the type of book kept in Institute Libraries and to prevent books hostile to the Christian religion being made available to members. The general agitation for cheap newspapers and freedom of the press was reckoned to be mainly carried on by working class secularists, who were often regarded by the conservative middle class element as giving the working class ideas above their station which could incite them to rebellion.

The York Mechanics' Institute began with all the enthusiasm common to founders of these institutions - and with most of the problems.

By 1827 it was realised that the premises in Bedern were too small. At the September monthly meeting it was announced that membership was then 272, and that plans had been drawn up for a new building that could be erected at a cost of £550, the money to be raised by shares of £10 carrying five per cent interest. At that meeting also, Mr. John Dalton the famous Scientist gave the very first lecture sponsored by the Institute on "The Steam Engine".²

1. Ibid, 10 July, 1827.

2. Courant 4 September, 1827.

Two months later it was announced that a house in St. Saviourgate had been obtained, quite near to Wellbeloved's chapel, that would be ready for use sometime in 1828, and that Dalton had been engaged to give a series of lectures on Natural Philosophy.^{1.} The series began in January, 1828, in the Merchants' Hall, Fossgate, while the St. Saviourgate building was being altered.^{2.}

The original ideas of the founders of the York Mechanics' Institute were to provide scientific lectures - for a class of the community which had been shown to have high levels of illiteracy by the Quaker enquiries into education in the city! It should have been perfectly clear to the promoters of the Institute that their hopes were based on false promises. After a short time, however, they created a number of "mutual improvement" classes in geometry, arithmetic, chemistry and drawing.^{3.} The creation of these classes was, of course, a tacit admission that the lectures were beyond the powers of comprehension of the people whom Wellbeloved and his colleagues were directing their efforts towards. Eventually, proper classes in basic subjects taken by an experienced tutor were started and the class provision remained an important part - perhaps the most valuable part - of the York Mechanics' Institute programme throughout the whole of its life. By 1836, writing, English grammar and Geography had been added to the class programme, and another "mutual improvement" class started.^{4.} Six years later the classes held by the Institute were writing (65 enrolled), arithmetic (56 Students), grammar (37 Students) and drawing (65 Students).^{5.} The

1. Ibid, 6 November, 1827.

2. Ibid, 15 January, 1828.

3. Ibid, 4 September, 1827.

4. A.H.Furnish, Ninth Annual Report, Y.M.I.

5. Ibid, 1842.

following year the account of the York Institute contained in the Annual Report of the West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes gave figures of enrolments and average attendances. They told a familiar tale.^{1.}

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>ENROLMENT</u>	<u>AVERAGE ATTENDANCE</u>
Writing	60	26
Book-keeping	60	26
Geography	60	26
Arithmetic	54	22
Mathematics	54	22
Algebra	54	22
Grammar	40	16
Elocution	40	16
Composition	40	16
Drawing, architectural landscape and perspective	60	25

The enrolment in York Mechanics' Institute classes was only a minute proportion of York's growing population (26,000 in 1831, 36,000 in 1851). That the Institute had no attractions for the mass of the population is quite clear; that there was a need for remedial classes is beyond doubt. Why, then, did the Institute prove so unattractive? It is more than likely that the classes operated at too high a level, but it is also possible that those who could have benefited shied away from an institution that was becoming more and more middle class orientated. It was a place in which they would have felt ill at ease, and where leaders in that intensely political era, had decided that "party politics, controversial divinity,^{2.} and all subjects of local controversy shall be strictly excluded." The Chartist Movement and the public houses proved to be far more attractive than a Mechanics' Institute.

Membership of the York Institute was divided into three classes. Membership of the first class, patrons, necessitated a subscription

1. West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes, Annual Report, 1843.
2. Ibid, 1842. Appendix No.2.

of one pound a year. Second class members paid ten shillings a year and the third class, mostly juniors, paid six shillings. Admittance to lectures was free to members and so too was membership of the classes. Library facilities, of course, were also free. In 1838 the total income of the York Mechanics' Institute amounted to £90, and was made up of subscriptions (£83.6s.10d.), donations (£3), non-members paying to attend lectures (£3.3s.0d.) and "fines etc." (10s.2d.).^{1.}

The response to the lecture programme was a great disappointment to the Rev. Charles Wellbeloved and his friends. In 1831 thirteen lectures on chemistry, galvanism and electromagnetism cost the infant society £20 and the committee complained of uncertain and irregular attendance. They also complained that classes were a means of apprentices getting a night out - "boys under the pretence of attending the classes, idle away their time in the street, instead of coming to the Institute."^{2.}

It is not surprising that the early lecture programmes of the York Institute were a failure and they were admitted to be such within a very short space of time. Patrons fell away, and members did not renew their subscriptions. "Your committee have to regret that the number of resignations in the last year has exceeded that of the new members admitted" it was recorded in June, 1831.^{3.} The annual report of 1834 commented on the apathy of the working classes and bemoaned the fact that they did not support an institution "designed and adapted to check the progress of Frivolity, Dissipation and Vice."^{4.} There was undoubtedly plenty of frivolity,

1. Ibid, 1838.

2. A.H.Furnish, 4th Annual Report, Y.M.I., 1831.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid, 1834.

dissipation and vice in the city at that time, but the annual report reads like one of the effusions from the Society for the Prevention and Discouragement of Profaneness and Vice, a local society said to have been ridiculed by Sydney Smith as one for the suppression of pleasure for all having an income of over £300 per year! The high moral tone of the York Mechanics' Institute's appeals could not have endeared it to the working class.

The York Institute's problems in its early years were manifold. Its lectures were not being attended, and the "lower orders" were not interested and neither, for that matter, were the "middling classes". After the first few years, enthusiasm for class teaching had waned and unpaid teachers were proving to be unreliable. There were also financial problems. As many patrons had lost their early enthusiasm there was not enough money to pay for the public lectures. But some of the Institute's problems were to be relatively easily solved - even if the solutions did bring other problems in their wake.

The evening classes, it had been decided, were absolutely essential, and an article of 1859 finally recognised that they were a partial remedy for a poor educational system - "so long as the defects of early education require a remedy, so long will elementary classes in a Mechanics' Institute be a necessity."¹ It was also advocated that teachers should be paid. William Newmarch, secretary of the York Institute for a time, in one of the most comprehensive analyses that exists of a Northern Mechanics' Institute, provided² evidence on behalf of the case for the payment of teachers. He recorded that the mutual improvement society had lasted for only

1. B. Blake, "The Mechanics' Institute of Yorkshire". Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, (1859).

2. W.R.U.M.I., Appendix No.2, 1842.

five years (1836-41) and that there had been great dissatisfaction with the unpaid class teachers. He also recorded that the majority of students in the classes were from the third category of members and mainly in the 14-18 years age group. From 1842 onwards all^{1.} class teachers were paid.

Paying the class teacher, however, meant an additional drain on the slender Institute resources, so that it was fortunate that from the mid-thirties onwards by far the majority of the lectures given at the York Mechanics' Institute were given freely, and there seems to have been no lack of persons willing to give their services. In the annual report for 1840, for instance, it was reported that between April, 1839 and March of the following year, 37 out of a total of 39 lectures had been given free.^{2.} (In that year there had been 404 members and an income of £174). Apart from people such as Wellbeloved and the Unitarians, well known local Tory personalities like Dr. William Dallah Husband and Newmarch gave their services. Husband lectured regularly at the Institute and on one occasion gave the inevitable talk on phrenology, without which no Institute programme was complete at that time. By the late thirties, Husband's presence on the programme suggested that most of the early hostility which the Institute had aroused locally had disappeared.

By the time Husband became a lecturer the York Mechanics' Institute had undergone a basic change. Newmarch described the change and the reasons for it. Originally it had been hoped that there would be large amounts of money from patrons and large attendances from mechanics belonging to the second class of member. However, by 1834 the Institute had become engulfed in apathy, and

1.
Ibid, 1840.

2.
Ibid.

Newmarch and his colleagues took an obvious course. The lecture programme had never been completely scientific and it had been noticed that lectures of a non scientific nature (on elocution and popular education, for example) were extraordinarily well attended. Their experience was "decidedly in favour of the conclusion - that scientific lectures, except where illustrated by a profusion of brilliant experiments, cannot obtain an audience, and in the excepted cases it is the experiments which form the attraction and not the principles they established."^{1.} So popular lectures were started. The annual report of 1838 singled out "phrenology", 'social institutions' and 'the influence of the press' for special mention and recorded an increase in membership. The following year "physiology", "phrenology" and "education" figured in the programme, with attendances so large that there was talk of extending the premises. By this time the rules of the Institute had been altered to enable first and second class members to take a lady guest free to the lectures. In 1840 nine weekly lectures had been given to an average audience of 180, many of them on literary subjects (for example, British Poets), the fine arts and music. The rules were altered yet again in the same year so that the Institute's activities could include provision for "The rational amusement ... of members and the cultivation of their tastes."^{2.} Excursions were initiated and the Institute seemed to have found the answer to its problems by forgetting its original aims. The management of the York Institute was applauded by the Yorkshire Union which urged other institutions to "go and do likewise".^{3.} Wellbeloved and his

1. W.R.U.M.I., Appendix No.2, 1842. J.F.C.Harrison, Learning and Living 1790-1960. (London, 1961) pp.71-72.

2. Ibid. (N.B. Programme details are from W.R.U.M.I. and Y.I.R.)

3. Ibid, 1840.

fellow workers realised that they had already deviated considerably from their original intentions. They expressed their concern in stating their dilemma. They wanted to attract more members by popular lectures, excursions and social meetings they admitted in their annual report, but, they went on, "How may the largest amount of sound instruction be combined with the most extensive provision for pleasing and refined enjoyment?"

In 1838 the York Mechanics' Institute changed its name and became the York Institute of Popular Science and Literature. The Institute declared that, officially, its aims were to be one, "The Instruction of its Members in the principles of the Useful and Ornamental Arts, and in the various other departments of Useful Knowledge, to the exclusion of Controversial Divinity, Party Politics, and all subjects of Local Controversy; and two, The rational amusement of its Members, and the cultivation of their tastes." These aims were to be achieved by:-

1. The voluntary association of members, and the payment of a small periodical sum, In advance, by each.
2. Donations of books, specimens, implements and apparatus.
3. A library of Reference, a circulating library, and a Reading Room.
4. A Museum of Machines, Model, Minerals and specimens of Natural History.
5. Lectures on Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Practical Mechanics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Natural History, Literature and the Useful and Ornamental Arts.

Newmarch said the Institute's name had been altered "with a view to avoid the manifest inconsistency between its original title and the occupations of the majority of its members." Several analyses of membership at York are extant and they all illustrate dramatically the failure of the Institute to capture the allegiance of those it had originally set out to attract.

Newmarch's has already been mentioned. Another, earlier, analysis of 1839 showed two barristers and four bank clerks among the members. Out of a total membership of 307 the occupations from which the Institute recruited ten or more persons were as follows. (As usual with statistical analysis of this period the descriptions are not completely clear).^{1.}

Clerks (Solicitors, Proctors, law stationers and merchants	22
Druggists	12
Joiners	10
Linen-drapers	17
Painters	12
Printers	14
Youths	51

The composition by age groups was as follows:-

14 - 18 years	51
18 - 21 years	32
21 - 30 years	165
30 - 40 years	30
40 and over	29

The Annual Report of the West Riding Union of 1840 generalised from returns such as those from York. " ... the members of Mechanics' Institute are," it said, "nineteen-twentieths of them, not of the class of Mechanics, but are connected with the higher branches of handicrafts trades, or are clerks in offices, and in many instances young men connected with liberal professions".

The York Institute had played a part in the creation (1838) of the West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes and two delegates had been at its inaugural meeting. One of the Union's prime objections was to facilitate the hiring of lecturers by engaging them to do a series of lectures throughout the region at reduced rates. Few member Institutes availed themselves of the scheme, however, and the Union's Annual Reports contain continual criticisms of members for not doing so. The truth was that most of them could

1.
Ibid, 1839.

not afford many of the paid lecturers even at reduced rates. Most, including York, were forced to rely to a very great extent on people such as Wellbeloved and Husband. At the end of the forties the West Riding Union produced a series of manuscript lectures that could be read, mutual instruction fashion, to members. To what extent they were used is difficult to ascertain, but the shortcomings of the system are obvious. Two of the lectures, emanated from York. One was a prize-winning essay entitled "On the Study of Geography," by G. B. Dalby and the other was by Thomas Barstow, a vice president of the York Institute.

The pattern prevalent about 1845 became the established pattern of activities at the York Institute practically until it ceased to function. Though predictable, the lecture programme remained impressive. The first lady lecturer appeared on the programme in 1844 - a Mrs. Hamilton who lectured on phrenology. Two years later a Mrs. Balfour gave three lectures. In general the York lecture programme conformed to the norm for most literary and philosophical societies at that time and many famous people appeared on York Institute platforms. They included Elihu Burritt, the temperance advocate, J. P. Pritchett the architect and the Rev. William Hey, headmaster of St. Peter's School. A look at the subjects appearing on the list of lectures from the mid-forties serves to illustrate how far the lecture programme had moved away from Brougham's ideals. Subjects then offered included Chivalry and Phonography in 1844, Photography in 1845 and Mnemonics in 1852. By the sixties the class programmes were complemented by weekly unconnected lectures open to the public and from the seventies the "systematic" department - evening classes - and the "unsystematic" department - library, reading room and open lectures - operated as

separate entities. Thomas Armstrong has described a typical Mechanics' Institute interior of the time:

"The vestibule of the Mechanics' Institute, the walls hung with many fine watercolours painted by members, extended almost to the full depth of the building. Towards the rear a flight of steps led to the library, science and art departments, and classrooms which on week nights were used for instruction in subjects ranging from the more simple - arithmetic, writing and grammar - to the profound: astronomy, the higher branches of mathematics, and foreign languages. On the ground floor three arched doorways gave entrance respectively to a fine reading room, a general room and a hall for entertainments.^{1.}"

In terms of membership and attendance the York Institute experienced varying fortunes from the mi-forties. In 1846, in his opening address delivered at the new hall, Professor John Phillips, eminent geologist and secretary of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, noted that the Institute had been in operation for 18 years and "during all that period they had had the conviction that time would give them the power to raise a noble temple for the cultivation of knowledge in which a large portion of the citizens of York might avail themselves of the advantages which it was so eminently calculated to confer."^{2.}

Although the members had their "noble temple", they were less successful in attracting a large percentage of York citizens, even though musical concerts which started in 1846 attracted audiences of over 500 and membership increased from 344 in 1845, to 400 in 1846, to 618 in 1847. Only three years later a drop in membership was recorded that was said to have been caused by the depression and the large numbers of people leaving the city.

1.

T. Armstrong, King Cotton, (London, 1947.) p.55.

2.

Introductory Address, Opening of the New Hall, York Institute of Popular Science and Literature, (York, 1846.)

Nevertheless an average of more than 200 attended lectures such as that of T. B. Smithies on 'Gutta Percha'. It was in 1847 that William Hey in an address to Institute members warned them not to debase literature into a mere idle luxury, nor to suppose that "the end of reading is amusement."¹ This was another attempt to try to stem the flow of periodicals and other cheaply produced popular reading material into the libraries as it was considered degenerate. Hey, and those members who shared his feelings, were, however, on a slippery slide, a slide which in York also, followed a national proclivity towards more recreative pursuits and an ever increasing swing away from the traditional offerings. The "systematic department" was on the wane. With reference to the York Institute's lecture programme Professor Phillips thought it "impossible to doubt that a vast body of important information had been diffused by them through the extent of York." He was even more optimistic later in the same speech, for he concluded that "if the members did their duty the whole population of York would be gathered round the institution," and he believed that "it might confer greater benefits than it had ever before conferred on the inhabitants of York."² Professor Phillips' enthusiastic and optimistic predictions for the future of the new Institute, however, were to prove false.

After a period of poor attendance in the sixties additional social activities were started in the early seventies to attract young persons. A gymnasium was created, a rowing club founded and concerts and discussion groups were initiated. With all this the committee still maintained that their avowed aim was to make the Institute increasingly a "Citizen's Institution, a check upon the

1.
W. Hey, M.A., Address delivered at 21st Session of the York Institute of Popular Science and Literature, (York, 1847.) pp.16,17.

2.
J. Phillips, Introductory Address, op cit., p.21.

attractions of a more pleasurable resort." ^{1.} Their efforts availed them little. In 1874 the lectures were given only fortnightly and the following year the reading room, the library and the lectures were reported to have been poorly attended. The members had made their choice.

The evening classes, however, which offered a means of improving qualifications and thereby increasing prospects of job advancement, proved so attractive that the class programme had to be enlarged. In 1851 the first informal examinations (conducted by the Rev. William Hey) were held at the Institute. In 1881 the Institute committee considered turning the classes into a School of Art, premises in King Street were obtained and the Institute of Art opened. At this time local examinations were also being held, under the auspices of the Department of Science and Art, for the City and Guilds of London technical certificates and the commercial qualification of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes. Thus were laid the foundations upon which the Institute began its gradual development into the Regional Technical College it is today.

York Mechanics' Institute, however, did not diversify as much as did some Institutes at this time. The Leeds Institute, for example, had by 1900 broken up to become Leeds Technical School, Leeds Boys' Modern School, Leeds Girls' Modern School, Leeds Commercial Evening School, Leeds School of Music Teachers' Classes and Leeds School of Art (established 1846) which became a centre for the diffusion of art knowledge in all the principal West Riding towns and was visited by many eminent artists of the day. Its total number of students in 1900 was 4,668. ^{2.}

1. West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institute Reports, Appendix No.2. 1842.
2. The Leeds Institute of Science Art and Literature, Historical Sketch 1824 - 1900. (Leeds, 1901.)

The early eighties saw the York Institute undergo another change of title, to the York Institute of Art, Science and Literature, and make a change of premises. A site was offered by the York Corporation for £1,375 in a newly created street, Clifford Street, near the city centre. The old building was sold for £1,250^{1.} and the new building completed in 1885. There was a sad note in the annual report which recorded the sale of the old building and the purchase of a new site, for the death of a great friend and patron of the institution, Henry Isaac Rowntree, was reported.

The York Mechanics' Institute, as most of its kin, failed to achieve its original objectives principally because it had not realised the gravity of the problem of illiteracy and therefore could not attract those most in need of its services. (Newmarch reckoned that the York Institute was getting from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent^{2.} of the population who could benefit.) Such genuine workers as still attended in the late forties had much the same motives as their predecessors in the mutual improvement societies or book clubs of the 18th century. "Self-improvement" may have been the slogan, but self-improvement covered both a genuine intellectual interest in learning for its own sake and, inevitably, a desire to acquire knowledge as a means to personal advancement in the sphere of work. As the Institute gradually developed into a kind of lower middle-class entertainment centre, those involved in the running of the Institute who saw such Institutes as a means to a radical reconstruction of society, who believed, as Birkbeck did, that they could be agents of a cultural education which would liberate the mind and enrich the understanding were disappointed and proved powerless

1.

The changeover from St.Saviourgate to Clifford Street is described in York Institute Records 1881 - 1885. On the transition from Mechanics' Institutes to Technical Colleges in general see e.g. S.F.Cotgrove., Technical Education and Social Change (London, 1958.)

2.

West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes, 5th Annual Report, 1843.

to stem the tide of change. Nevertheless, though they were largely unsuccessful in their original intention, their efforts to provide, under difficult conditions, a liberal education for the working man were commendable.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ADULT SCHOOLS IN YORK.

THE ADULT SCHOOLS IN YORK

During the first half of the 19th century it took the consequences of social ills to wake up and bring home to those in authority the imperative necessity of a good education for the poor and lowly as well as for the wealthy and powerful. A review of the receipts and payments of the York Corporation for the years 1830-1834 shows how little it gave to educational efforts. In 1833 a subscription of £15 was made to the Blue Coat Charity School (in part, one of the Corporation's own foundations in 1705) but there is no further mention of subscription to education in the accounts. Against this stand subscriptions to Fox Hounds £50, to the Races £200, while annual dinners cost £121.16s.6d. in 1830, £118.10s.6d. in 1831, £126.11s.6d. in 1832 and £120 in 1834. It is all the more creditable, therefore, that at a very difficult time for educational ventures "the early foundations of the Adult School Movement in York were laid by a few families of Quaker tradesmen and the young men employed in their establishments."^{1.}

Towards the end of the 18th century, out of the period of religious fervour generated by preachers like the Wesleys and helped along by the under-currents of social and industrial change, Sunday Schools which were aimed at teaching the illiterate to read the Bible began to appear throughout the country.

The Adult School Movement's beginnings derived from similar sources and developed under the direction of dedicated workers for education such as Griffith Jones, who, with his Welsh Circulating Schools, attempted to provide a basic education for the poor. By 1798 the inspiration and example of Thomas Stock, an early worker for adult education and the Sunday Schools, had led to a kind of Adult School being established by Samuel Fox of Nottingham, a

1.
F. J. Gillman, The Story of the York Adult Schools, (York, 1907) p. 15.

Quaker grocer. The school met at his home on Sunday mornings at the early hour of seven a.m. to teach reading and writing and although it catered for both men and women they were taught in separate rooms.

The narrowness of the adult schools in their approach to education is revealed by the slogan contained in the first pamphlet issued by the Bristol Adult Schools in 1812. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Dr. Pole, an early historian of adult schools, re-iterated these narrow religious ideas even more strongly. "The Bible should be the only book read in these schools and that without any explanation whatever; and no lesson should be used that contains a sentiment not approved by every denomination of Christians."¹ Furthermore, he stressed that the carrying out of that strict principle of the Bible Society, "Co-operation without compromise" was to be a pre-requisite of the adult schools' programme and one which ought to be still as much observed in the 20th century as at the beginning of the 19th century. Pole was also very much alive to the deficiencies of such education as there was for children at that time, and argued that educating adults was more "hopeful" than educating children for a number of reasons; they came willingly to school; they understood from the outset the values of their tasks; they were eager to attain the definite end they had in view; difficulties did not so easily bring discouragement. Pole also thought Adult Schools might prove economical for those instructed in the Schools might instruct others, and therefore there would be less need for providing such schools in the future.² Indeed a slogan later adopted by several

1. T. Pole, A History of the Origin and Progress of Adult Schools, (Bristol, 1816) p.15.

2. Ibid, p.18.

adult schools and probably inspired by Lancaster and Bell, was "each one teach one."

By 1816 news of the Bristol Adult School had spread and Friends in York and Leeds had set up similar schools. The York class had Samuel Tuke, a prosperous Quaker tea-dealer, as one of its teachers. Tuke had realised the need for adult education while conducting a survey into the want of Bibles in the poorer quarters of the city some four years previously. Attendances at the Adult Schools fluctuated somewhat, and Tuke recorded that the 22 December, 1816, was "a day of headache," as the result of an attendance of 24 adults. Despite the fact that Tuke devoted most of his spare time to the promotion of education for the working class, this York school had only a brief existence - although the Leeds school after its inception ran continuously for six years with considerable success. Other classes for adults at this time arose out of denominational Sunday Schools, which continued to make such provision for a considerable number of years. In 1836, for example, in York there were seventy-one adults attending Church of England Sunday Schools distributed throughout the city as follows:

Boys' Schools

Bilton Street	9
Bishopgate Street	13
Fossgate	6
Groves	19

Girls' Schools

Layrthorpe	3
Bishopgate Street	7
Micklegate Bar	14

Attempts to provide adult education continued in a desultory fashion until there was a rapid resurgence of interest about 1850. A new, more liberal adult school, which laid greater stress on

1. See J. Howard, Historical Sketch of the Origin and Work of the York Incorporated (Church of England) Sunday School Committee, instituted 1786. (York, 1887) p.76.

achieving basic literacy had been established in Birmingham, in 1845, by Joseph Sturge who, about three years earlier, had visited the thriving Nottingham school. The Adult School Movement in Yorkshire in particular took notice of its success and during the next decade promoted the foundation of seven new adult schools along similar lines. In York itself, a meeting held in January, 1848, by a few Friends who had been encouraged by the success of the new style movement in Birmingham, resulted in a decision to form a school at Hope Street using premises which had - largely through the efforts of Samuel Tuke again - been erected as a Boys' School in 1828. A thousand handbills were printed and some young Friends went out in pairs to canvass the neighbourhood. The object was declared to be, as far as was possible, to combine with secular education, a practical knowledge of Scripture truths.^{1.} This statement was important in itself, for it revealed that there was already a considerable shift of emphasis away from pronouncements such as that of Dr. Pole quoted earlier in this chapter. No boys under eight years of age were to be admitted to this school, preference being given to those who were unable to attend a day school, and they were expected to come with clean hands and faces. At its first session on the morning of the 20 February, 1848, sixty-two boys and youths turned up. At its second session in the afternoon of the same day, one hundred and twelve attended and one hundred were placed on register.

J. W. Hudson the Adult School historian commented on the resurgence of interest about 1850, and offered his opinions on the decline of the first schools.^{2.} He asserted that they really ceased

1. The Yorkshire Gazette, Saturday 12 October, 1907. An article giving a brief résumé of the history of Adult Schools to their Jubilee Year.

2. J. W. Hudson, A History of Adult Education, (London, 1851) pp. 22-25.

to exist not because they had failed in their objectives - basically to supply the working man with facilities to become literate enough to read the bible - but because they had largely achieved what they had been created to do. It is difficult to substantiate such an assertion, however, for in most cases, other than actual figures of numbers in attendance, there is little to go on in attempting to assess the impression made by the Adult Schools on various communities. Certainly the numbers flocking to Hope Street indicated that there was still a great need for literacy - a need not confined to the male section of the populace. As is often the case, one need exposes other needs, so that on the 23 March, 1856, largely as a result of the deputation sent to visit Hope Street by the Friends First Day School Association, an adult school for women was opened in Castlegate.

The Castlegate school, however, did not have the same initial problems which were encountered at Hope Street where the teachers were "too few to keep order" as the pupils "jumped over the desks, shouted and laughed."¹ It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that when, later, mature adults presented themselves at the school and asked the teachers to teach them to read, the staff had the energy, patience and time to teach them. It is known, nevertheless, that a man called Jackson Kilby applied to Thomas Coning one of the masters, to be taught to read and when he subsequently brought others to the school with him, there originated around this nucleus the York² Adult School Movement.

As the school expanded, recruitment to the teaching staff of the York Adult School continued to be predominantly from the ranks of employees of Quaker businessmen in the City. The Superintendent

1.
F. J. Gillman, op cit., p.4.

2.
Ibid, p.6. See also Appendix No.I.

of the school was often the businessman himself. It was in this way that the Quaker Rowntree family, who were to play such a big part in the development of adult education both locally and nationally, became involved in adult school work.

It is interesting to note that the dreadful accommodation in poor schools, was even then considered equally unsuitable for adult needs and not conducive to serious study. As an early adult school worker, Thomas Pumphrey, recorded "we either had to sit in rows, or stand in a semi-circle like boys in a class and this was our usual practice."¹

In its early years the school met from 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. on Sundays and the teachers held regular staff meetings in the Friends' Meeting House, after they had finished work to ensure that their lesson material was prepared for the following Sunday. This could be testimony to the seriousness with which they regarded their work in the Adult School. The 'first half-hour' of morning classes usually took the form of a short Bible reading followed by dictation and writing practice, while the evening meetings were mostly religious in content. Despite the grave disadvantages of mixed age groups, it was not until 1851 that the eight or ten adult members of the Hope Street School were able to meet separately from the youths. Nevertheless, attendance was maintained and gradually increased.

By 1856 there were between twenty and twenty-five adult scholars who were taken over as a class by John Stephenson Rowntree, a member of the York chocolate manufacturing family, on 20 January of that year. Shortly afterwards the Friends First Day School Association sent a deputation to York which included in its ranks several prominent Quaker names in early adult education such as,

¹. Ibid, p.6.

William White, Joseph Storrs Fry and Richard Southall. It is quite probable that the provision for adult education at Hope Street was also discussed while the deputation was in York.

1857 was to be a significant date for the York Adult School. Removal - away from the proximity of noisy lads - to independence and more central premises in Lady Peckitt's Yard was effected. No one under the age of twenty-one was admitted to the class and the membership of about thirty was divided (whether arbitrarily or according to some level of attainment is not recorded) into "A" and "B" classes. John S. Rowntree taught the "A" group and his brother Joseph the "B's". A simple curtain arrangement divided the two classes, but this was only for scripture readings, after which the two classes joined for 'instruction' - usually practice in reading and writing. Gillman mentions the 'friendly rivalry', which existed and, while there are no details available, this rivalry probably took the form of performance in attainment and was obviously sanctioned, if not deliberately fostered, by the two teachers. Here there was a notable difference from the attitude of many present day adult educationists who advise against introducing the element of competition into adult learning. Their grounds are that it could result in invidious distinction among students, which would be a deterrent to learning and attendances. It may have been that the motivation of the typical early Adult School student was so strongly directed towards improving his own level of basic proficiency in reading and writing that he remained unaffected by better, or worse, performances on the part of his fellow students. Part of the present day argument against competition among students, perhaps, is that for many students schooldays are redolent with unhappy memories of poor performances in competitive situations. This was certainly not the case for the

adult school student in 1857 for, almost without exception, it was his first serious attendance at any school. Moreover, whatever the truth about structured competitive situations, encouraged or handicapped by them, the membership during the first ten years at Lady Peckitt's Yard rose steadily to reach one hundred. Elsewhere in York other attempts were also being made to provide basic instruction and a Young Men's Class was begun among the members of the Wesleyan Chapel at Priory Street by a Mr. Robert Kay in February, 1862. This marked the beginning of a long and distinguished^{1.} service to adult education in York for Robert Kay.

By 1863 there was some indication that there had been an attempt at streaming in Lady Peckitt's Yard, for a "C" class which had been an "elementary" section of the "A" class was constituted a section in its own right. The following year a further increase in numbers made necessary a "D" class. Although the school continued to meet over the next ten years without significant event, tribute must be paid to teachers and students alike for most of them worked until eight p.m. six days a week and it must have taken great determination to attend school regularly on the one free day each week. The teachers attempted to create a cordial atmosphere of mutual helpfulness and their aim, said Gillman, "was not primarily Scriptural exegesis, but rather to attempt to apply the teaching of the Bible to everyday life and the problems of society."^{2.}

This serious study was, however, leavened by "several female friends," cricket matches and attendance at Temperance Lectures and exhibitions. 1867 saw the formation of another small Sunday morning class which shortly afterwards amalgamated with the "D" class and met regularly at Cumberland House on the King's Staith. In the early

1. See J. Lyth, Glimpses of Early Methodism in York and District, (York and London, 1885) p.279.

2. F. J. Gillman, op. cit., p.14.

seventies numbers rose to nearly three hundred, a coffee stall was established and Temperance assumed tremendous popularity, one thousand pledges having been taken by 1875. The idea behind the coffee carts, built at Henry Isaac Rowntree's suggestion, was to provide an alternative to the refreshment obtainable at public houses. Coffee was a halfpenny per cup and buns were a halfpenny each. York appears to have pioneered this particular social service and a York Adult School member, George Pattison, manufactured the first carts which were quickly put to use in several parts of the country. Coffee and Cocoa Houses were also opened and flourished alongside the carts for a considerable period.

The increase in social activities, increased membership and cramped premises led to demands in the school for premises of its own, and in 1874 an old chapel in Lady Peckitt's Yard was bought, duly demolished and building operations begun in order that elementary teaching might be further developed. At the laying of the memorial stone of the new school on 25 November, 1875, six hundred people attended the tea and were afterwards addressed by William White and others. White, sensing the already changing nature of the Adult Schools, voiced his concern that there was a danger that Adult Schools would lose their missionary spirit and become a spiritual and intellectual luxury for their members rather than being an inspiration for service to one's fellow men.

Nevertheless, the new premises were opened in 1876 with 220 scholars present. Later a refreshment room and a reading and smoking-room were provided. About this time a system of distribution among members of weekly tracts dealing with social issues such as sanitation, over-crowding and temperance, as well as religious topics, was instituted and proved very popular. Attendance appears

to have been rather irregular during this period and in order to increase membership the school's leaders resorted to the splitting of the "A" class to re-constitute the lapsed "C" class, after which membership rapidly increased to a record 263 in 1887 and was maintained at about the two hundred level for six successive years. By 1900, however, attendance figures of 150 were recorded - the lowest for thirty years. In an attempt to halt the declining membership, the Monthly Business Meeting opened a Social Club in the original Hope Street Premises. The club met on Friday evenings and offered refreshments, music, a games room and a smoking room, but average attendance was still only between twenty and thirty so that the club soon foundered.

F. J. Gillman offered two possible reasons for the decline. Firstly, that the "lack of missionary zeal was telling against the true welfare of the school" and secondly, that extensive re-housing of people from the city centre slums into suburban dwellings was taking place and members were not prepared, or could not afford, to travel back to the centre in the evenings to attend school.¹ While the first reason may have been a valid factor in the decline of the Adult Schools and the second certainly was, there were also other forces at work which were to manifest themselves more clearly after the next period of revival.

On looking at this period of the revival of interest from about 1845 to shortly before the end of the century, during which there was a large increase in the number of schools, three significant points emerge. Firstly, the Adult School Movement ceased to look upon itself as simply a temporary organisation set up to overcome basic deficiencies, but rather as a discipline for

1. Ibid, p.21.

the nature of the whole man to co-ordinate and develop all his powers of personality. It was in part the expression of this feeling which led adult school members of this period to raise money and erect permanent buildings for their purposes. Secondly, there was a serious attempt to make the movement more democratic than it had been. The young Quakers who made up the new leadership professed belief in the responsibility and competence of their students, and tried to lessen the patronising air which had always pervaded the schools. Social and intellectual distinctions were forgotten - or at least overlooked - and the ideal of common service was fostered. Thirdly, the religious principles of the earlier schools were continued and extended. Although Christian zeal remained the main dynamic of the Adult School Movement the signs of serious repercussion later to arise on account of this zeal were already becoming evident by the turn of the century.

After 1899, the Friends began to make an official and deliberate withdrawal from the organisation and management of Adult Schools and in some areas, notably Leicester, there began to evolve a distinctly different pattern in the Adult School Movement. Early in the 20th century, York's Adult Schools began to experience what was to be a brief spell of renewed interest which was sparked off by a visit to York in 1903 of Edwin Gilbert, the National Secretary of the Union of Adult Schools. During this visit the attention of the York Schools, now four in number, was drawn to the advantages of federation and to the general re-kindling of enthusiasm for Adult Schools throughout the country. It was subsequently decided at a meeting of representatives of the four existing schools to form a federation. On 6 March, 1903, the Council of the York and District Adult School Union met for the first time and ~~twenty-eight~~ representatives were present when Arnold S. Rowntree was elected President. In 1905 he was also elected National Secretary of the

Union of Adult Schools and remained in office until 1919, when he was followed by F. J. Gillman another York man, so that York had its finger on the pulse of the national movement. From 1903 to 1907 membership in York burgeoned under the stimulus of mass meetings arranged by the York Union which were addressed by such prominent champions of working-class education of the time as Dr. George Newman, Will Crooks, M.P., Arthur Henderson, M.P., and C. Silvester Horne.

Earlier stringent admission regulations seemed to have gone by the board in some schools in the drive for recruits, for in 1904 potential members of Layerthorpe Adult School, Working Men's Club Section were enjoined in an advertisement for the Club's opening to "Never mind your coat and collar. WE WANT TO SEE YOU - NOT YOUR COAT! Don't stop to black your boots. Come just as you are. There will not be any room for any "swells" in this school."¹

The statistics of the York Schools, 1902 - 1906 shows a rapid growth which was part of the national trend of resurgent interest which reached its peak about 1910, though it seems to have levelled off somewhat earlier in York.²

December 31.	No. of schools (Men's and Women's together)	Members (Men and Women)	Average Attendance (Men and Women)
1902	4	729	362
1903	9	1,442	772
1904	11	2,224	1,068
1905	13	2,648	1,186
1906	13	2,373	1,128

Despite the fact that these figures reveal that the average attendance appears always to have been less than half the total enrolment it is interesting, and worthy of some praise for the

1. Collection of cuttings, advertisements etc., held in York Public Library Archives on York Adult Schools.

2. F. J. Gillman, op.cit., pp.31-34.

York Adult Schools' workers, that their total membership in 1905 was greater than that of Leeds, which had a much larger population and more schools. The religious element in the philosophy of the Adult Schools continued to be strong and led to the establishing of monthly hymn sheets preparatory to the publication of an adult school hymn book. Several of the hymns, containing rallying sentiments, were written by the members themselves. However, times were changing and religious fervour alone could not sustain the Adult Schools in the face of change. Some distress was caused to the promoters of Adult Schools by the fact that some people mistook the word "adult" for "dunce" - even though for most of the students the social stigma of only being able to make a mark was strong enough to make them want to learn to write their names, whatever they were called for attending school.

William White, had seen the need for what he called "Free and Easies", (social evenings) much earlier, and during the period of their greatest expansion, 1902 - 1907, the York Schools' leaders also realised that meeting only once a week was insufficient to hold the interest of their less academic members - who were the very ones who stood to gain most from the schools. In an attempt to retain these members, twelve Social Clubs attached to the Adult Schools were formed in the City. Various indoor pastimes such as billiards and reading rooms were provided and there quickly developed inter-school tournaments in many activities, particularly winter games, fishing and cricket, the results of which competitions were often entertainingly reported in 'One and All' the Adult School Journal. At the end of 1906 Social Club membership alone exceeded 1,450.

This popularity, however, received only a guarded welcome from the Adult Schools' leaders, many of whom felt such activities were not really part of the purpose of the Adult School Movement, even if

they did attract and retain members, and that they might eventually prove a real detriment to the Movement. Gillman himself felt moved to issue a warning on this subject. In 1907 he pointed out to his readers that while games might be "wholesome and necessary" they were only ancillary to the educational work of the schools. He wrote that "The needs of today differ greatly from those of fifty years ago, but we must not forget that our institutions are Schools, and 'the first half-hour' still offers unique opportunities for educational work, suited to the altered conditions of life."¹ Troubled by the increasing popularity of the Social Clubs the leaders of several schools set up pressure which led to the formation of an Education Sub-Committee of the York Union and inter-school societies of a more academic nature such as literary and debating societies. It was also at this time that, in conjunction with representatives from the Railway Institute, the first tentative steps towards the foundation of the York Branch of the W.E.A. were taken. There had been a feeling abroad for some time that efforts at a more ambitious educational programme by individual schools were too spasmodic and the smaller schools felt themselves handicapped by the difficulty of obtaining and paying teachers and lecturers. Consequently, the Council of the York Adult School Union convened a meeting of interested parties with the object of enquiring into existing conditions and attempting to promote some practical scheme for the construction of an educational programme which would reach the rank and file of the men and women of York. After a meeting with Albert Mansbridge, who outlined the ideas and work of the newly constituted W.E.A. to them, the committee invited representatives of all public bodies interested in education to a conference to be

1.
One and All, York Supplement, January and February, 1907.

held at the Railway Institute on Wednesday 24 April, 1907.^{1.}

The York Supplement of One and All, the National Union of Adult Schools' magazine, extolled the virtues of the new movement to its readers in its editorial comment on schools offering to co-operate with the W.E.A. "..... such schools have everything to gain by throwing themselves into a movement which will enable their members to attend first class lectures and will give them, through the Adult School representatives, a voice in the educational policy of York."^{2.} In August, 1907, Mr. J. W. Proctor was appointed additional representative to the recently formed York Branch of the W.E.A. to supplement those members of the Adult School Union already sitting on this committee and it was decided that the Union should affiliate with this branch. Thus there began an association with the W.E.A. which may still be seen in an extenuated version in the York L.E.A. provided evening centres today.^{3.}

There was also anticipation of another aspect of adult education today in the organisation of a week-end of lectures and social activities on Saturday and Sunday 20 and 21 October, 1906, held in the grounds of the Rowntree owned "Homestead" at Clifton which was attended by one hundred and thirty people. This week-end and the others which followed in the wake of its success were inspired by visits of York adult Schools' leaders to the N.U.A.S. summer school at Woodbroke and helped to set the pattern for such residential adult colleges as Fircroft. Once more Quaker initiative and philanthropy were making themselves evident.

The journal of the Adult School Movement, York Supplement, recorded very well the buoyancy and general diversification of

1.
Ibid.

2.
One and All, January and February, 1907. Editorial comment.

3.
The W.E.A. in the session 1970-1971 provided classes in York L.E.A. centres in such subjects as Local History, Ornithology, Antiques, Industrial Archaeology and Music Appreciation.

interest of the movement at this time, which was reflected in the reporting of events as far apart as the 1906 General Election, trips abroad and exchange visits with Sheffield's adult school members, with 2,000 members taking part and offering reciprocal hospitality over a week-end. Officially, of course, the Adult Schools' policy was one of non-involvement politically, but nevertheless the same journal carried the following exhortation under the heading:

Adult Schools and the General Election

"In view of the General Election let us remember that our movement is NON-POLITICAL, but let us remember, too, how sacred is the trust which the possession of the vote imposes - a trust which it is his duty to use intelligently and to the best of his judgement." 1.

Unofficially, as the Quaker adult school leaders were staunch advocates of temperance, and it is reasonable to associate temperance with liberalism in the early years of the 20th century, the schools tended to reflect liberal attitudes.

The attempt to inculcate a sense of social obligation in Adult School members was typical of the Quaker attitude of their leaders, exemplified in York by Joseph Rowntree. This found expression in concern for the human aspect of what education could do for the welfare of man, not only in restraint from drinking and gambling, but in the avoidance of war. The same concern was part of the thinking behind the Schools' extensive social activities during the period 1902 - 1906 which were typically, a temperance society, rambling, swimming, cricket, cycling and football clubs and week-night devotional meetings. There was even a week-end excursion to Antwerp for the reasonable sum of £2.

The Adult School Jubilee Year, 1907, marked the beginning of the end of their period of peak membership and high activity and already there were signs of the onset of a decline. From the outset

1.

One and All, York Supplement, 1906.

the leaders of the Adult Schools had sincerely attempted to realise the ideal which the York Quaker, John Wilhelm Rowntree expressed in his history of the movement. "The Adult Schools must be a true order of St. Francis, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. And theirs must be the evangelical gospel of freedom and hope, not narrowly or doctrinally interpreted, but in the broadest charity and in the deepest faith."¹ Those Quakers most deeply committed to the schools, however, realised that a movement still tied to a small distinctive religion could not hope to expand indefinitely. The Society of Friends had never officially regarded the Adult Schools solely as a direct means of recruitment to their sect and, in any case, as early as 1870 most scholars had "come to regard the Adult School as a permanent commitment, midway between a church and a club."² In the original Adult Schools, in fact, once literacy had been achieved scholars were sometimes actively encouraged to leave in order to make room for others.

The signs of decline were evident also in an issue of One and All. Layerthorpe Adult School reported that, although "Our 'first half-hours' are an immense attraction and the majority of our members never fail to turn up to them, the Evening meetings have fallen off a good deal and a special meeting is being called to see what can be done."³ Some of the smaller schools, especially those belonging to affiliated country federations, lost their numbers so rapidly that they had to be closed down. Although the growing unpopularity of the Adult Schools' persistence with their religious lessons was undoubtedly a factor in their decline, their leaders placed a different interpretation on the nature of their changing character.

1. J. W. Rowntree and H. B. Binns, A History of the Adult School Movement, (London, 1903) p.76.

2. Elizabeth Isichee, Victorian Quakers, (London, 1968) p.270.

3. One and All, York Supplement, August, 1907. District Notes.

Arnold S. Rowntree, in a speech made on behalf of his mother at a Jubilee Year function in 1907, said that there seemed less need for reading and writing lessons and that adult schools had their minds directed towards good literature and good history - because these were essentially religious subjects where the hand of God could be seen at work. He also remarked that there had been a revolution in the government of the schools. Instead of the schools being governed by the teachers there was now government by the schools themselves. The idea of involving the rank and file in their own government appears to have been a favourite of his, for he employed it in the family business at the Cocoa Works and supported a system of self-government in his later work for the Educational Settlements.

There seems, to have been a sincere attempt on the part of many teachers in the Adult Schools from about 1890, to run their classes on democratic rather than authoritarian principles and to employ the Socratic method of teaching. To all but the exceptionally able scholars, however, the difficulties were so great that two adult school workers writing on their experiences in the schools, asserted that "many teachers abandon the struggle to fall back not of choice but in despair, upon the autocratic method."¹ Moreover, said the same authors, the attitude of the class was often "We do not want to hear each other talk. We know what the others know. We want to hear you. You have had the better education. You have books that are beyond our reach and knowledge where we are ignorant. You must give us what you have, in simple form, that we may understand and learn."² The reality of the situation seems to have been that machinery may have been set up for the running of centres but the power to drive it lay where it had always been - with the middle-class

1.

J. W. Rowntree and H. B. Binns, op. cit., p.70.

2.

Ibid, p.71.

teachers and wardens.

Although there was an attempt, then, to make the adult schools more democratic, most of the evidence suggests that they remained strongly paternalistic and that there was - despite the emphasis in their literature on "goodfellowship" - an unbridgeable class gap between the scholars and their middle-class teachers and that in this relationship lay the seeds of their ultimate downfall. Edward Grubb, the famous temperance worker, drawing attention to other grounds for dissatisfaction in the community at this time, also criticised traditional philanthropists for their assumption "that there must necessarily be a huge class condemned to a kind of life which they would never think of submitting to themselves."¹ Elizabeth Isichee, a recent historian of the Quaker movement during the first decade of the twentieth century, also noted that the process of "embourgeoisement", which had occurred in the Mechanics' Institutes, the Athenaeums and some other educational institutions also took place in the Adult Schools and the poor felt themselves excluded once again. This alienation was present in York too; that and the spread of literacy generally in the community tended to add even more impetus to the changes taking place in the schools. The need for remedial classes had largely gone and the Quakers saw attendances booming - but because of billiards not because of the attractions of temperance or the 'first half-hour.' Moreover, the respectable working class men forming the nucleus of the Adult School Movement continued to join the drift referred to earlier into better class suburbia, leaving the centrally situated schools stranded and York was typical of many larger cities in this respect. The schools

1. The Friend, September, 1889, p.51. See also N. Longmate, The Water Drinkers. For a short but informative account of Grubb's work by F. C. Tring see Adult Education, Vol.48, p.303.

which were situated in Lady Peckitt's Yard, Hope Street and Hungate¹ provide good examples of this population shift. This migration also lends support to Isichee's theory that, although it had been claimed that Quaker educational facilities rapidly lifted working class families into the middle class, in fact many of the working class were already on the verge of the middle class.² There appears to be at least one legacy of this era though, for the foundation of several Working Men's Clubs within the city boundaries was probably the result of the initiative of the former Adult Schools Social Club sections. The oldest established Working Men's Clubs in York today are situated in the immediate vicinity of the old Adult Schools and originally seem to have been in part the expression of a need exposed and never fully met by the schools. These Working Men's Clubs also originally provided premises and facilities for W.E.A. lectures and sponsored themselves classes for interested members. However, their creation as drinking establishments out of an original temperance background is a further ironic demonstration of the dilemma the adult schools found themselves in during the first part of the twentieth century.

There were other features which ultimately affected attendance in the Adult Schools, for although the "Schools succeeded in reaching down into the working class --- there remained a gulf, social and educational, which stigmatized the movement as charitable in the eyes of independently minded workers. When middle class Quakers, however, sincere and liberal, threw themselves whole-heartedly into a mission for Adult Schools, it was exceedingly difficult for them to avoid the appearance of Victorian philanthropy."³

¹: See map of York, Appendix No. 2.

². E. Isichee, op.cit., p.130.

³. J. F. C. Harrison, op.cit., p.309.

Furthermore, the rapid spread of large-scale industrialisation, social legislation, Trade Union activity and further improvements in the speed of communication early in the century, contributed to the rise of Socialism, and the dissemination of scientific knowledge. The working class was becoming materialistic and socialistic, and many of their collectivist new ideas and attitudes were in direct conflict with the basic tenets of the Adult Schools' original philosophy, and consequently had a disruptive effect on their work. The grand idea of equal fellowship had never really worked and the strong paternalism of the movement became increasingly irksome.

Apart from the obvious attraction of the social and community advantages, the motives of the students of Adult Schools are not easy to define with certainty. The desire to achieve a basic education in the three R's was obviously paramount, and this fact ensured that recruitment continued to be from the lower working class who had most to gain from the programme offered in the schools. The motives of the promoters of the schools, largely Quakers, are somewhat simpler to identify. Their religious and spiritual convictions bolstered by their middle class social and moral ideals were expressed in social and educational form.

Although Quaker influence in the Adult School Movement over the country as a whole declined from 1907 onwards it probably remained strong in Yorkshire, and particularly in York itself, because of the wealth and influence of the Rowntree family who had been persuaded to renew the traditional Quaker interest in adult education by the enthusiasm and dedication of the short-lived John Wilhelm Rowntree.^{1.} His cousin and contemporary, Arnold S. Rowntree, who devoted a great

1.

The Constitution printed on page 8 of the 1970 Adult School Directory allows for two Friends Educational Council Representatives to sit on the Adult School Union's National Council in order to "maintain the historic connection of the Society of Friends with the Adult School Movement..." In 1970 the Yorkshire Union with 515 members still had the second highest membership.

part of his life to the cause of adult education, carried out the conversion of many of John Wilhelm's ideas into realities.

Probably the two most significant reasons contributing to the decline of the Adult School Movement from 1910 were firstly, that the essentially amateur quality of the teaching was sufficient when the movement was alive with a spirit of spontaneous voluntarism, but it was not an adequate substitute for the trained teachers' expertise necessary to sustain the hard routine slog of settled educational provision.^{1.} It is all the more to be wondered at therefore, that the Adult Schools did a useful job of providing a means of obtaining basic literacy considering their limited academic resources. Secondly, the Adult Schools' aims were not clear cut enough for them to establish an identity markedly different from any of the other organisations providing for the educational needs of adults - a problem which they have never satisfactorily resolved. As Ernest Champness, a recent historian of the schools, pointed out, the original Adult School work was so immediate that it needed no formal statement of aims, but once this initial stage was over there occurred an inevitable hiatus in the impetus of the movement while considerable course corrections were being thought out. Although the following Nine Aims for the Adult School Movement were drawn up and widely used until 1948, "there was no question of their formal acceptance or imposition."^{2.}

1.
1910 saw a maximum national membership of almost 100,000. Thereafter there was a drop to 80,000 in 1914, 50,000 in 1921, 33,000 in 1939, 9,000 in 1955, 5,833 in 1962 and 3,260 in 1970. (Figures from A.R., N.A.S.U.).

2.
The Adult School Directory, 1970, p.5.

NINE AIMS

1. To make and develop men and women and to teach them the art of life.
2. To study the Bible frankly, freely, reverently, and without prejudice.
3. To establish an unsectarian basis for Christian effort and unity.
4. To bring together in helpful comradeship and active service the different classes of society.
5. To stimulate and educate public spirit and public morality.
6. To teach the responsibility of citizenship.
7. To encourage whatever makes for International Brotherhood.
8. To advance as far as maybe the equality of opportunity.
9. To help men and women to understand and to live in the life of Jesus Christ, and to encourage them in their personal allegiance to him. 1.

The fact that they never were officially adopted serves to underline a further statement by Champness that "if, and when, such a time is reached that more attention is given to such clarification and verbal statement of aims than is given to the passionate endeavour of which they are but the intellectualisation, then that movement has probably reached a decline."² Undeniably the Adult School Movement had entered into a decline which, partly because of the conflict of loyalties which Quaker pacifism meant, was seriously aggravated by the onset of the First World War in 1914.³

In the difficult period immediately after the First World War

1. E. Champness, Adult Schools, a Study in Pioneering, (Surrey, 1941) p.32.
2. Ibid, p.31.
3. Although much earlier, of course, evidence of Quaker pacifism in York is given in Joseph Rowntree Junior's report on Hope Street School in 1857 where it was recorded that "although there have been some encouraging trends, it was disappointing to find that some members had left to join the navy and militia."

although "love not dogmas: life, not creeds" was the motto of the Adult Schools and their devoted approach to education, though Christian, was irrefutably liberal and undenominational, nevertheless this religious zeal may be considered a major factor in their failure to attract recruits. At a time when working men were being faced with increasingly difficult social and political problems such zealousness seemed to them out of place and inapplicable. By 1919 the work of the movement had shifted from a remedial and social emphasis to more liberally educational activities. Model lessons were sent out to tutors complete with lesson notes and suggestions for further reading which were very well produced and thought out. Activities at this time included a correspondence class group, study and book circles, classes on handicrafts, mother-craft and music, a drama group and play reading, so that the schools began to have the embryonic look of a modern day evening centre about them. The National Adult School Union in fact stated in an official pamphlet entitled Twenty-two Points about the Adult School Movement, that "the true Adult School ideal is that it should become a 'community centre' with an 'all the week programme'." In the inter-war years, mostly years of slump and widespread unemployment, the adult schools in the form in which they had gained recognition entered their final decline. In York approaches were made, but unsuccessfully, for financial aid from the Local Education Authority to sponsor classes in the way other authorities, such as Doncaster and Bradford had done. The City of York, Victoria County History, commented on the York Adult Schools and stated that "by 1924 none was active."^{1.} In fact, in 1927 a trust was founded to administer the revenue from the Adult School premises which, appropriately enough, for it meant a kind of return to the Quaker

^{1.}

The City of York, Victoria County History, p.406.

source from which they had originated, came largely under the control of the Rowntree family. Records held in York City Public Library Archives reveal that although used sporadically for lectures in the twenties and thirties the Schools had generally become social meeting places only.

Though nationally the National Union of Adult Schools is still quite active and plays a very useful supporting role in the provision of mostly non-vocational Adult education, today there are only vestigial remains of the once extensive York and District Union of Adult Schools which gave such valuable service to the education of the working class adult in York. Such examples may be seen at Acomb, Lawrence Street and at Old Priory, Nunnery Lane. The continued existence of these Adult School buildings is primarily due to the foresight of the Association known as the York and District Adult Schools and Social Clubs Ltd., which was set up in 1906 by the York Union to organise the building and renting of premises for Adult School purposes.^{1.} Today the remaining premises of the defunct schools are used for a variety of commercial and industrial purposes.

While, since the number of scholars nationally was always under 100,000, there is a body of opinion which allots relatively small importance in the history of education in this country to Adult Schools, nevertheless, their importance and relevance to this study is significant and an important link in the chain of development of York's Evening Centres of Further Education.

Women's Adult Schools

The first Women's Adult School in York seems to have originated in a Girls' school in Castlegate which was opened in 1856. The school was the result of the initiative of the Friends' First Day

^{1.} York Adult Schools, Acc.118-96-189, held in York Public Library Archives.

School Association, and, though it was not created until about eight years later than the Hope Street School for men, thereafter it, and those which came later, followed a roughly parallel course to the Hope Street School. At first, owing to a lack of teachers some of the very young girls had to be turned away and for several years there were no more than twelve students. The school was intended solely for younger people at first and by 1869 circumstances generally had improved and Cumberland House on the King's Staith was acquired as new premises. Out of the Mothers' Meetings held in Lady Peckitt's Yard during the early sixties there grew the first Women's Adult School proper which in 1872 had 17 members. When the teacher was unable to continue, however, the organisation lapsed between 1874 - 1876. Fortunately for the women's school though, the Church of St. Mary's took over the teaching of the girls thus releasing several teachers to re-establish the Adult School. In 1876, again using rooms in Lady Peckitt's Yard, two classes were started which ran with moderate success and maintained quite large attendances despite a succession of changes in the teaching staff. Ancillary activities such as sewing meetings, fund raising efforts and temperance work were carried out and there was available a library of around three hundred books.

The Adult School Movement followed the development of York's suburbs and new schools for men were established at Acomb, Holgate, Hungate, Hope Street, Lawrence Street, Layerthorpe, Leeman Road, Burton Lane, Bishophill and the Groves and each soon established its Women's Class as a natural corollary. In addition, affiliated Womens' Schools were founded as far away as Northallerton, Harrogate and Thirsk, and, nearer to York, at Selby and Easingwold. The procedure inside the Women's Schools followed much the same pattern as inside the men's - many of the teachers in fact were close relatives or wives of teachers and adult school workers from the

men's schools, so that a really separate existence and ethos would have been difficult, if not impossible, even if it had occurred to the women as being desirable, which it apparently did not. Almost without exception in all the local Adult Schools women were fewer in numbers than their male counterparts, and if this was due in part to their being academically and economically less strongly motivated, socially they made a significant contribution to the morale of the Adult Schools on joint outings and social evenings.^{1.} Although the Men's and Women's Schools usually shared the same premises they do not appear to have had regular co-educational classes. Nevertheless, York records show that quite a few members found ample opportunity, and enough in common at meetings in the tea room, to form a basis for marriage!

1. In 1962-1963 according to The Adult School Directory (p.43) there were five schools for women operating in the York Sub-Union area compared to one mixed school and one school for men. By 1970 there were only four women's schools still functioning. See Adult School Directory, 1970, p.34.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN YORK

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN YORK

The spontaneous development of the University Extension Movement about 1873 was the Universities' answer to an urgent demand to extend their educational services beyond their walls from several quarters. It was not the first such demand, for three centuries earlier Sir Thomas Gresham had had a similar idea.^{1.} Much later too, in 1850, a Mr. William Sewell of Exeter College in a letter entitled "Suggestions for University Extension," (which was not acted upon) addressed to the Vice Chancellor of Oxford, had proposed the setting up of local Colleges to be directly associated with the old Universities.^{2.} It was not until after 1870, however, that conditions were favourable towards the beginning of such a scheme. England had at last acquired a system of elementary education, the importance of education itself was apparent, workers' leisure time and prosperity were increasing and, most important of all, perhaps, the advent of the railways had made it possible for itinerant lecturers to undertake a widespread programme quickly and efficiently. Moreover, reforms within the universities themselves meant a widening of the syllabus and made the universities available to large sections of the community which were formerly excluded from them.

In 1872 Cambridge University received memorials from public bodies and educational organisations as variously constituted and as far apart geographically as the municipalities of Birmingham, Leeds and Nottingham; the Educational Committees of some Industrial Societies and Mechanics' Institutes and the North of England Council for the Education of Women. The memorialists sought the provision

1.

R. D. Roberts, University Extension Under The Old and The New Conditions, (Cambridge, 1908) p.6.

2.

R. D. Roberts, Education in the Nineteenth Century. Chapter on The University Extension Movement by Prof. Sir Richard Jebb. (Cambridge, 1901) pp.196-7.

of a service to meet the educational needs of people such as artisans, shop assistants and clerks whose jobs would only allow evening study. Their idea was that as there were "would-be" students who could not attend the Universities, which were the national centres of higher learning, why should not the Universities come to them? These University teachers, they thought, could act as "interpreters of the liberal spirit in education (if) they would conduct evening classes in our towns for men who have no leisure during the day."¹ Moreover, pointed out the memorialists, there were many ladies of good education in the large towns who desired to increase their knowledge and improve their minds who would welcome classes in literature, history or science. There could be, they maintained, a circuit assigned to such lecturers so that they had a full programme of day and evening lectures - and they should be well paid.

The University considered the report of a committee appointed in 1872 and inaugurated the University Extension Movement as an experiment in the three Midland towns of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. The method of lecturing must have demanded a particular type of personality and a specially developed expertise to put across what was sometimes quite difficult subject matter to a very heterogeneous audience. Nevertheless an élite cadre of enthusiastic lecturers was formed who were, apparently, usually very entertaining and comparatively successful in their task. Their normal method had four characteristic features, namely the lecture, the class, the weekly paperwork and the examination. As a rule the lecturer presented the subject in broad outline to a pre-prepared printed syllabus which contained relevant abstracts, quotations or statistics and a list of text-books and authorities on the subjects

1.
Ibid, p.194.

chosen. In the class following the lecture, students were invited to ask questions and the lecturer would attempt to explain more fully any difficult points arising.

Sometimes the lecture audiences numbered two hundred or more, but the subsequent class was more likely to be about thirty strong - which gave the lecturer some chance to get to know individual students. A further opportunity of this kind was provided by the written work which the student undertook in the form of short essays as a weekly exercise. These essays were usually marked and returned at the next class with the lecturer's comments. Finally there was an examination held a short time after the end of the course of lectures. The examiner appointed by the University - always someone other than the students' course lecturer - issued a pass list in alphabetical order, those who had gained a distinction being singled out by an asterisk at the side of their names.

The experiment proved a success and other towns soon joined in the movement. London in 1876 formed a society to undertake such work and Oxford began similar lectures in 1878, though there they did not become really established until 1885. The movement spread quite rapidly to include Scotland and Northern Ireland and by 1898, when a Conference was held in Cambridge to mark twenty-five years of University Extension work, it was announced that in the previous winter 488 courses of lectures had been held in different parts of the country and attended by nearly 50,000 people. Similar movements were later to spread as far afield as Europe, America and the Colonies while yet other movements were working on a national basis to attempt to improve the lot of the worker through a radical reconstruction of attitudes within society.^{1.} The attitude of

1.

See for example, F. J. Rees, for an account of The National Union of the Working Classes and Others, founded in 1831, given in A Social and Industrial History of England 1815-1918, 5th Edn., (London, 1932).

society towards the education of women, or rather the lack of it, was beginning to come under fire, not least from the more militant ladies themselves.

This dearth of educational provision for girls - until 1891 there were only two public secondary schools for girls in the city - was responsible for the formation of the "York Association for promoting the Improvement of Female Education," which sought to make good the deficiencies of its members' schooling by means of courses of lectures and there was also talk of it promoting a school of cookery.^{1.} Their interpretation of "improvement," really constituted remedial work and serves to underline yet again the deficiencies of elementary education at this time. The advantages of any such improvement, however, were not intended for just any York females, for the Association declared officially in 1874 that it "aimed chiefly at benefitting the middle and upper classes of society, the State having taken charge of the elementary schools."^{2.} Middle class female opinion seems to have been thoroughly stimulated by the efforts of the action group for there soon followed in the spring of 1875 a decision arising out of a resolution carried at a meeting initiated by the York Ladies' Association to introduce University Extension Lectures into the City.

The York University Extension Society was inaugurated in 1875 and had its first president in prominent surgeon and Medical Officer of Health for York, S. W. North, M.R.C.S., F.R.S.

1. Yorkshire Gazette, 17 January, 1874; report of Annual Meeting of 13 January, 1874.

2. Ibid.

There were fourteen Vice Presidents and an "influential committee" of twenty on which J. S. Rowntree acted as Treasurer. The executive had decided that part of its functions should be to provide a series of lectures on important religious, historical and biographical subjects "for the benefit of the young attending the various schools, who subsequently should be able to produce a satisfactory résumé of the series, determined by examiners appointed for that purpose, the successful students obtaining certificates."¹

The Society commenced its lectures with a course on Physical Geography conducted by Dr. R. D. Roberts, well known secretary to the Cambridge Extension Syndicate. At first the Society was not very successful in attracting audiences, but after some vigorous reconstruction in 1883 it began to be more successful. In 1889 the Committee, in order to cope with the Society's financial difficulties had to review the admission prices and introduced two varieties of ticket for the annual course of lectures - 5s. and 2s.6d. School children were admitted at half-price and Pupil Teachers and others engaged in education were admitted at a reduced price.

In 1891 the Yorkshire Association of University Extension Societies, to which the York Society was affiliated, decided to make application to the Councils of the three Ridings for a grant under the term of the new Local Taxation Act by which money was authorised to be made available for Technical Education. This joint application was unsuccessful, but the York Society decided to make further representation to the City Council. The Society's delegates had been instructed by their executive to "put forward the claims of the Society in the event of the division of the money, but at the same time to urge the advisability of devoting it to some

¹.

See Yorkshire Herald, 23 January, 1909. An article by W. Hargrove, J.P., entitled Philanthropic and Educational Institutions from the series "The History of York: Its Men and Its Institutions."

special scheme instead of splitting it up among a number of beneficiaries."¹ Their suggestion was accepted and implemented by the York Council. In 1892 and 1893 York Corporation Technical Instruction Committee gave an annual grant of £25 towards the cost of the Society's lectures - though for some reason this grant was withdrawn in 1894 thus compelling the Society to cancel a course of lectures on Architecture which it had arranged. Nevertheless the Society had its academic successes, for in that year a Miss. M. J. Byron obtained the highest award in the Scholarships given by the Yorkshire Association.

1895 brought in a comprehensive reorganisation of the system. For some time the Committee had been dissatisfied with the small number of students who entered for the examination. It pointed out that the Extension scheme had been expressly designed to bring the advantages of systematic study, under efficient lecturers, within the reach of those who found it impossible to attend a full-time University course. They felt that it was very disappointing that such small numbers were willing to submit to an examination. Later that year, possibly owing to pressure from the movement as a whole, the Scheme of Certificates granted by Cambridge University was altered. In future the Certificates were to form successive steps in a ladder of continuous work, beginning with the Terminal Certificate for one term's work, leading to the Sessional Certificate for a year's work and ending in the Vice-Chancellor's Certificate of Systematic Study for four years' work, although this was only granted after the passing of a final examination. It is hardly surprising that such a formidable list of obstacles to the Vice-Chancellor's Certificate, in York at any rate, acted as a deterrent rather than as a spur to the taking of examinations.

1. Ibid.

The earliest extant records begin fourteen years after the inception of the society with the report for the year 1896 - 1897. At that time the President of the Society was the Rev. G. T. Handford, M.A., who had an imposing list of Vice Presidents, twenty in all, which included prominent York and district citizens such as John Stephenson and Joseph Rowntree, Sir F. Lockwood, Q.C., M.P., and J. G. Butcher, Q.C., M.P. While the majority of these dignitaries undoubtedly had an interest in the University Extension Society, the title of Vice-President appears to have been a bought office as individuals subscribing more than £1.1s.0d. were automatically appointed to the title. Committee members, however, were appointed from constitutionally elected members only.^{1.}

At this time the Society was financially solvent and academically buoyant, for there is mention of an afternoon course being started for the first time in addition to the usual evening course. The afternoon class consisted of a course of lectures during the Michaelmas term on "The French Revolution" and was conducted by Mr. A. J. Grant, M.A., King's College, Cambridge. Thirteen students took the examination and all passed, four of them with distinction which led the Examiner to report that:

"This was a highly satisfactory set of papers: for, though no one candidate sent up a paper of extraordinary merit, yet no one failed to pass a good examination, and four acquitted themselves with sufficient ability to deserve in my opinion, the mark of distinction. In each case the leading incidents of the momentous epoch of the French Revolution had been carefully studied and by several students a considerable amount of thought had been brought to bear upon the subject." 2.

1. Fourteenth Annual Report, York University Extension Society, 1896 - 1897 p.1.

2. Ibid, p.2. A. J. Grant later became Professor of History at Leeds University and earned a wide reputation as a historian.

The Examiner of the evening subject, a course on Greek History comprising an admirable sketch of the Political, Literature and Philosophy of Greece during the Peloponnesian War, however, appears to have had reservations about the standard of his class for, in slightly pompous manner, he reported:

"These candidates, I suppose are mostly young, and they have yet a good deal to do before getting a clear grasp of facts or their significance. There were a good many instances of careless writing and spelling. There were four good papers, but the average of the rest was not high." 1.

Nevertheless, out of forty students who sat the examination thirty-seven passed, four of them with distinction. In the Lent Term the Society's students redeemed themselves and one student, a Miss K. L. Burtt, received not only a Cambridge University Scholarship of £5 for the Oxford Summer Meeting for her paper on "The Rise of Napoleon," but also the Vice Chancellor's Certificate awarded to students who had gained six terminal certificates.

In addition to the terminal lectures, short courses and single lectures during the session were given on topics such as "Animal and Plant Life," "Evolution," "A Mediaeval Abbey," some of which were illustrated by lantern slides. These lectures were held in halls belonging to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society and York Corporation Technical Instruction Committee. It is interesting to note that as well as loaning their premises, other institutions - which must to some extent have been in competition with the York University Extension Society - also contributed cash subscriptions towards the running of the Society.²

In the very next year, 1897 - 1898 the Society's Committee had to report that its financial position was far from rosy. The committee noted that the Society's troubles were mainly due to the

1. Ibid, p.2.

2. See Subscription List, Y.U.E.S. Accounts for 1896-1897.

decreased attendance at lectures and observed that this was almost certainly caused by the difficulty of the subject - "Biological Problems Past and Present." The committee nevertheless stated that financial considerations alone could not condition the choice of subject and expressed themselves willing to continue to provide opportunities for studying minority interest subjects of intrinsic merit. They also reported that a special feature of the course on "Evolution" was the large number of men present. Of this "large number" nine had taken the Examination, all passed, three with distinction, but the Examiner remarked that -

"The candidates were unequal. One deserves special mention as showing very considerable first-hand knowledge of the subject matter of the lectures." 1.

The Society's Management Committee stated their intention of trying to attract persons "not hitherto interested in University Extension Work," by a special lecture on "Waterloo" where the chair was taken by the Lady Mayoress and which seems to have attracted a reasonably large audience - though how many new members later joined the Society is not recorded.

The policy of lectures which the committee considered were of special interest was continued and in the session 1900 - 1901 afternoon and evening lectures (by now a standard feature throughout the Extension Society Movement to make the most economical use of a visiting lecturer's time) were given by Mr. P. H. Wicksteed, M.A., on "Dante," which was followed in the Spring term by an evening only course, intended as a sequel to the winter term's subject, entitled "Redemption of Italy." Not surprisingly, perhaps, the numbers in attendance did not fulfil expectations - though an average of 118 for evening lectures on "Dante" cannot be considered poor - and the

1.

Fifteenth Annual Report, Y.U.E.S., 1897-1898, p.1.

Society finished the session with what its committee described as "a very small balance," of £3.12s.1d. Nine candidates had entered and passed the examination on "Dante" four of whom were able to translate from the original Italian and six students - again all successful - for the "Redemption of Italy." The examiner was able to report that -

"There were no feeble papers, great care and study was evident and the standard reached was very high." 1.

Although the numbers of students actually sitting the examinations appear to have been a very small percentage of the number attending the lectures, there seems to have been quite a high standard of attainment for this diligent minority.

By 1901 - 1902 the list of other institutions subscribing annually to the University Extension Society included the Co-operative Society, which contributed £2.2s.0d. and the Railway Institute was then represented by a member sitting on the Extension Society's Committee. In the following session the Co-operative Society also had two members sitting on the Committee. The Society seems to have attracted an even wider section of the general public at this time and to have exposed one of the flaws in the full time education provided in the city. Their report for this session stated, with reference to an examination set on "The Roman Empire," that although the lecturer recorded that "... it is a long time since he has seen such thoroughly good work as that which he received from both the afternoon and evening students," nevertheless "It should be noted that a considerable proportion of the candidates on this occasion came from the upper forms of schools which pre-supposes a lack of leisure for wide reading." 2.

1.

Eighteenth Annual Report, Y.U.E.S., 1900-1901, p.2.

2.

Nineteenth Annual Report, Y.U.E.S., 1901-1902, p.2.

The ensuing period of the Extension Society's history appears to have been a period of re-organisation for a Draft Constitution appears on the back cover of the Annual Report for 1902 and the Society's aim was re-stated under Article 1 as follows:-

"The object of the York University Extension Society is to provide Courses of Lectures in the City of York, either under the auspices of one of the Universities or otherwise, and to promote the cause of higher education in any way that it shall consider desirable." 1.

It may be that the re-organisation injected a re-infusion of enthusiasm into the Society, for the 1903 Report, while regretting the poor afternoon attendance figures, declared that:-

"The Classes after the Evening Lectures (on "The Forces of Nature") were exceptionally large and animated, and it is worthy of note that several very young students wrote excellent papers." 2.

Prudently, the Society did not undertake any University Extension lectures in the Lent term of this session for it had obtained a concession under a trust formed to "rouse and stimulate public interest," called the Gilchrist Educational Trust, to run a series of "Gilchrist Lectures," for which financial responsibility was accepted by the new Education Committee for the City. Held in the large hall of the Exhibition buildings which seated 1,600 these lectures are reported to have been well attended on each night of the course. The Society continued to broaden its appeal and noted that it now had a duty "to keep up the interest" aroused by these lectures "especially among the artisan class." 3. The last statement is significant in that it reveals the definite attempt in this period at upward social movement by a section of the working class which was manifested also in the outward move to the suburbs already

1. Ibid, Back cover.

2. Twenty-First Annual Report, 1903-1904, p.1.

3. Ibid, p.2.

noted in the chapter on the Adult Schools. Furthermore, it was tacit recognition of the fact that the Society had until this time - by virtue of its level of work and the educational background it presumed - been predominantly a preserve of the middle and upper classes. What the Committee described as "an adverse balance," of £22.9s.11d., was no doubt also instrumental in helping them to encourage attendance from a wider section of the populace. Owing to the same reason, afternoon classes, which had languished for some time, were now discontinued with the expressed hope that they could be restarted should sufficient support be forthcoming.

The desired support was not forthcoming in the very next session, but the Committee were nevertheless able to record a "distinct advance in both the numbers of the audiences and in the zeal and earnestness of the Students," which they attributed to the Gilchrist lectures. Further concessions were made to encourage attendance and encourage receipts, artisans being admitted to lectures at a "merely nominal charge of 1s.6d," persons in educational work, and members of subscribing societies (that is to the Extension Society) were allowed tickets at half price. In addition the first lecture in each course was made free of charge.

Astronomy seems to have been the subject in vogue during the 1904 session. The main courses of lectures were entitled "The Solar System" and "Light and Sight" and were apparently well received. The lecturer's report stated -

"There were very large audiences at this centre, and the numbers were well maintained till the end of the course. The class too was an excellent one and quite a large number wrote the weekly papers."

1.

A good number of scholars from the Mount School and Bootham School were among the average attendance figures for these lectures of 158 and, perhaps in return for their concessional rates, the Society was

allowed the use of the observatories at these schools in addition to using the one in the Museum Gardens. At this time the attendance of pupils from local schools, especially the private schools, was obviously a well established practice. Not only did these pupils account for a substantial proportion of those in attendance at the Society's lectures -

"The attendance at the lectures, though steadily maintained throughout the course, had not been so large as it was last term. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that some schools which made very considerable contributions to the attendance at last term's course have not been able this term to fit in a course of lectures with the ordinary school curricula," 1.

- but they also made up a very high proportion of those attending the classes and finally sitting the examinations. It may be that the rigorous and restricted life of the boarder at this period encouraged the pupils to attend lectures as a legitimate means of escaping their school precincts, but some of them were undoubtedly genuinely interested in learning as they bothered to sit the examinations. Although such pupils were often the only students to fail the examinations, some were able to compete on equal terms with their adult student colleagues and even, on occasion, excel as the lecturer's report in 1905 revealed:-

"The majority of students doing paper-work were scholars in the Friends' Boy School in Bootham. It might therefore be expected that the youth of the students would lower the standard of merits. While this has undoubtedly proved the case yet the lecturer would call attention to the singularly excellent work of one of these boys, viz. George N. Clark." 2.

1. Ibid, p.2.

2. Twenty-third Annual Report, Y.U.E.S., p.2. "George N. Clark" later became Sir George N. Clark, wellknown author and sometime Provost of Oriel College, Oxford.

A University Extension Society Students' Association was formed in the summer of 1905 - a fact commented on approvingly by the Society's next report, part of which reveals perception worthy of trained sociological analysis:

"The formation of a Students' Association is always felt to be a most desirable adjunct to a University Extension Society. More than once an enthusiastic lecturer has succeeded in drawing his York Class into closer union for study, but an Association deriving its bond of union from outside itself, has fallen to pieces when the influence of the leader was removed. Now, however, the Students' own sense of need for an opportunity of discussion of difficulties, and for the mutual help and encouragement that are derived from interchange of thought, has given rise to an Association which from its spontaneous character bids fair to be more helpful and more permanent than those which depended on the person influence of a lecturer." 1.

As far as the Society was concerned, of course, this Association was another means of trying to improve the numbers of those attending classes and sitting the examinations, not a vehicle for mere socializing among its members, but it seems to have had only moderate success in this respect.

York University Extension Society, however, continued to function well and received special commendations over the next two sessions from visiting lecturers and examiners. Comments after a course on "Nature Study", in 1907, read as follows:-

Lecturer: "It is an excellent centre fortunate in its President, its Secretaries, and in the support of a large body of influential and cultured inhabitants of the city. A large proportion of the audience consisted of men."

Examiner: "The class attained a uniform and high level of excellence. The answers showed comparatively few errors, and a considerable range of knowledge on the part of the candidates." 2.

1.
Ibid, p.3.

2.
Thirty-second Annual Report, Y.U.E.S., 1906-1907, p.2.
N.B. It seems a new system of dating reports was employed after the reconstitution of 1905-1906, for the Annual Report numbers leap from the 23rd to the 32nd though chronologically the years are in correct sequence. There appears to be no record of any reason for this, but in 1907, 32 was the exact number of lapsed years, from the Society's inauguration in 1875.

The York classes appear to have attracted an unusually high percentage of men, a fact commented on several times by visiting lecturers.

The examiners and lecturers were also not averse to giving themselves a pat on the back from time to time as the 1908 Report reveals -

"The results of this course of lectures (Modern History) shows that it is quite possible to teach to a large class the history of the most recent times with conspicuous success." ^{1.}

This was obviously a halcyon period for the York Centre, attendances were good, finances more sound, and tributes to the effectiveness of the Students' Association, the general running of the Centre and the standard of work carried out in it were generously forthcoming. In its 1909 Report the York Society was able to report proudly that "The Cambridge Syndicate has paid the York Centre the distinguished compliment of offering to hold the Summer meeting of 1910 in York ... this new departure must be hailed as a fresh proof of the desire of the Cambridge Syndicate to bring the advantages of the University within reach of the people." ^{2.}

The Summer Meeting of 1910 was, apparently, a great success and might have gone some way towards fulfilling the Committee's hope that it would "prove a splendid stimulus to the work of University Extension all over the North of England." The York Students' Association was thriving. A room was taken by them in St. William's College, kept open at all times for study and a full programme of additional meetings was arranged, ranging from fairly formal lectures to excursions and "Ten Minute Papers" - lecturettes prepared and delivered by the students themselves - on subjects such as "The Poem That Attracts Me Most And Why It Does So,"

1.
Ibid, p.2.

2.
Thirty-fourth Annual Report, Y.U.E.S., 1908-1909, p.3.

"Browning's Women," and "Popularity." A loan library, stocked mostly with books from Cambridge University, was also available to the students in their quarters at St. William's College.

Inevitably, perhaps, following the peak attendances of 1910, a fall in attendance set in and finance began to be a problem again. The additional expenses of the Summer Meeting had been met by special subscription, but nevertheless a small deficit was now showing. By the session 1913-1914 this deficit had increased and numbers, attending classes, though quite good at evening lectures still, had dropped considerably. The Students' Association Meetings also recorded a drop in attendance and showed only an average attendance of 16 persons including visitors. This was no doubt a difficult period for the Society. Political feeling was running high and there were meetings of a political nature in the city which attracted people away from their usual loyalties. No records are available for the period 1914 - 1918 and it seems likely that the activities of the Society were suspended during these war years.

After the 1914 - 1918 war the first (and only) report available shows lectures were held on much the same lines as before the war. The two courses were "The Inspiration of Greece" and "The Evolution of Land Forms," and attendance was 234 at the Michaelmas Evening Term Lectures, Class 24, and in the Lent Term, Lectures 112, Class 7. The Lecturer's Report on this post-war period read -

"The work at York was most encouraging. The attendance was excellent, the small class was interested and interesting, and the audience enthusiastic. The paper-work though disappointing by pre-war standards was better than elsewhere." 1.

The Students' Association remained in existence and on 16th October, 1920 heard a lecture by Mr. W. H. Young, H.M.I. on

1.
Forty Sixth Annual Report, Y.U.E.S., 1920-1921, p.1.

"Plato's Theory of Education and the York Scheme." Unfortunately, no record of this lecture is available for it would have made interesting reading to see what influence, in Mr. Young's opinion, Plato had had on the Local Education Authority's re-organisation of education in the city in 1920 !

By this time, however, there were some indications that the University Extension Movement was about to be superseded by the next phase in the attempt to bring a university-type education to those who could never hope to attend a university full time.

York Education Committee had already been presented with an opinion as to the value of extension classes ... "we think Courses of University Extension Lectures can form a useful part of our educational provision for adolescents and adults and we propose to give a block grant to this Society for each approved University Course."^{1.} The York University Extension Society, however, did not appear to receive this grant. Instead the Local Education Authority began to support the Lectures Syndicate of Cambridge University and the Tutorial Classes of Leeds University. The Cambridge University Courses, Scientific Progress in Recent Times, Elementary Economics, and the Economical Industrial History of England in the 18th and 19th centuries were held one each year from 1919 to 1922 and were advertised in the Prospectus for Evening Schools. Leeds Tutorial Classes started in 1920 with a Literature Course and then added Philosophy and finally a History Course. To these three year Tutorial Classes the Authority made a grant of £25 per year for each class and continued to give some financial assistance to similar classes even after the 1924 Adult Education Regulations were brought in.

Thus the work of the University Extension Movement in the city

1.
Scheme of Education for York under the Education Act 1918,
Third Draft - York, 19 July, 1920, p.4.

was absorbed into Tutorial Classes held by the W.E.A. in conjunction with Leeds University, and by the direct descendant of extension, extra-mural classes which from about 1927 onwards have been mostly held on the premises of York Educational Settlement under the aegis of Hull University.

Although enduring benefit might have been gained by only a minority of students, as the number of certificates gained in comparison with the number of tickets issued was small, there is no doubt that University Extension was in several respects an improvement on its predecessors in adult education. Firstly, it had a wider appeal and attracted greater numbers; secondly, the academic standard of the teaching was, comparatively speaking, quite high; thirdly, examination was conducted by an external, impartial, relatively competent body. Furthermore attendance at extension lectures was more than it seemed - it was in effect a demonstration of the students' own individual dignity and their social aspiration. An early worker for University Extension Classes wrote in 1894 that -

"The aim of University Extension is to create as many student citizens as possible, not primarily for the purpose of raising the market value of the individual, but to add that fulness and dignity to life which makes for the well-being of the community."

1.

While it may be considered that University Extension Classes offered little more than vicarious academic experience and that the whole movement was firmly esconced in middle-class respectability, it was nevertheless a creditable attempt, within limited finances to "cover the country with a network of educational agency,"^{2.} which strengthened the case for the spread of permanent universities into the provinces.

1. R. D. Roberts, University Extension: Its Past and Its Future, op. cit., p.4.

2. Ibid, p.4.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOCAL AUTHORITY EVENING SCHOOLS

LOCAL AUTHORITY EVENING SCHOOLSTHE CITY 1870 - 1902

Between these dates York continued to expand. New development reached a peak in 1879, by which time three large industries - cocoa and confectionery, flour milling and the manufacture of railway materials had firmly established themselves. Conditions for the working classes including the provision of elementary education, improved tremendously and the population increased rapidly between 1870 - 1902. In 1871 the inhabitants numbered 43,796 and in 1901 77,793. Modern industrial buildings now stood alongside well preserved examples of Gothic architecture and a new bridge - Lendal Bridge - spanned the river near the Guildhall. This mixture of old and new at the dawn of the 20th century heralded a new spirit distinguished within the city by a new, determined progressive attitude linked to tradition. Though there is some dispute in educational circles as to whether it was an entirely good thing the vastly superior resources and political strength of the State began to make itself felt over the patchwork system of education sponsored by various religious denominations. The culmination of the rising strength of the State was realised in the 1902 Act by which time the Government Education Department was strong enough to emerge as the dominant central power with the County Councils and County Boroughs as its agents. The extent and strength of the Voluntary Schools in York was a main factor contributing to the late coming into existence of the York School Board that had been set up under the powers granted by the 1870 Education Act which was designed to introduce a national system of elementary education under the direction of local School Boards. That the strength of the Voluntary Schools had waned seriously by 1887, however, there is no doubt, for the Department and the local bodies agreed that there was a deficiency of 478 school places

in the city and Joseph Rowntree made the following statement on the condition of education in York: "When my brother was Lord Mayor of the City he made enquiry as to the school accommodation, and came to the conclusion that since Mr. Foster's measure was passed many hundreds of children had grown up and passed the school age in York without having received an elementary education."^{1.}

In 1889 the York School Board came into existence when there were within the city thirty-one public elementary schools, of which fourteen were Church schools. Only a public body could deal with problems such as siting schools where the population growth was greatest and making provision for further municipal growth and development, therefore these problems became the responsibility of the School Board. To the School Board then fell the task of supplying school places in areas deficient in "efficient, suitable, public" accommodation though it appeared to have been its own judge of the extent of that duty.^{2.} Obviously, to carry out its duties and dispense the elementary education required of it, a considerable building programme was necessary which was financed partly out of the rates and partly by direct Government grant. One result of the School Board was that the subsequent improvement in the quality of elementary school education and the enforcement of day school attendance finally put an end to the effective contribution of the Sunday Schools to general elementary education, though their religious and moral functions remained. Nevertheless, the importance of their contribution to adult education and in particular to the Adult Schools should not be under-estimated. As this door closed, there began to arise a need for education beyond the elementary school leaving age and so the door to Evening Continuation classes

1.

York National School Society - cutting from York Herald, 24 May, 1887 reporting Joint Meeting. Also Society Minutes, 30 October, 1887.

2.

Elementary Education Act, 1870, section 18.

opened. This was to lead to another phase in the eventual development of liberal adult education.

From about 1890, by which time the effects of the 1870 Education Act were generally beginning to be noticed, the quickening change in education which was taking place in the latter part of the 19th century began to accelerate as many of the former serious deficiencies in the state system of education were overcome. For both officialdom and the general public, education began to take on a broader meaning. School libraries grew, children's sections of libraries became separated from adult sections, medical clinics were established in schools and organised games and out of school activities such as school camps were encouraged. Moreover, school-leavers could now officially look forward to advice and assistance from the Local Education Authority. The Act of 1902 also ensured, by giving financial help to old Foundations in return for a measure of control, that long established schools providing a good standard of education did not go under in the face of competition from Council Schools. Girls also could, at last, receive a sound secondary schooling.

THE FIRST LOCAL AUTHORITY EVENING SCHOOLS

As early as the middle of the 19th century there had been an attempt by the denominational schools in York to provide some evening classes. "The second of a very interesting series of lectures to be delivered in connection with the Walmgate and Manor Night Schools was delivered at the latter place on Thursday evening last by W. Procter, Esq. on 'Chemistry and the Natural History of Water.' The lecture was illustrated by some interesting experiments^{1.} and listened to with attention." As the government gave no grant for pupils under the age of twelve or over the age of eighteen,

1.

The Yorkshire Gazette, 5 November, 1859.

however, it is hardly surprising that Evening Schools found it difficult to survive. So serious was this situation that a report in 1887 indicated that the municipally provided evening school in the North of England was almost extinct. Certainly York itself had no such schools in existence at this time.

By 1889 regional pressure led to an attempt to redress this state of affairs and resulted in the passing of the Technical Instruction Act which gave Borough and County Councils power to apply this branch of education. York Corporation, which had acquired the Mechanics' Institute and the Exhibition Buildings in 1891, began to conduct two Schools of Art - one being held in each of these two places. Some classes were also held in technical instruction as local industry began to exert demand for it.^{1.} The careful, co-ordinated, centralised organisation which had improved the elementary day schools was now needed in the evening school sector of educational provision in the city. Evening classes designed more as further education rather than an attempt to redress the deficiencies of the day schools by evening classes were envisaged.

On the 23 November, 1893, the Yorkshire Evening Press carried the following announcement in its local news column.^{2.} "The School Board for the city is giving another proof of its energy by the establishment of evening continuation schools. A series of classes for young people, as well as for those who are no longer young, will be held at both the Shipton and George Street Board Schools. Everything will be done to interest the students and to brighten the introduction. It will be cordially hoped that these classes will render valuable aid to those who wish to fit themselves for the more advanced instruction given in the Technical schools, and

1. City of York School Board, First Triennial Report, 1889-1891, p.20.

2. See also Appendix No.III.

citizens having the welfare of young people at heart will recommend these classes." The classes referred to in the above report may therefore be regarded as the first evening classes to be arranged by the local authority in York. Their prime raison d'être was obviously to supplement the day school education, but at the same time, by providing an instruction free of charge, and giving consideration to a "brighter" than usual presentation, there was a deliberate attempt to attract an adult element and encourage a long term approach to education. The chairman of the sub-committee on Evening Continuation Schools said:-

"I trust that these continuation schools will be of great value and appreciated, and that those who avail themselves of the advantages they offer will so continue their education that they will be able to step from the continuation schools to the Technical schools, and carry 1.
on their education for years to come."

THE ACLAND CODE

Prior to the 1890 Education Act, those Evening Continuation Schools which existed were obliged to dispense elementary education to a prescribed standard in each of seven grades. The Government Grant allotted to the school depended upon the results of examinations in reading, writing and arithmetic for each standard. The 1890 Act removed the restriction requiring the Evening Schools to provide only elementary education and allowed them to excuse examination to scholars who had attained a Standard V pass in their day schools.

It was possibly due to the new Code of 1893, which was introduced by Mr. A. H. D. Acland, Vice-Principal of the Committee of Council, that the York School Board was encouraged to introduce their Evening Continuation Schools. Acland had realised that the limitations which had been imposed upon the Evening Schools had

1.
Yorkshire Gazette, 2 December, 1893.

stunted any further development and he had sufficient vision to see the wider educational possibilities that these schools could offer if only they could be divorced from the regulations applying to the day schools. It was his idea that they should be in a position to give a new sense of purpose to their adolescent members and open up much wider horizons in the arts and sciences for young and old alike. His stated objective in introducing the new Code was to give "freedom to managers in the organisation of their schools, offering to managers and teachers a wide choice of subjects adapted to the various needs of scholars and districts, and of enabling managers to combine instruction in subjects for which grants are paid by the State with instruction in other subjects for which no such grants are paid, but which it may be desirable to include in the curriculum."^{1.} To further the achieving of this objective the following measures were implemented in the schools. The examination in the "Standards" was abolished; the grant for the year was to be based on the efficiency of the school as a whole, not on the individual attainment of its scholars; examination by the Inspector on a fixed day was replaced by periodic visits of inspection without notice; students over the age of twenty-one would be recognised for grants and no-one would be compelled to take "elementary" subjects.

The immediate result of these measures is reported in the press account of the meeting of the York School Board following the inception of the Evening Schools at which the Chairman made the following statement.

1.

Evening Continuation School Code, 1893.

"With regard to the Evening Continuation Schools there had been 428 candidates enrolled at Shipton Street Centre and 330 at the George Street Centre a total of 758. That, he thought, fully demonstrated that these schools were really a necessity in York, and had been a great want. As to the staffing of these schools, teachers had been engaged at a rate of remuneration to which the most economical person could not be disposed to take exception. With the liberal grant from the Education Department the cost of these Continuation schools would be practically nothing to the city."

1.

While this quotation indicates, perhaps, an undue satisfaction on the Chairman's part with the cheapness at which the "great want" had been supplied, nevertheless his report indicated an initial success by the Evening Schools. Moreover, as the actual number of class enrolments during that first period was 2,404 (as many students attended more than one class) 651 of which were listed as Juniors attending the Arithmetic, Writing and Shorthand classes only.

2.

The Second Triennial Report of the York School Board for the years 1891 - 1894 makes the following comment about the Evening Schools:

"The instruction given having been much appreciated, it was decided to continue the courses in 1894 ... and to open a new Centre at the Priory Street School which was engaged for this purpose, the occasion extending from 1 October, 1894 to 31 March, 1895."

3.

French and Drawing had been added to the list of subjects and once more attention in this report was drawn to the cost of provision which reflected the new policy outlined in the 1893 Code.

"The instruction given in the Evening Schools is practically free, a fee of only 1s. being charged on entry, which is returned at the end of the Session to those students making sufficient attendances to earn the Government Grant."

4.

1. Yorkshire Herald, 6 January, 1894.

2. See Appendix No. IV.

3. 2nd Triennial Report, York School Board, 1891-1894, p.25.

4. 2nd Triennial Report, York School Board, 1891-1894, p.26.

Although ls. may have been a considerable sum to many of the students they were allowed to pay weekly and there was the added incentive of having the whole fee returned at the end of the course on fulfilment of an attendance minimum. The report concluded, "The reports of H.M. Inspector speak of the instruction as thoroughly sound and suitable, and that the scholars were always orderly and much interested in their work."^{1.} However, Mr. Colson, H.M.I., visited the classes at Shipton Street six times and suggested that "one or two more attractive subjects such as "Woodwork, Ambulance Work" could be sandwiched between the elementary subjects which would improve the curriculum. The most popular subjects, he found,^{2.} were Music and Book-keeping.

In 1895 the population of York was just over 70,000 but only 687 students enrolled at the three centres during that year and, of these, over a quarter fell away before the session ended. Despite the publicity given to the Continuation Schools and the very low charges imposed at that time, the Board was failing to attract sufficient students to its centres. While, in fairness, it must be stated that a particularly bad winter in 1894 had provided unusual opportunities for skating "which proved a temptation during the early part of the year and the attendance suffered in consequence,"^{3.} the matter was considered urgent enough to be raised at the Board's September meeting.

"Mr. Leetham, speaking on the general question of Evening Schools, pointed out the loss which arose by the failure of students to put in the requisite number of attendances. Out of 687 entering for the three centres last year, 206 failed to attend and the Board lost the Grant accordingly. If those students had attended better the Board would have obtained £50 more Grant, and their deficit would have been reduced by 25 per cent."

4.

1. Ibid, p.26.
2. York School Board Minutes, 6 September, 1895, p.79.
3. Ibid, p.80 (See Appendix IV for enrolment figures).
4. Yorkshire Herald, 7 September, 1895.

Subsequently, as a result of this concern, classes securing less than twenty students initially, or falling below twelve in average attendance were discontinued. These severe restrictions afford some explanation for sessionally low enrolment figures which did not include students who joined classes which either failed to form or which subsequently closed.

Although sailing close to the wind financially, mostly because of their poor enrolment figures, the Evening Schools continued to operate along much the same lines and maintained similar programmes.^{1.} By early 1897 some of their work had been transferred to newly built schools and four centres in Shipton Street, Park Grove, Fishergate and Scarcroft Board Schools were well established. The Board's financial difficulties became more acute, however, and it became obvious some pruning would have to be carried out. It fell to the lot of Mr. Leetham to bring the matter before the Board at their meeting on 2 April, 1897. He pointed out that they had to provide for an abnormal year's expenditure. They had on hand the equipment of the new Scarcroft School and other important works. That being so, he felt justified in assuring the Board that this year the expenditure would be of a reduced nature. The Finance Committee's estimate of expenditure for the ensuing year was £17,015. Towards this they expected to receive £7,899 including a balance in hand of £964. This would leave a deficiency of £9,115. The writing was already on the wall when the Sheriff of York, also present at the meeting, said that he only wished to point out "instances where he believed a saving could be made - Evening Schools and books and apparatus."^{2.}

1.
See Appendices V, VI.

2.
Yorkshire Herald, 3 April, 1897.

After receipt of the particularly poor enrolment figures for the Session 1896 - 1897 the Board put into effect a plan to reduce the cost of the Evening Schools. This was:-

"to work the schools under two Centres, grouping Fishergate and Scarcroft as one centre, and Park Grove and Shipton Street as another. Instead of four days, as in some schools before, they would not have only two days a week in each. The approval of the Education Department had not yet been received, though the scheme had been before them for a fortnight. By the new arrangement they were saving nearly 50 per cent in the 1. salaries and the facilities were practically the same."

Attendance figures for the next three years after the plan was put into operation demonstrated that the facilities were patently not the same, however, for enrolments fell dramatically from 1,864 in 1896 to 1,051 in 1897 and to only 780 in 1898. In three years, 2. therefore, numbers attending had been cut by 58 per cent. Factors contributing towards this dismal attempt at economy were that, although the classes offered were certainly unchanged no subject taught at Scarcroft, for example, was also taught at Fishergate. To avoid duplication all the subjects available were divided between the two schools making up one Centre. As each school was situated about one mile away from its twin, two to the North of the City and two to the South their geographical location would have involved a great deal of travelling. Moreover, the situation was aggravated by the fact that the centres were only open on two evenings each week.

The attempted saving was unfortunately a false economy and one which the Department of Education had been suspicious of, for they had replied to the York School Board's request for approval and stated that they were unable to agree to the scheme. There was, however, a carefully worded let-out clause which the Board had taken

1. Yorkshire Herald, 11 September, 1897.

2. See Appendix IV.

advantage of -

"The Chairman stated at the October meeting of the Board, 1897, that he had received a letter with regard to the Evening Continuation Schools, and the Education Department informed them that they were unable to concur in the arrangement for working the classes with two Centres for the four schools, though they gave no good reason for it. They could, however, work the four Centres on the same lines and at the same expenditure as they could the two Centres."

1.

Later in his speech the Chairman further announced that the response to the circulars announcing the classes had been extremely disappointing, and that unless the entries came in great numbers they would have to call the Committee together again to consider what steps could be taken.

His worst fears were realised when only 496 individuals enrolled for classes in the season 1897 - 1898 and so the Finance Committee was convened to discuss the problem. They reported to the Board meeting on 2 September, 1898 and recommended:

"that the Evening Schools should be carried on this session at the Fishergate, Park Grove and Scarcroft Centres only, the Shipton Street Centre to be discontinued. The three Centres would meet the wants of the City, and would be less expensive. The only hardship connected with the change was that the number of teachers would have to be decreased. Miss Wilkinson (who seconded the motion) said that the Shipton Street School evening classes had been closed only on the grounds of economy, and not because of any dissatisfaction with their management."

2.

When the Shipton Street Centre closed in 1898 the three remaining Centres became autonomous once again. The dismal downward trend of enrolments continued, however, reaching their lowest ever figure in the 1898 session when only 400 students entered their names. Not surprisingly for the 1899 session the Committee felt that as "The number of pupils was continually diminishing ... it would be very hazardous to go back to four Centres."

3.

Despite the

1.

Yorkshire Herald, 2 October, 1897.

2.

Yorkshire Herald, 3 September, 1898.

3.

Yorkshire Herald, 2 September, 1899.

poor response the Chairman was moved to express the hope that as the charges were so reasonable, and the classes offered were so well run and interesting, that "the young people of the city will come forward in sufficient numbers to form classes in the various subjects. We propose also from time to time to give entertainments at which lectures on some historical, geographical or science subject will be given."^{1.} The mention of science is interesting and it was obviously beginning to emerge as a popular subject for study. In fact Scarcroft Centre had begun a series of classes in Inorganic Chemistry, Physiography and Hygiene, the latter two subjects being mainly intended for Pupil Teachers and Assistants. Students were prepared for the South Kensington Science examinations and a 3s.6d. course fee was charged. A laboratory offering practical facilities was also set up in premises just off Holgate Hill to provide Saturday morning classes about this time. This interest in science demonstrated the beginning of a movement towards direct vocational training in Evening Schools and was to affect the future development of York's Evening Centres, particularly that of Scarcroft.

In view of the poor enrolment and the consequent financial difficulties already referred to, it is strange that in 1900 the Fourth Triennial Report of the York School Board made no mention of these problems. The report merely stated that:

"The Evening Continuation Classes ... have been carried on successfully during the past three years, and Her Majesty's Inspector in his reports has always spoken of the satisfactory progress made in all the subjects taught, and described the schools as being ably conducted, and that order and tone are admirable." 2.

1.
Ibid.
2.
4th Triennial Report, York School Board, 1898 - 1900, p.37.

The avoidance of lengthier comment suggests it was deliberate policy on the Board's part to avoid drawing attention to the uninspiring state of its Evening Schools, in an attempt to ensure their continuance until either a remedy could be found to invigorate them, or some alternative arose.

The preliminary notes which introduced the 1900 - 1901 session of the York School Board Evening Continuation Schools set out clearly, in a 15 page brochure, the objectives of these schools. They re-affirmed that the Evening Schools were established to continue the Day School education of those over 14 years of age, or younger if exempt from the legal obligation to attend a day school. It was also claimed that the Evening Schools "offer exceptional facilities to older students who wish to improve their education." These 'exceptional facilities' were: Writing and Composition, Arithmetic and Drawing at an elementary stage, (primarily for young people from the Day Schools for which the fee was still 3s. payable at 1d. per week. Shorthand, Mensuration, Book-keeping, French and Woodwork, however, were classified as 'Advanced Subjects' and the fee charged for these subjects was 2s.

In the 1900 - 1901 session new regulations affecting the number of classes it was possible to attend were put into force. Whereas, previously, students had had to take not less than two and not more than five subjects, now students were able to "receive instruction in one or not more than five of the subjects mentioned in the timetable." The particular emphasis on attendance and punctuality in this brochure obviously bears testimony to the urgent necessity to improve attendance figures. The Board had apparently decided to put the blunt facts before prospective students for the prospectus stated that:

"The ordinary classes continue each evening for two hours. The lessons given are of one hour's duration. If unable to be present at the first hour's lessons students can be admitted to the second hour's lesson. The Government Grant payable to the Board by the Education Department (which assists in meeting the cost of maintenance of Evening Schools) is dependent mainly upon the exertions of the scholars, and they are asked to assist in earning this Grant - FIRST - by attending most regularly the classes chosen by them with the object of completing as many sets of 12 hours attendances in each subject possible, for which a Grant is received of either 1s. or 1.6d. per student for each set completed - SECOND - by attending punctually and thus securing the full attendance of one hour or two hours as the case may be, at each meeting of the school." 1.

Moreover, the last paragraph in this section of the prospectus used a psychological ploy to appeal to the loyalty of the students to "assist the Teachers by fostering among each other an esprit de corps for the Welfare of the School." 2.

Some extracts from the subject syllabuses of this period will serve to give a fair indication of the content of the courses. In Arithmetic the instruction given -

"is determined to a large extent by the individual needs of the students: as far as possible the practical bearing of Arithmetic upon the ordinary transactions of business and mercantile life is kept prominently in view. Writing and Composition place much emphasis on Penmanship and Spelling. Exercises in Dictation are occasionally taken whilst Copy Book and Letter Writing are regularly practised." 3.

Woodwork comprised "a series of exercises performed with all the ordinary carpentry tools carefully graduated and embodied in a set of models characterised by being useful articles." 4. The prospectus's idea of 'useful articles' it appears was: plant labels, square flower sticks, flat rulers, string winders, flower-pot crosses and paper knives. The exceptional student could, however, end up with a nail box, towel roller or soap box!

1. Prospectus of York Evening Continuation Schools, York School Board, 1900, p.2.
2. Ibid, p.3.
3. Ibid, p.7.
4. Ibid, p.9.

1902 saw the return too of Dressmaking and Cookery classes, both of which had been absent from the prospectus in 1900, but they merited a fee of 3s. despite being conducted at the Park Grove Centre by uncertificated teachers. The Cookery Course comprised "Twenty Lectures on Household and Middle Class Cookery: Invalid Cookery: Vegetarian Dishes: Management of Stores." To bring relief to the programme lantern lectures - short descriptive lectures illustrated by limelight views - were arranged once a month in each centre and were free to all students. At the same time the Scarcroft Centre enjoyed considerable success with its students who had entered for the South Kensington examinations in Science and Art. It had also inaugurated a Sick Nursing and Ambulance Course, under the auspices of the St. John's Ambulance Association, which awarded certificates to its successful students. Judging by the cookery course title it seems that once again the middle class was being appealed to and the working class excluded. The Process so familiar in the voluntary institutions seems also to have been at work in the Authority provided ones.

By 1903 when the new City of York Education Committee took over the administration of education within the city, the Evening Schools seemed to have safely weathered the doldrums. Numbers enrolling for classes still fluctuated between 600 - 900 which represented less than 2 per cent in any one year of the City's population at that time - a factor which was to have some significance in future developments when it appeared in a later report by the Inspectorate. In addition to three industrious Evening Centres the Committee also took over the work of the Technical Instruction Committee of the City Council... This was the body which had held Schools of Art and Science plus commercial classes in the Exhibition Buildings and the

1.

Institute in Clifford Street. There were two independent Schools of Art and Science which conducted classes principally for Art - namely the Exhibition School of Art in St. Leonard's Place and the Institute of Art at Clifford Street. In addition to the Evening Classes held in York's three Evening Centres, classes were also held at the Model School attached to St. John's College and at St. George's Roman Catholic School. Also at this time the vocational evening class held at the Railway Institute, which had been established in 1900 by the North Eastern Railway Company to provide technical and further education for its employees, were brought into line with the work being done in the municipal evening institutes and provision in the city began to assume a more coherent pattern after the initial period of largely individual effort.

YORK EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Act passed in 1902, though controversial in several aspects, nevertheless should be considered of major importance in the history of Education in the country, for it provided the foundation for the development of Secondary Education and established an administrative pattern for the future. One important effect of this Act was the replacement of School Boards and Technical Instruction Committees by Education Committees which were appointed by the County and County Borough Councils. By 30 September, 1903, after some initial problems had been overcome, York's new Education Committee was installed in office. The local press ran a long obituary which outlined the fourteen years of educational work which had been administered by the York School Board. However, the press did see at least one advantage in the new system for they pointed out

1.

Statement - Art Schools and Technical Classes carried on by the late Technical Instruction Committee; submitted to the Higher Education Sub-Committee on 13 October, 1903.

that:

"One important result of the transfer of the work to the City Council is the freedom which the new Act confers on the Authority to further develop their evening classes and continuation schools. The Cockerton judgement, which made it necessary for the leave of Council to be obtained, was a stumbling block which could only be got over with difficulty, and this important branch of the work should in the future go steadily forward 1. ... with a free hand it is probable that the new authority will be able to increase the popularity of this valuable section of the late Board's work." 2.

In common with most L.E.A's. at this period York was busy trying to lay a solid foundation of secondary schooling, but not until after 1910 were there substantial numbers of post-secondary school pupils in the city who had a sound basic education. Vigorous efforts to improve secondary education in the city were being made in 1903 and 1904 and it seems likely, that no important changes in policy or curriculum took place in the York Evening Schools during these years because priority was given to developing secondary education.

It was to be the Evening Schools, however, which were to provide the principal means of further education for many working class people. The Evening Schools became the responsibility of the Higher Education Sub-Committee which also administered Secondary, Technical and Art Education and at the time had three main functions. Firstly, to provide for the continuing education of the elementary school leaver, secondly, to prepare young persons for technical training, and thirdly, to arrange series of general courses for adults, mainly in women's subjects.

In 1904 a very important decision was taken by York Education Authority. On the advice of Mr. Hartley, H.M.I., it was decided to

1. See H. J. Edwards, The Evening Institute (London, 1961) for a short but informative account of the effect of the Cockerton Judgement on evening classes, Chap.3 passim.

2. Yorkshire Herald, 17 October, 1903.

separate vocational classes from the non-vocational and recreational pursuits being taught in the York Evening Schools. The intention was, "to alter the curricula of the evening schools carried on at Fishergate, Park Grove and Scarcroft Schools, by confining the two former schools to Elementary instruction only, and providing the more advanced instruction at Scarcroft."¹ As a result Scarcroft Evening Centre began its separate development and eventually became the largest evening school operating in the City. Individual enrolments at Scarcroft rose from 231 in 1904 to 615 in 1912. Part of this increase was, perhaps, due to the new subjects which appeared in the Scarcroft prospectus after the re-organisation. These were: German, English Composition, Dressmaking for Teachers, Commercial Correspondence and Office Routine, Commercial Geography and History, English Literature, Commercial Arithmetic and Millinery. In its first Triennial Report the Education Committee acknowledged the successful new developments at Scarcroft:

"This is a well conducted Evening School. The Students work under excellent conditions; the rooms are well lighted, and an adequate equipment is provided in all the subjects undertaken. The teaching is thoroughly efficient and the students, as a rule, do good homework."

2.

The Committee attached great importance to the matter of homework and in the Prospectus laid great stress on its value. The Prospectus stipulated that a Certificate of Study would be awarded at the end of each session to every student who had achieved 80 per cent of the possible attendances and stated that -

"to ensure satisfactory progress it is essential that students should attend with the utmost regularity the classes for which they are enrolled, and that they should devote sufficient time at home to the careful and systematic preparation of the exercises set by the teachers."

3.

1. First Triennial Report, York Education Committee, 1903-1906, p.17.
2. Ibid, p.21.
3. Prospectus of Evening Schools, 1905-1906, p.4.

In view of the very limited free time available to workers in that period the Committee was really adding an additional burden to the part-time study, which already consumed a considerable proportion of their free time. The Committee went even further in a directive about homework under the heading of "Attendance", where it was stated that:

"It is a condition of attendance at these classes that Homework should be done by every student, which will be properly tested, and Head Teachers may, at their discretion, refuse to allow a student to continue in attendance who fails in this respect, and such a student's fee will be forfeited." 1.

It appears that the new Certificate of Study assumed some value, for it came to be required of students seeking employment. It was regarded as proof of having attained a certain level of education and also entitled the possessor of such a Certificate to free admission to the Advanced stage for the succeeding year's work in the subject for which it had been issued. It was, therefore, in the student's own interest to try and accomplish the tasks set as homework.

A new class which was offered in the 1904 - 1905 session and not subsequently repeated sheds light on the living conditions amongst the working class of that day, and reveals a deliberate attempt on the part of the authorities to improve standards of hygiene and cleanliness within the home. The course on 'Laundry' was arranged for 12 weeks for a fee of 3s. and the lessons were alternatively demonstration and practice and covered the following aspects of the subject:

Properties and use of water, soap, salt and ammonia.

Making boiled starch.

Washing flannels, handkerchiefs, stockings, lace and muslin.

Disinfecting and removing stains.

Washing print, silk, fancy work, chintz, goffering.

Damping, folding and ironing body linen.

Ironing and polishing starched linen-collars and cuffs.

The use of Turpentine, wax and borax.

Mangling and drying, cleaning and heating of irons.

Also in 1905, Park Grove Centre, which was housed in one of the new Elementary Schools, promoted a new course in Woodwork and the use of tools. This was intended for Teachers who were preparing for the City and Guilds examinations. The cost of this 2½ hour course to York residents was 7s. and 14s. to nearby country teachers, though in both cases this relatively high fee could be reclaimed from the employing authority.

At the Fishergate Centre, a class containing a considerable artistic element was offered under the title of Woodcarving. It too was fairly expensive at 15s. but students were able to use Centre tools and were taught the intricacies of ornamental chip carving, decorative relief work and carving. The course was spread over two years and students were "strongly advised to take up the subject of Clay Modelling as an aid to Carving."^{1.}

By the time the 1906 - 1907 session arrived, the Prospectus for Evening Schools had swollen to 40 pages and was subsidised by eight full pages of advertisements from local businesses. There was yet another innovation which was an enterprising and constructive attempt to forge a connecting link between the Day and Evening Schools and establish the habit of continuing education. In its Annual Report the Education Committee had instructed Head Teachers of the Public Elementary Schools to impress on each child about to leave school, the advantages to be derived from enrolling as a

1.

Prospectus of Evening Schools, 1905-1906, p.18.

student at one of the Centres. Each child on leaving full time day school was given a card which entitled him to free admission to an Evening School course of instruction.^{1.} He was also presented with a prospectus to encourage him to choose a suitable class.

By this time the fee structure had become a complex scale ranging from 1s. to 5d. and, for no apparent reason, distinguished among subjects, thus creating for the present day reader strange anomalies such as Writing and Composition 1s, English Composition, Commercial Correspondence 3s. While Commercial Arithmetic and French cost 3s.6d. each, German was much more expensive at 5s. Shorthand, Typewriting, Book-keeping and Music, however, cost only 2s. This apparently illogical scale of fees must have caused annoyance and confusion to the public and headaches for the administrators. The teaching staff employed in the Centres during this period were being paid at the rate of 10s. per evening for the Head Teacher and 3s.6d. per hour for his assistants.

In 1907 the Education Committee decided that it should be compulsory for young people who had just left the Day Schools, and who were attending Evening Classes, to take a general course of instruction in English, Commercial Arithmetic and Drawing. Alternatively these students could follow a special course in Commercial or Technical subjects - the Commercial Course. The basic course in English was common to all three Centres. It consisted of Essay and Letter Writing, the rules of correct speaking and writing, and, (as a liberalising element?) a study of selections from one of the standard poets. The Preparatory Technical Course though, was held at Scarcroft Centre only and was basically Geometry and Technical Drawing plus a general course of Elementary Science, based on Chemistry and Physics which was treated theoretically and practically.

1.
Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1906-1907, p.9.

Scarcroft Centre had also organised a new class in "Citizenship", which proved so popular that it was repeated the following year. The syllabus of this class covered the Rights and Duties of Citizenship, Local Government and Administration, Executive Government, The Legislature, The Judicial System, Direct and Indirect Taxation and the Budget. The separate elements of this class in themselves constituted a course which was much more imaginative, much closer to the kind of course offered by the W.E.A., and much nearer the general conception of a liberal education than most other subjects in the same programme. Unfortunately, however, it did not herald the beginning of more enlightened provision. Another class entitled "Manual Instruction in Metal for Men and Women" - described as an Elementary Course which would not include any exercises necessitating the use of Forge or Brazier - predictably received not a single enrolment nor was it offered again the next year.

The Committee realised the advertising appeal of Exhibitions of Work and in the 1907 - 1908 prospectus announced that such an Exhibition of Students' Work would be held at the end of that session. The Exhibition was obviously a successful innovation for thereafter it became an "Annual Event". Some form of advertisement which would encourage more people to attend the centres was obviously necessary in this period, for in reporting on the work of the Centres for 1907 - 1908 session an Inspector had stated that, while the work done was of a satisfactory standard, the enrolment figures were poor in relation to the population of the City which was at that time about 78,000. The figures quoted for the number of students on roll in that session were as follows:

Fishergate	- 282
Park Grove	- 341
Scarcroft	- 562
Public Library Buildings	- 50
Railway Institute	- 367
	<hr/>
Total	1,602
	<hr/>

The report went on to state that -

"This total is equivalent to just over 2 per cent of the population which is considerably below the average for a number of towns in the North of England comparable in size with York."

1.

Further suggestions made in the same report were that improvements should be made for the provision of suitable accommodation for Technical Education - for it had been pointed out that the North Eastern Railway Company could hardly be expected to enlarge its premises (The Railway Institute), ^{2.} to cater for the Technical Education of the city as a whole. In a York newspaper report in 1904 it was reported that the Committee had indeed acknowledged its debt to the Railway Institute which was attended by 490 students and which they thought "was doing a good work, and one which the Committee could not undertake at present, and it was entitled to help." ^{2.} In fact help to the extent of £50 in respect of educational provision and £75 towards the conversion of old premises at the Institute into a laboratory and was made by the Education Committee.

REORGANISATION

In the 1908 - 1909 session the Committee took the reorganisation of the Evening Schools curricula one stage further. In its Annual Report it had been written that -

1.

A short account of the work done in the Railway Institute is given in a later chapter.

2.

Yorkshire Herald, 11 June, 1904, Report of Education Committee Meeting.

"past experience has shown that when students were allowed to take up single subjects they were unable to make the progress which was expected of them owing to the imperfect state of their education. The Committee desire to remedy this in future by requiring students to produce a certificate stating that they have attended a two years' preliminary course before they are admitted to ... the Committee's Technical Classes."

1.

In the Committee's attempt to solve a problem which had earlier bedevilled the Mechanics' Institutes and the Adult Schools there was, however, an unfortunate anomaly. This was that Railway Institute students of any age were allowed to take the single subject of Shorthand or enter the Engineering classes without passing through a Preparatory Trade Course. The result was that a conference was held early in 1909 when representatives of the Board of Education, the York City Education Committee and the North-Eastern Railway Company were present. The object of the meeting was to secure better co-ordination between the classes in the City's Evening Schools and those in the Railway Institute and to define the place of the Railway Institute in the scheme of further education for the City.

Subsequently it was decided that young people under the age of 17 would, therefore, no longer be able to take up single subjects but would be required to choose one of the three courses of instruction: Commercial, Artisan or Domestic. No student would be allowed to attend Technical classes unless he had successfully completed the Artisan course at one of the Committee's Evening Schools. The new policy for those under 17 years of age was clearly set out in the 50 page Prospectus of Evening Schools for 1908 - 1909 which included photographs of the Science Laboratory and the Handicrafts Centre at Scarcroft School.

1. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1907 - 1908, p.11.

A new Commercial Course of four year's duration covered Commercial Arithmetic, Commercial Practice and Office Routine, English, Shorthand, Book-keeping, French and German. The fourth year of this course was not explained in detail but was to include Accountancy, Law, Economics and Statistics, Banking and Currency. The Artisan Course replaced and enlarged upon the Preparatory Technical Course, which had been introduced a year earlier, by adding English Composition and English Literature to the syllabus. The two years' Domestic Course for Girls covered the whole range of Household Management, English essay and letter writing, English Literature, Cookery, Dressmaking and Millinery. Students in this course were allowed a choice of one subject from the final three. It seems curious that the Commercial Course apparently merited no liberalising element, while the Artisan and Domestic Courses which might have been expected to be mundanely practical contained English Literature and English Essay Writing. It would be interesting to know what, if any, thinking lay behind the decision to offer such a feature in the courses.

EVENING CONTINUATION CLASSES

It seems clear, therefore, that the re-organisation described above led to a shift of emphasis in the work carried out by the Evening Schools which committed them thereafter to the provision of essentially vocational training for youths and girls. Single subjects were still offered for persons of the age of 17, though these followed the traditional pattern of Dressmaking, Cookery, Millinery, Arithmetic, Writing and Composition, Woodwork, Metalwork, French, German and Vocal Music - subject to the proviso that classes in these single subjects would only be formed "should a sufficient number of students present themselves."^{1.} This may have been an

1.

Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1908-1909, p.52.

"escape" clause for there is no further indication how many a "sufficient number" might have been.

The following statistics taken from the Annual Report of work in the 1907 - 1908 session further serve to underline the fact that the trend during this period was towards accommodating the school leaver rather than catering for the mature adult.

AGE	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL
Males	2	13	143	93	76	69	48	39	26	178	687
Females	-	3	61	58	61	51	29	31	27	177	498
TOTAL	2	16	204	151	137	120	77	70	53	355	1185

Therefore: 53 per cent of students were aged below 18.

17 per cent of students were aged 18, 19 and 20.

30 per cent of students were aged 21 or over. 1.

An assessment of individual enrolments taken at this time to determine the most popular single subjects would have shown the following order:

Dressmaking	118 students
Millinery	70 students
French	67 students
Woodwork	57 students
Cookery	56 students
German	40 students

While the actual numbers in attendance would be different in York today, it is interesting that the student scatter and order of popularity in these subjects remains largely the same.

1.
Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1908-1909, p.52.

Although the Education Committee stated in their Annual Report of 1909 that "The efforts of the Committee to connect the day school career of the pupil with the classes provided for further education are bearing fruit," and the enrolment figures quoted in 1909 were 1,809 compared with 1,306 in 1908, a somewhat false picture was painted for these figures were taken from the Annual Statistical Returns which showed the position at October 22nd each year and therefore did not take into account late enrolments.^{1.} The actual situation was that the efforts of the Committee were not really proving as successful as its members had anticipated, although they attached no blame to themselves and contended that as they had (in their opinion) offered every inducement to the young the fault must be with the more powerful attractions of the entertainment industry. The Committee's report of 1910 speaks for itself:

"The results of the continued efforts of the Committee are fairly satisfactory, considering the numerous counter attractions such as music halls, cinematograph shows and skating rinks which have arisen in recent years. It is feared that nothing short of compulsion will make any appreciable difference in the number of entries."

2.

While there is more than a slight suggestion of injured resignation about the preceding statement the last sentence at least contained an element of truth. However, when the principal employers in the City at the time were contacted and it was suggested that these firms should offer inducements to their employees to continue their education, the employers appear not to have acted upon the Education Committee's suggestion. The Rowntree Company was, of course, in any case already making considerable efforts to encourage its apprentices to attend Evening Classes and allowed them to leave an hour early once a week as well

1.

See Appendix VII.

2.

Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1909 - 1910, p.11.

1.
as refunding their fees.

York Education Committee did not become complacent over the problem of encouraging the attendance at Evening Classes of the City's youth. The Committee's next attempt to encourage attendance was to send out circulars to all those scholars who had left Elementary Schools and who had failed to enrol for evening classes to point out the opportunities available to them for the contin-

2. uation of their education. Three additional Evening Schools were opened in the City at Bedern School, at St.Denys School and at Shipton Street again. The Bedern and St.Denys Centres provided a two-year General Course for Youths and a two-year Domestic Course for Girls, both of which were free on the understanding that

3. "regular and punctual attendance was to be made." The General Course included Arithmetic, English Literature, Handwriting, Spelling, Dictation, Composition and Drawing. The girls' course dealt with House Management, Needlework, English and Vocal Music. The object of these two courses was indisputably to continue the education received in the Elementary Schools and was about the same standard. Shipton Street, however, fulfilled a need in the Park Grove area of the City by providing classes for women in Cookery, Millinery and Dressmaking in addition to a two-year Domestic Course. It was also still possible, according to the prospectus, to learn how to apply leeches as part of a Home-Nursing Course! Lantern lectures supplemented by selections of music continued in their popularity and the following list of titles give some indications of topics of

1. Educational Provon at Rowntrees is dealt with more fully in Chapter 8.

2. See Appendix VIII, for examples of "opportunities".

3. Prospectus of Evening Schools, 1909 - 1910, p.58.

interest:

A Visit to Winnipeg

A Tour through Switzerland

From Carmel to Olivet: A Run through the Holy Land

A Trip down the Rhine, with glimpses of the Black Forest

In the Footsteps of Sir Walter Scott

An Hour with the best Artists

Fishergate Centre attempted to introduce a class in Esperanto in 1909 but as only four people enrolled the class was not subsequently repeated. It was more successful though with a Special Trades Course in Typography, the object of which was to supplement the training of apprentices and men engaged in the printing trade. That three year course attracted 41 enrolments in its inaugural year!

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In 1910 the York Education Committee, having recognised the need for a reorganisation of Technical Education in the City, set up a special committee to inquire and report on the evening and technical instruction of the city. Their declared objective was -

".... to enable the Committee to take such steps as are most desirable with a view to improving the facilities for acquiring further education. The Committee on receiving their report will endeavour to ensure that although the young people of the City have not the environment of some of the large centres of industry ... its students shall nevertheless be provided with an education such as will fit them for the work of the world." 1.

With the exception of the single subject courses the Evening Schools were thus quite obviously committed to vocational work to provide facilities for pre-technical training, Commerce and Domestic Science and to preparing students for the examination of the City and Guilds of London Institute. Attendance at this time was also depressed slightly as Rowntree's Factory School and the Railway Institute continued to expand and compete with York Education Committee to

1. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1910, p.8.

some extent for students. The Education Committee Annual Report of 1912 commented that 600 students attended school at Rowntrees and stated -

"It is impossible to say how many of these students would attend the ordinary evening classes in the city were they not compelled to receive the instruction whilst they are employed with Messrs. Rowntree, but it is fair to assume that a proportion of them would do so." 1.

In 1912 the Committee set up to inquire into the city's technical and evening instruction submitted its report. York had been compared by the authors of the report with other towns which also had no heavy industries and which were of similar size. Although the members of York's Education Committee must have realised that the state of technical education in the City was far from satisfactory, it is doubtful whether even they were prepared for the severe admonishment, couched in uncompromising language, which the report administered to them. It began:

"We have over one hundred technical institutions in England and Wales embracing every kind of technical school, college and institute. Of these 88 or more than one half - are situated in towns of a less size than York ... It is significant, however, that not only in industrial centres, but also in the old cathedral cities of Lincoln, Oxford, Bath, Gloucester, Worcester and Peterborough (each with a smaller population than York) technical schools flourish. It seems doubtful whether there is any single city of the same size, certainly none of the same prestige and the centre of such an important district, which has not already provided itself with this important addition to its educational resources. In this regard York has undoubtedly lagged behind and has thus unwittingly handicapped a host of boys and possibly girls also, at the outset of their careers." 2.

If they had been concerned to defend themselves, the Education Authority Officials would no doubt have pointed out that the Evening Schools were providing a full programme of vocational

1. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1912, p.10.
2. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1912-1913, p.9.

subjects, and that the Railway Institute and Messrs. Rowntree, both of whom received grants from the Authority, contributed towards the provision for technical education in the city. The authors of the report, however, were regretting the absence of a technical school per se and, though they acknowledged the tremendous expense of such a project, went on to suggest one way of establishing such a school. They said -

"The munificence of private donors has made it possible to erect suitable buildings in many towns, and we can imagine no happier expression of interest in the welfare of the city nor worthier way of commemorating the name of the donor than this."

1.

The estimated costs of such a "dignified and impressive building" were put at between £15,000 and £20,000 with running costs of about £2,500 annually, though it was suggested that the annual "Whisky Money" grant of £1,000 should be definitely allocated to the running of the proposed technical college. As the Evening Schools were already costing £1,000 to operate and there was a grant of £250 to the Railway Institute the report was able to make the point that the running costs of such a college would therefore be little more than the system already in existence.

The outbreak of war in 1914 put paid to any immediate action on the proposals:

"When the war broke out in 1914 arrangements had just been completed for the establishment of Day Technical Classes in Engineering subjects. Owing to the changed conditions certain employers find it exceedingly difficult to release their apprentices during the day time, as promised, so it was decided to hold the classes in the evening until the close of hostilities."

2.

After the war day-release classes were established in the city and the old Mechanics' Institute (later the Public Library) was taken over and run as a Technical School. It was not until 1941, however,

1. Ibid, p.11.

2. Prospectus of Evening Schools, 1915-1916, p.63.

that this school was finally designated York Technical College.

The onset of war in 1914 drastically affected Evening School arrangements for the session 1914 - 1915. Although it had been decided to commence the session with a full programme and reconsider the position after the first two weeks of classes "it became necessary to suspend or amalgamate a large number of classes before the termination of the session."^{1.}

York suffered, as did many other cities, from disruption to its educational activities by soldiers using the schools as billets. "The Army Pay Corps still occupy the Park Grove School, so the Evening School meets in the Haxby Road Council School Premises."^{2.} Despite such hindrances, York L.E.A. did try to make some improvements to the Evening School provision. In 1916 a Central Commercial School was opened using the Castlegate Council School premises where "Full provisions will be made ... for Senior Students who have completed the Junior Commercial Course (at an Evening School) and for Adults who desire to improve their general education or to study commercial subjects or languages."^{3.} Another evening school was also opened which followed the usual pattern of courses and single subjects, but at which "Popular Lectures, Entertainments, Socials and Games (were) arranged by the Head Teacher, during the Session."^{4.}

In 1912 the York Education Committee began to produce a series of statistics which were similar to, but more detailed than, those which had previously been printed in the Annual Reports of Work. Unfortunately, this practice was only continued until 1917.

1. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1914, p.12.

2. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1917-1918, p.23.

3. Prospectus of Evening Classes, 1916-1917, p.17.

4. Ibid, p.19.

Table 1 shows the ages of students on enrolment in September, 1912.^{1.}

TABLE 1 - SEPTEMBER, 1912, AGES OF ENROLLED STUDENTS

YEARS	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 and over	
Males	6	61	387	283	217	87	48	34	25	162	1310
Females	5	61	622	473	405	246	40	29	23	219	2123
TOTAL	11	122	1009	756	622	333	88	63	48	381	3433

It would appear from Table 1 that the Committee's policy of attracting school leavers into the Evening Schools was successful, but keeping them there proved more difficult as 25 per cent of them seem to have stayed for one year only. Nevertheless, those under 16 years of age were still easily in the majority with 73 per cent of those attending. Only 6 per cent were aged 18, 19 or 20 and 11 per cent were over 21. No analysis of its own statistics was undertaken by the Committee but it seems likely that the 580 students aged 18 or over were the majority of those in Table 2 who were taking one class only.

TABLE 2 - SEPTEMBER, 1912. NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN SINGLE CLASSES AND COURSES

Students taking Courses	-	2631	76.7%
Students taking 1 Class	-	721	21.0%
Students taking 2 Classes	-	73	2.1%
Students taking 3 Classes	-	8	.2%

1. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1912-1913, pp.66-69.

TABLE 3 - SEPTEMBER, 1912. SINGLE SUBJECT ENROLMENTS

German	29	-	Vocal Music	41
French	95	-	Embroidery	18
Cookery	77	-	Clay Modelling	13
Millinery	62	-	House Management	1
Dressmaking	56	-	Hygiene	6
Woodwork	48	-	TOTAL	466

Table 2 shows that altogether 802 students were taking single subjects. Those students in Table 3 represent 58 per cent of those not following an examination, or an obviously vocational syllabus. These 466 students represent 13 per cent of the total student enrolment. Again it would be of interest to know how many of the 466 were in the 18 and over age groups and therefore likely to be pursuing a non-vocational course.

TABLE 4 - SEPTEMBER, 1912. STUDENT OCCUPATIONS

Skilled Trades	-	190	5.5%
Factory Hands	-	1875	54.6%
Labourers	-	3	.1%
Errand Boys	-	24	.7%
Telegraph Messengers	-	34	1.0%
Shop Assistants	-	72	2.1%
Office Workers and Typists		557	16.1%
Teachers	-	89	2.6%
Household Work	-	41	1.2%
Dressmaking and Millinery	-	42	1.2%
Females at Home	-	302	8.8%
Other	-	78	2.3%
Unemployed	-	93	2.7%

Table 4 is valuable not only as a breakdown of student enrolment by occupation, but also because it reveals to what extent the evening schools were recruiting non-vocational students from the respective

social classes. With the exception, perhaps, of the "teachers" it would seem that the professional classes were not very well represented in the L.E.A. evening institutes and that the "Females at Home" then, as often today, formed easily the largest category.^{1.} Unfortunately, the table does not state how many of this last category were housewives or how many were over 21.

Regrettably the York Education Committee continued to produce Table 3 only until the end of the war. Table 5 shows single subject enrolments for September 1914 and Table 6 similar enrolments for 1917 - the last time such statistics were published.

TABLE 5 - SINGLE SUBJECT ENROLMENTS SEPTEMBER, 1914.

German	8	-	Vocal Music	0
French	45	-	Embroidery	40
Cookery	48	-	Hygiene	0
Millinery	25	-	First Aid	8
Dressmaking	42	-	Woodwork	6
Needlework	7	-	TOTAL	229

TABLE 6 - SINGLE SUBJECT ENROLMENTS SEPTEMBER, 1917

Cookery	20	-	Millinery	0
Dressmaking	19	-	Needlework	0
French	37	-	Russian	10
First Aid	0	-	Woodwork	41
Spanish	23	-	TOTAL	150

A glance at the total enrolment figure for 1917 is sufficient to confirm the fall in enrolments which was to be expected during

^{1.} See Adult Education, Vol.44. No.2. 1971, p.108. See also T. Kelly, Adult Education in Great Britain, 2nd Edition, (Liverpool, 1970) pp.343-344.

the war. There were, however, two interesting new additions to the prospectus for 1917 when Spanish and Russian, which were quite well attended, were introduced. German, understandably, appears to have been discarded.

A subject now a feature of evening centre work throughout the City, but which York Education Authority apparently did not recognise as having much potential as a non-vocational class in the early 1900's was Art. There had been two Art Schools in York for a number of years. One had been founded "through the persevering efforts of William Etty,"^{1.} the York born painter,^{2.} who persuaded the Council of the School of Design in London to open one of its first branch schools in York in 1842. The other had been part of the Institute of Popular Science and Literature, which had started work in the 1850's. In 1905 the two Art Schools united and were subsequently administered by the City Education Committee. The new Art School had its own Prospectus at first but was amalgamated with the Evening Schools in 1911. Its aims were set out as follows:-

OBJECTS OF THE SCHOOL

1. ART AS APPLIED TO THE TRADE -

To promote a system of Higher Art and Technical Education by suitable organised courses of instruction in the principles and practice of Art, aiming at the preparation of students engaged in industries with a view to the application of these principles by Manufacturers, Designers and Craftsmen, and by giving a higher and more general course of instruction to prepare those who intend to make Art their profession.

2. PICTORIAL AND DECORATIVE -

To give sound and comprehensive instruction so as to form a basis for the study of the Fine or Pictorial Arts.

1.

Supra.p.18. See also G. Benson, York Part 3, from Reformation to 1925, An Account of the City and County of York, Vol.1 (York, 1968) p.144.

2.

William Etty, born 10 March, 1787, died 13 November, 1849.

3. AS PART OF GENERAL EDUCATION -

By methods of practice in Art subjects to develop the powers of observation, memory, perception and Artistic Culture.

1.

Until 1918, when the school came under the jurisdiction of the York Authority's Higher Education Sub-Committee, there was always a separate Art Sub-Committee to administer its affairs. Although it was possible for students to enrol in single classes there was no explicit statement to the effect in the prospectus and the practice seems not to have been encouraged. The Education Committee obviously considered Art was a subject unrelated to other Further Education taking place in the Evening Schools. Consequently, it was not until well after the second World War that the York School of Art began to play a substantial part in the provision of non-vocational classes in art and allied crafts which were open to the general public.

Towards the end of the first World War - reinforced by the setting up of the Reconstruction Committee - there began to appear widespread signs of change in adult education. In the academic year after the War York Education Authority was still providing a very small number of classes in which adults only could enrol, other adults being forced by the system operated to enrol in classes which were predominantly made up of the 14 to 16 years age group. Although it is not possible to be absolutely accurate because of difficulty in extrapolating the required statistics, it is unlikely that adults who attended classes in non-vocation subjects at that time constituted more than .5 per cent of the total of adults attending Evening Schools. Despite slight evidence of some change and some hope for the future there was, therefore, clearly a great deal of scope for improvement in the provision of non-vocational

1.

Prospectus of Evening Schools, 1911-1912, p.82.

classes and in the numbers of adults attending them. The section of the 1918 Education Act relevant to non-vocational education, and the 1919 Report on Adult Education, were the Government's attempt to provide a basic framework to allow such improvement to take place.

CHAPTER SIX

DIRECT PROVISION FOR NON-VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AFTER 1918

DIRECT PROVISION FOR NON-VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AFTER 1918

THE 1918 EDUCATION ACT AND THE 1919 REPORT ON ADULT EDUCATION

It may be just coincidence that the two most significant and far-reaching Education Acts to be passed this century were both conceived and planned during a period of World War, or it could also be that a national emergency creates a desire to re-direct a nation's energies after the hostilities of war so that to re-organise the existing educational system would seem to be the logical place to begin reshaping the future.

Whatever may be the case, the 1918 Education Act contained far-sighted and elaborate plans for 'half-time' education which, had they been implemented on the scale proposed, could eventually have radically affected the style and speed of development of adult education. The Fisher Act was to give more freedom of action than ever before to local education authorities and to place the onus of drafting reconstruction squarely on their shoulders. The legal obligation of local education authorities to provide adult education, however, remained exactly where it had been since 1902 when authorities had been empowered to organise or assist the organisation of courses for adults. If an authority considered adult education to be part of a scheme for "the progressive development and comprehensive organisation of education," it could be provided for in any way which the authority decided was appropriate.

There had already been some indication that adult education was assuming new importance nationally though, for in 1917 the Committee of Reconstruction had appointed a special Committee to report on it. The committee was almost completely recruited from the larger voluntary bodies and the universities, with little representation from either the local authorities or the Board of Education. A. L. Smith, Master of Balliol, chaired the committee

and had as his secretaries A. Greenwood (later Minister of Health in the first Labour Government) and E. S. Cartwright, who had been a very active member of the W.E.A. since its inception. Two other famous members were A. Mansbridge and R. H. Tawney.

"To consider the provision for, and possibilities of Adult Education (non-vocational) in Great Britain, and to make recommendations," were the terms of reference under which the committee set to work. The result of its labours, which were punctuated by interim reports on Industrial and Social Conditions, on Education in the Army, and on the use of Libraries and Museums, was an extremely lengthy document whose final section even included a synopsis of the history of adult education. For a report which has been written of in such glowing terms as "one of the most perceptive official reports on Education ever compiled in England,"^{1.} and "Its great virtue is to have gathered together past, present and a possible future in one compelling vision of social advance,"^{2.} it seems to have made singularly little impact on York Education Authority as a body for it receives small mention in the authority's records. Inevitably a committee constituted in such a way as the Reconstruction Committee had to recommend that the voluntary organisation be the basis of adult education and the means of its expansion. It was also predictable that the committee would criticise the draft form of the Further Education Regulations which were published in 1917 and which advocated the setting up of Colleges to cater for the whole range of Further Education under the control of the local education authority in whose area they were sited. The financial implications of such a scheme, as well as opposition from the Committee of Reconstruction's special sub-committee on

1. H. C. Dent, 1870-1970 A Century of Growth in English Education, (London, 1970), p.84.

2. R. D. Waller, A Design for Democracy, (London, 1956), p.33.

adult education and influential educationists, prevented the Further Education Regulations being adopted.

With regard to local authority provision for non-vocational adult education the sub-committee made the following recommendations:-

1. That Local Education Authorities should submit to the Board of Education Schemes for non-vocational adult education.
2. That L.E.A.'s should establish non-vocational evening institutes for those between the ages of 18 and 21.
3. That L.E.A.'s should give substantial assistance to University Tutorial Classes and should be prepared to give assistance to adults wishing to attend Residential Colleges or Universities.
4. That L.E.A.'s in co-operation with voluntary bodies should establish Joint Committees for Adult Education.

In addition it requested more generous state aid for adult education generally and urged that where conditions of eligibility for financial assistance were to be laid down, they should be flexible enough to allow for as many different kinds of educational effort as possible.

How near York Education Authority came to fulfilling the prescriptions of the hard working sub-committee on adult education is in some measure discussed below.

DIRECT PROVISION AFTER 1918

In 1917 the realisation that a comprehensive system of education able to cope with the city's immediate needs and embracing a plan for the future was already beginning to make itself evident. The chairman of the Education Committee, K. E. T. Wilkinson, had studied the possibility of compulsory half-time education in York by means of Continuation Schools and presented a long report on its suitability.¹ His research ranged over the possible uses of

various institutions such as church halls, Adult Schools, The Railway

1.

K.E.T. Wilkinson, A Scheme for Compulsory Half-Time Education in York, (Unpublished Ms. 1917), held in Technical Library, Rowntree-Mackintosh Ltd., York.

Institute and Rowntree's Company School if incorporated into a comprehensive scheme for the city. His general conclusion was that while it was feasible, such a scheme would be not only makeshift but unsatisfactory in many respects. In September of the same year H. A. L. Fisher addressed "a large representative gathering" in the Guildhall and presented the broad outlines of his proposed Act.^{1.} Shortly after this visit a Scheme Sub-Committee was set up to assess the existing state of education in the city and to make recommendations for a new, comprehensive scheme. Subsequently the sub-committee broke itself down into even smaller units and co-opted both interested individuals and representatives of local organisations which had a specific interest in education. The W.E.A., for example, had representatives on both the Further Education and Adult Education Scheme Sub-Committees. Other Further Education Committee members included representatives of Rowntrees, The Railway Institute and five members of the Higher Education Sub-Committee. The Adult Education Sub-Committee comprised representatives from the Settlement, York University Extension Society, the Y.M.C.A., the York Adult School Union, the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, and three members of the Higher Education Sub-Committee.

In 1920 York Education Committee published its report for the year ended 31 December, 1919 on work carried out in preparing the educational scheme under the Education Act 1918. The report noted that the method adopted of enlisting the help and assistance of the public, made the work of the scheme very slow though it had undoubtedly been of great value. The co-opted members had attended well, shown much interest in their work and been of much material assistance in evolving a satisfactory scheme. Special arrangements

^{1.}

Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1917-1918, p.12.

had been made for "discharged fighters" to attend the School of Arts and Crafts. Mention was also made of the flourishing condition of the evening schools. 208 more students than in the 1918 - 1919 session had enrolled and 561 more than in the last pre-war (1913 - 1914) session. The total number of students in the 1919 - 1920 session was 2,001. This was a record attendance figure - though it was probably largely attributable to the fact that the 1,008 children who left school between October, 1918 and 30 September, 1919, were twice communicated with and the houses of those who failed to attend were visited. Attendance was consistent despite what the annual report referred to as "the strong attraction" for the students at the Fishergate centre of a fair which had established winter quarters nearby. The general standard of work in the evening centres was high stated the report and the experiment with singing and physical exercises at the Park Grove centre was warranted; "the influence of music and ordered movement on the working girls who enrolled being most marked. Noise and disorder gave way as the session advanced to self-control both in the school and in the street."^{1.}

After having reviewed the state of education in the city of York as it then was, however, the Adult Education Scheme Sub-Committee arrived at the conclusion that the Evening Schools were "for the 90 per cent who do not go on to Secondary School."^{2.} It further stated that "In the region of Adult Education the committee has hitherto done little or nothing. The need has hitherto been partially supplied by voluntary bodies, such as the University Extension Society and St. Mary's Settlement."^{3.}

1.

Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1918-1919, p.33.

2.

City of York Education Committee, Scheme of Education for York, the Education Act, 1918, op. cit., p.3.

3.

Ibid, p.3.

The main deficiencies were then summarized and listed as:-

1. the lack of any form of Further or Higher Education, except the evening and technical classes ,
2. the want of a technical school,
3. the insufficiency of secondary provision,
4. the lack of any organised provision of adult education. 2.

Even the report for 1919 of York's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Smith, mentioned the need for more "play centres", and urged every citizen to have a hobby, - "especially women and girls because they are more liable to periods of mental and physical depression." Furthermore, it went on, there was a need for the community to devise facilities for the mixed recreation of the sexes under the best possible conditions as there was insufficient provision of such facilities in the city. Dr. Smith believed it was natural for the sexes to mix together "comfortably and profitably instead of in street, lane or theatre", and that it was high time that the community tackled the "unsatisfactory and demoralising state of things." 2. He also advocated active participation in sport rather than passively accepting the role of spectator while others exerted themselves. Couched in language which revealed Dr. Smith's sporting preference, his report summed up the beneficial effects of games playing:

"Noblest and most universally available of all games is cricket, for girls, tennis - and if sufficiently fit, hockey. For both sexes of young people some form of dancing is probably the best of all indoor exercises for it adds grace and lightness to the exercises of the gymnasium and the playing field, especially such forms as morris, folk and classical dancing." 3.

The Scheme Committee had commenced its work early in 1919 and by April, 1920, had submitted three Draft schemes of which the third

1. Ibid, p.4.
2. City of York, Council Minutes, 1919-1920, p.37.
3. Ibid, p.39.

proved acceptable. Before it was finally adopted by the full Education Committee, however, it was subjected to a public discussion in the Guildhall in May, 1920. Subsequently fully accepted by the Education Committee in July, 1920, it was then immediately published in booklet form although it did not gain the approval of the City Council until October in the same year because its debate had been several times deferred.

Despite a very full coverage of the situation vis a vis adult education the section on proposals in this area of education laid little stress on direct participation by the authority except to list recently held classes in Liberal Studies:-

"There are classes in Domestic Subjects in the Evening Schools and in the Handicrafts at the Art School and Evening Schools; the Haxby Road Old Scholars' Association had held classes in History, Literature and Singing, and at the Commercial School there had been classes in Singing and (Dramatic) Literature."^{1.}

No recommendations affecting these classes - or any other provided by the York Authority - were made. However, the following proposals were put forward:-

1. "... we think courses of University Extension Lectures can form a useful part of our educational provision for adolescents and adults and we propose to give a block grant to this Society for each approved University Course, on condition tickets at a reduced figure are given in suitable cases.
2. ... we now give a grant of £10 per annum to the York Tutorial Classes at St. Mary's Settlement. We are impressed by the valuable work done in these classes, and we are prepared to increase our financial assistance.
3. Other classes established by Organisations interested in the promotion of Liberal Studies. We are prepared to support these if they satisfy conditions which the Committee has laid down.

1. Scheme of Education for York, 3rd Draft, 1920, op.cit.,p.5.

4. We propose to set up a new Advisory Committee for Adult Education representation upon which will be offered to associations and institutions particularly concerned with this work." 1.

The proposal to offer representation had been put to the Committee by both the W.E.A. and the York Educational Settlement Committee, although the 1919 Report had also recommended the establishment of such joint committees. The W.E.A. appears to have regarded the idea of such a joint committee as its main recommendation, but the Settlement's official view was that while the whole scheme might be worthwhile it would still not be adequate to deal with the ten years to follow. Apparently the Higher Education Subcommittee during this period was also aware that there were deficiencies in its sphere of operation, for, in May 1919, it passed a resolution recommending the Local Education Authority to advertise for an Organiser of Further Education in the city who would at some subsequent date become Head of the Local Further Education College. The minute was, however, deleted when the City Council failed to agree to it on the grounds that the revised Scheme for Education was still in preparation and at that stage it would be better to await its completion. This proposal could have been very important to the development of further education in the city of York but it was never re-submitted. A further opportunity to bring change was lost in 1922 when a lobby of City councillors, including K. E. T. Wilkinson, would have liked to have appointed a professional educational administrator as Director of Education, but, mainly because of economic difficulties, a clerk with no background in education, C. H. Gray, was appointed secretary. While Gray served the authority conscientiously in the capacity in which he was appointed, it was not until almost the end of the Second World War that York had its first Chief Education Officer. Consequently, an

1.

Ibid, pp.54-55.

excellent opportunity was missed, for the Clerk's primary duty was to serve the Council, whereas an educationist might have prompted it towards progressive decision making.

In 1920 a pressure group of councillors particularly interested in Further Education managed to persuade colleagues to establish an extra sub-committee for Further Education, to which were "referred matters relating to Continuation Schools, Evening Schools, the School of Art, the Day School of Commerce and Technical and Part-Time education generally."¹

Though approved by the City Council the new scheme for education could not be implemented until the academic year 1921 - 1922, after approval had been gained from the Board of Education. Unfortunately, however, it was in this year that the post war economic boom suffered a rapid collapse, strikes became commonplace and unemployment rife. Public expenditure had to be severely pruned and Sir Eric Geddes was chosen to chair a Select Committee. He recommended a massive cut of £18 million in educational expenditure and even though this was reduced by the government to £6½ million² he has been accused of swinging his 'axe' indiscriminately.

In September, 1921, the Board of Education issued Circular 1231 which asked for economies in evening schools. Local Education Authorities were asked to distinguish among classes and retain only those considered essential and to charge fees high enough to make a substantial contribution towards the education provided. The Further Education Sub-Committee's recommendations in attempting to act on the instructions of the Board's Circular are interesting though no reasons for their distinctions are available. It recommended that Millinery Classes should be reduced from four to

¹. City of York, Council Minutes, 1920 - 1921, p.49.

². A. J. P. Taylor, English History 1914-1945 (Oxford, 1965), p.183.

one or two, that Country Dancing, History and (surprisingly) Science Classes should be stopped completely. Fees for all single subjects at evening schools, it was proposed, should be raised to 5s. per session. In cases where, previously, some subject fees had been only 2s. or 3s. this represented a very large increase. Course fees remained at 2s.6d for the first year but the second year fee was raised from 3s.6d. to 5s. - poor reward it may be thought for perseverance and some measure of success. Single subject fees at the Evening School of Commerce were maintained at their pre-circular level of 7s.6d.

York's Evening Schools' enrolment figures which had already fallen from their peak of 2,001 in 1919 to 1,478 by 1921 (largely because the Committee had stopped giving free admission to holders of Day School Leaving Certificates) followed the national trend in the wake of Circular 1231 and dropped to their lowest point since the 1916 - 1917 session.¹ How drastic the effect on enrolments was may be determined by the fact that the 1919 enrolment figures were not to be reached again until the session 1936 - 1937. It was not only enrolment figures which were affected either, for in 1920 the L.E.A. had attempted a small number of experiments which led to the statement in the annual report for that year that "the non-vocational classes met with much success."² Because classes shown as part of a course were also open to eligible students desiring instruction in a single subject, it is difficult to say which of the single subject classes were successful from the statistics available. During the session 1920 - 1921 the Rev. J. F. Brightling, a local vicar, repeated his lectures on Citizenship, there was a course of lectures on English Literature and a series of talks by York Corporation employees on the work of their departments was given.

1.

See Appendix IX (Enrolments at Evening Schools and Evening School of Commerce 1914-1935).

2. Annual Report, York Education Committee, 1920-1921, p.18.

In this session, of 44 single subjects available in the evening schools 39 were of a non-vocational nature.

It would appear that by 1922 many classes must have been closed or amalgamated and that, despite a reasonably lenient interpretation by the Further Education Sub-Committee, Circular 1231 was making itself felt, for even with an increase in the number of single subjects offered total enrolments were down by nearly 400. The policy of economy was continued by the Board who issued yet another circular (1271) which asked for further savings where possible. York appeared unwilling to make further reductions for the L.E.A. pointed out to the Board that they had already closed Haxby Road and Shipton Street evening schools, but their hand was forced when a national agreement resulted in a reduction of teachers' salaries. Those teachers in their first or second year of service suffered a reduction of 1s. per hour from 6s. to 5s., and teachers having taught for three years or more received 7s. instead of 8s. Head Teachers' salaries remained unaltered, however, at 16s. per evening if enrolments were below 200 and 20s. per evening if they were over 200.

Despite the severe economic restrictions of the period there was a review body for evening school work which, concerned about the continuing downward trend of enrolments, endeavoured to remedy the situation. The Board of Studies Committee comprised a mixture of Councillors, the Art School Principal, the Teacher-in-Charge of Building Classes, the Head of the Evening School of Commerce, and the Education Officer for Rowntree and Company, but was restricted in its effectiveness by only meeting once each academic year. It seems that Evening Centre Heads were not expected to have a say in the planning of their programmes for they were not represented

on the Board of Studies. Their conditions of service meant that they were employed in a mainly clerical capacity while being expected to exercise control over the teaching standards within their schools and to teach a minimum one evening per week themselves.

Paucity of provision - only four classes were specifically designated "Adult" in the 1923 - 1924 prospectus - and vague information for the General Education Course, which gave no details of days or times but simply stated "a class will be formed provided that a sufficient number of entries are received," might have been^{1.} expected to discourage enrolment, but this was not the case. In fact permission was given after the session had already commenced for five extra classes for adults to be formed. The subjects of these extra classes (Dressmaking, Woodwork and Cookery), possibly reflected the times, for they were emphatically of a utilitarian nature. Nevertheless, a mood of concern for adult education, which was to shortly initiate change, was beginning to manifest itself throughout the country. In Birmingham, for example, about this time the evening schools were re-organised into Junior and Senior Centres. Junior Centres catered for those under 17 years of age and Senior Centres for those older than 17. There was still no division into vocational and non-vocational centres, but the new arrangement at least allowed adults to attend classes predominantly composed of students in their own age groups. From 1924 York too divided its evening schools into Junior and Senior Schools, but the division was based on standard of work and not on the age of the student. The Evening School of Commerce and the Technical Classes became the Senior Evening Schools and admission could only be gained to their courses if the student had passed the necessary school-leaving examinations or had attended school until the age of 16. Single^{1.}

Prospectus of Day and Evening Classes, 1923-1924, p.25.

subject classes now held at these Senior Schools were purely vocational and even foreign language classes were incorporated into a Commercial Course.^{1.}

One Evening School which deserves special mention was established during the first World War at Layerthorpe School. Philanthropically aimed at providing some education in a very poor quarter of the city, and primarily at the younger age group, this school could be considered rather a forerunner of the City's Youth Service than an antecedent of adult education. First advertised in 1916, Layerthorpe School was intended to provide "general and semi-recreative classes in which continued education is given without making it preparatory to the higher institutions."^{2.} Initially classes were provided free, but in 1922 a fee of 2s.6d. was introduced. Classes, though "semi-recreative", were nevertheless formed into courses and students had to "undertake to attend regularly and to comply with the Club Rules."^{3.} These Club Rules were laid down by the Local Education Authority not by the Club itself, and also stipulated that boys and girls should be taught separately and on different evenings. These restrictions would have been unnecessarily irksome to young adults today, as would the repressive atmosphere within the schools, though they seem to have been unquestioningly accepted at the time. The teachers in charge have been described by an ex-teacher as, though adept at teaching English plus Physical Exercises and Handwork (woodwork for boys, needlework for girls) in an interesting manner, lacking in any attempt to make discipline during the evening different from what it was in the day

1.

By an odd swing of the pendulum at the time of writing, the evening language classes held by the Department of Commerce are completely non-vocational (though one may sit for examinations) and are largely held at the York Educational Settlement by special arrangement.

2.

Board of Education, Further Education Report on Further Education in Yorkshire, 1927, p.99.

3.

Prospectus of Day and Evening Classes, 1923-1924, p.16.

1.
schools of the time. A report of the time also commented that:-

Suitable accommodation is not usually found in ordinary School buildings... What is really wanted is a simple room, furnished with chairs and tables, designed for adult use. It is suggested that Local Education Authorities might have this consideration in mind when erecting new schools.

2.

Again it is to be wondered at that as the general atmosphere was not conducive to adults attending Evening Classes, the adult students did not state their grievances forcefully in official quarters.

3.

Nevertheless, taking classes for adults out of the Junior Evening Schools and putting them in a Secondary School where they were the only class seems to have had some influence on a course of lecture demonstrations on Cookery which began in January, 1926, at the Queen Anne Secondary School. Although this class was not advertised in the official prospectus it must somehow have received considerable publicity for 65 students enrolled at the first meeting and it was necessary to form two classes. So successful were these classes that after their scheduled ten meetings another course of lectures, this time on Dressmaking, resulted in 39 enrolments. It is a curious feature that the number of students attending these classes which functioned in various premises continued to be recorded separately until 1935 (see Appendix IX), yet no mention was ever made of them in the Prospectuses of Evening Schools for this period. As classes in Cookery and Dressmaking were also advertised and successfully run at the same time it may be that York Education Authority preferred to keep the unadvertised classes in an unofficial overspill capacity as there was difficulty in estimating demand in these popular subjects. York was not exceptional in this

1.

Information extracted from conversations between C.S.Baxter, Head of Layerthorpe Evening Institute, 1912-1930 and G. Renshaw, present Head of Danesmead Evening Centre.

2.

Ibid, p.99.

3.

See e.g. chapter on Rowntree & Co.

respect, for the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education seemed to have similar problems in assessing the vast number of Dressmaking classes which were held in Yorkshire during the 1926 - 1927 session.

"There are a large number of classes in Dressmaking; but the exact number is difficult to ascertain, and it is difficult to distinguish between those that are vocational and those that are non-vocational."¹

Table 7, quoted below, from the Adult Education Report, serves to emphasise these difficulties of statistical analysis.

TABLE 7 - ADULT NON-VOCATIONAL CLASSES PROVIDED DIRECTLY BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN YORKSHIRE
1926 - 1927

West Riding	95	East Riding	3
County Boro's Associated with East Riding		Hull (Associated with East Riding)	2
Barnsley	0	North Riding	6
Bradford	23	Middlesborough (associated with North Riding)	0
Dewsbury	0	York	2
Halifax	0		
Huddersfield	0		
Leeds	21		
Rotherham	0		
Sheffield	21		
Wakefield	0		

York apparently fares badly, even allowing for differences in population densities, in comparison with Huddersfield and Sheffield. The York prospectus, however, contained six classes marked adults and did not mention, as already noted, the "over-spill" courses in Cookery and Dressmaking. The Report in acknowledging its problems pointed out that the figures quoted were:-

"probably not accurate, as it is sometimes impossible to distinguish between classes attended wholly by adults and others in which younger students are also found; nor between classes of a semi-technical or semi-vocational character and those of another kind usually included under the term adult education classes."

2.

1. Board of Education Report, Adult Education Committee, Adult Education in Yorkshire, 1928, p.48.

2. Ibid, p.9.

In common with all other Local Education Authorities throughout the country, York was called upon to submit to the Board of Education a new scheme for the years 1927 - 1930. Owing to the economic difficulties which the country found itself in, the Government scheme for education under the 1918 Act, especially that part concerned with Continuation Schools, had been severely inhibited. Now, however, a new scheme to cover three years only was asked for. Again York Education Authority included some provision for adult education in the scheme it submitted although it still did not see direct provision as a prime requisite. In fact it was proposed "that the same provision shall be continued during the programme^{1.} years," in the Evening Schools.

If it was not to be remarkable in terms of initiating increased direct provision there was, nevertheless, some innovation of more unusual subjects for the evening schools. Probably the most ambitious was a Study Circle in Modern Poetry - which cannot have been very successful as it was not repeated after the 1925 - 1926 session. Esperanto, first tried in 1909, appeared at intervals in the prospectus over a number of years. A more practical course "Light Household Repairs", first tried in 1927, proved unsuccessful though on the Board of Studies' recommendation it was offered again in 1928. The rapid spread of the motor car prompted the first class for car owners in 1929, which attracted 50 students without being advertised in the prospectus. When a similar class was proposed for 1930, however, it caused some difference of opinion in Council. Although it had already been reduced from a two hour class to one and a half hours, at the meeting of the full City Council an amendment was proposed "That an automobile class for^{1.}

^{1.} City of York, Council Minutes, 1925-1926, p.24.

for owner-drivers be not formed unless the fees received are sufficient to cover the cost of the class."^{1.} Usually after an amendment discussion a vote was taken and the result recorded in numbers of votes only, but on this occasion the Town Clerk was instructed to take names and votes and these were recorded in the Minutes. The amendment was passed with 24 votes for, 13 against and three abstentions which suggests that a lively debate took place. In the 1930 - 1931 prospectus the class was offered at a fee of 10s. which was not a tremendous increase in fees as the class was held in the Technical Institute, whose usual fee at this time was 7s.6d. It appears to have been too much for York motorists nevertheless, for only four students enrolled and the class was closed. Leather-craft which was to become a popular subject for many years was also first offered in the 1930 - 1931 prospectus.

York in these inter-war years found itself in a difficult situation with regard to the provision of non-vocational adult education. Henry Morris in Cambridgeshire had pioneered the revolutionary "Village College" system especially to cater for the rural area and other large industrial cities had copied London's successful Evening Institutes. York, however, was neither a large city (its population in 1931 was 84,810) nor a rural area. Moreover, in this period, further economies were demanded by the Board of Education. The trade depression afflicting the country reached its nadir in 1931 and resulted in a financial crisis which led to the formation of a National Government. The May Committee was set up to consider ways of reducing Government expenditure and subsequently recommended that the main cuts in education were to be made by reducing teachers' salaries. When the Higher Education Sub-Committee

1.

City of York, Council Minutes, 1929-1930, p.527.

wrote to ascertain whether this reduction was to be applied to part-time teachers' salaries, the Board of Education replied in the affirmative and York introduced a 10 per cent salary reduction. After the last reduction in teachers' salaries in 1922 hourly rates for part-time teachers had ranged from 5s. to 7s.6d. The latest cut now meant a further reduction of 6d. per hour for all grades, but teachers still continued to take their classes.

Enrolments in October, 1931, reflected the generally depressed situation and were lower than recent years despite the York Education Committee's concession to the difficulties of the period when it -

"generously granted free entrance to all its evening classes to unemployed persons, and 42 men attended classes ranging from woodwork and workshop practice to book-keeping and painting and decorating. Dress-making and Cookery classes were run for the women of whom between 30 and 40 attended."

1.

Since 1918 the York Education Committee had shown a continuing interest in trying to provide education for the unemployed, especially youths in the 14 to 18 age group. Throughout the 1920's they had been willing to provide facilities for the unemployed young of both sexes - sometimes in the face of advice to the contrary from the Ministry of Labour.² It was not until the new crisis of the 1930's, however, that unemployed adults had received such consideration. Because of this crisis - and the effects of an earlier fall in the birth rate - enrolments in 1932 - 1933 and 1933 - 1934 fell to the 1926 level - 61 unemployed adults took advantage of the free admission concession in the first of these years and 82 in the second.

1.

Yorkshire Herald, 23 June, 1932.

2.

City of York, Council Minutes, 1922-1923, p.140 and 1923-1924, pp.537-540.

Despite financial restrictions, and falling enrolments, in 1932 a new Junior Evening Institute was opened at Tang Hall School which, in its first year, catered for girls and women with two Domestic Courses and three single subjects for adults - Embroidery, Dressmaking and Leatherwork. Two years later the enrolment figures had crept back almost to the 1930 level - but included in the figure quoted were 310 unemployed youths and girls and 17 unemployed adults. By the next year, 1935, the economy had recovered sufficiently for teachers' salaries to be restored to their 1930 figure.

At about the same time some new classes began to appear for adults which included two classes specially intended for women - "Keep Fit" and "Electrical Housecraft for Women" - "a class dealing with the uses and application of Electricity in the home and in Public Institutions."¹ The exigencies of the economic depression seem to have emphasised the gaps between rich and poor, fortunate and unfortunate and to have brought home to York Education Committee the social significance of protecting and stressing adult education. In order that education should be seen to be available to the adult community, the Committee recommended that for the session 1936 - 1937 classes for adults should be specially advertised at the beginning of the session and separate classes formed where numbers justified it. Furthermore, the following banner headlines were printed in each section of the Prospectus which dealt with an Evening Institute:

CLASSES FOR ADULTS ONLY WILL BE ARRANGED IN ANY SUBJECT
WHERE THE NUMBER OF ADULTS ENROLLING JUSTIFIES THIS.²

While there obviously was a genuine attempt to provide adult only classes, the practice of naming the same teacher for two classes on the same evening (one class was usually a second or third year

1. Prospectus of Day and Evening Classes, 1934 - 1935, pp.44 and 49.

2. Ibid, 1936-1937, p.6.

class in a course, the other a class for adults) meant that many adults had to join classes where the average age was 16. A curious feature of the period between the wars was that the Art School, which could have been a vital centre for cultural classes in liberal adult education, seems always to have regarded itself as only being there to provide vocational courses. Moreover, with the single exception of the Haxby Road Old Scholars' Association class in the session 1925 - 1926, "art" was not advertised at all as a non-vocational class in any prospectus of the period. It may be fairly stated that during the inter-war period York Education Authority did its best in severely restricted economic conditions, but, apart from an occasional experiment, little real effort was made to directly provide non-vocational classes for adults on any significant scale.

Although L.E.A. direct provision for non-vocational adult education was indisputably poor, York's officials were perhaps not entirely to be blamed for what seemed to be lack of initiative on their part. York was not exceptional in its poor direct provision for adult education. The attitudes of local authorities generally were in part formed by factors outside their control such as the poor economic situation of the period and non-committal reports similar to that published by the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education in 1929. While this committee had been impressed by the London Institutes and had thought that there was "room in many urban areas at least for similar experiments," they nevertheless also thought it unwise to draw "hasty inferences" from the London experiments. Official pronouncements of this nature were hardly likely to encourage local authorities to make greater
2.
provision for experiments of their own.

From 1927 York's Evening Schools had become "Evening Institutes"-terminology used officially in the Board of Education Annual Report
1.

Board of Education, Adult Education Committee, Pioneer Work and Other Developments in Adult Education (H.M.S.O., 1929), p.27.

in 1926 (though in use in London since about 1913) and from 1929 onwards York Further Education Committee ceased to exist - probably to the detriment of adult education in the city - and its work was handed over to the Higher Education Sub-Committee, whose main concern was with the Municipal Secondary School.

Such national bodies as the British Institute of Adult Education seem also to have supported the trend which stressed co-operation with the voluntary bodies rather than stressing direct provision by the education authorities themselves. Indeed most adult educational organisations of influence from the Government down appear to have developed what amounted to a sentimental regard for the work of the voluntary bodies and to have been greatly influenced by this regard in making official recommendations.^{1.} Early in 1924, York Education Committee had passed a resolution submitted to them by the British Institute which stated:-

"This meeting is of the opinion that the education of adults in the subjects and under the conditions of their own choosing is a matter of vital importance to the development of the social industrial, political and spiritual life of the country; and while recognising the help already given it calls upon His Majesty's Government, Education Authorities and Universities to increase that assistance, and to lose no opportunity of strengthening the work of adult education in co-operation with the voluntary bodies engaged in the development of that work."

2.

On the other hand, that some workers in the field recognised a need for the L.E.A.'s to increase direct provision was revealed in a speech made by a Miss E. G. B. Thomas of the London Evening Institutes who urged the national conference of the British Institute not simply to regard non-vocational adult education as that provided by voluntary bodies.^{3.} The trend at this time

1.

See J.F.C. Harrison on this. Learning and Living, pp.340-342. See also Adult Education, Vol.44. No.1. 1971, p.9.

2.

City of York, Council Minutes, 1923-1924, p.291.

3.

British Institute of Adult Education, The Purpose of Adult Education (Address given and Papers read at the Ninth Annual Conference, 1930), pp.43-44.

was, however, against Miss Thomas and her fellow thinkers and with those who thought that the further expansion of liberal adult education should take place through the medium of the voluntary bodies. Their idea was that:-

"Broadly speaking, the advance of adult education can proceed only as quickly as voluntary agencies can stimulate, focus and organise the need for it. In the last resort the value of educational activity is determined not by the capacities of the universities and education authorities to provide facilities, but by the ability of organised bodies to give a shape and substance to the demand. The organising work of voluntary bodies should, therefore, be maintained and developed." 1.

In a publication issued in 1933 the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education re-affirmed that the Board's policy was one of supporting the voluntary organisations. It repeated that its aim was "a double one - to raise the standard of work under the Adult Education Regulations and to relieve Local Education Authorities so far as it is possible, of the burden of direct provision." In the conclusion of the same report it was also stated that "the Local Education Authority may be expected to play an active part in promoting schemes (i.e. schemes of co-operation with voluntary bodies) and to take its share in providing facilities as and when required." 2.

Local Authorities indisputably had to operate in extremely difficult circumstances during the long years of economic depression and probably felt it incumbent upon themselves to devote most of such money as was available to the development of technical, vocational adult education in an attempt to alleviate the work situation. Certainly York had made its position clear as early as 1920, in the terse statement referred to earlier, which was issued by the sub-committee appointed to inquire into adult education in the

1. R.D.Waller, op.cit., pp.153-154.

2. Board of Education, Adult Education Committee, Adult Education and the Local Authority (H.M.S.O., 1933), p.133.

city, and to make recommendations for the forthcoming revised Scheme of Education:-

"In the region of Adult Education the Committee has hitherto done little or nothing. The need has hitherto been partially supplied by voluntary bodies." 1.

The policy, established in the period between the wars, of leaving the bulk of liberal educational provision to voluntary organisations was to continue for a very long time. 2. It was left to dedicated individuals, who were often active in one or other of the voluntary organisations anyway, and who were members of the Education Committee to keep in touch with changes in adult education nationally through the difficult years of the thirties. One such person was Councillor Jack Hargrave who, in 1936, attended the annual conference of the British Institute of Adult Education at New College, Oxford. 3. Two years later York played host to the North of England Education Conference, but whatever inspiration may have been drawn from that conference other events already evident in Europe were shortly to make educational innovation impossible for a time.

The pattern of provision which was in operation during the years leading up to the second World War was to continue during the war years with little alteration other than that occasioned by the austerity measures which obviously affected all sectors of education in the city to some extent. During the war it became evident that when hostilities ceased a revised system of education would be necessary to provide for the new era. The result of much debate was the re-structuring of primary and secondary education by the 1944 Education Act which also contained the following proposals for

1.

City of York, Council Minutes, 1920-1921, p.49.

2.

Until 1964 when non-vocational adult education in the city of York was completely re-organised.

3.

City of York, Council Minutes, 1936, p.63.

adult education.

THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT

Under the Education Act of 1921, local education authorities were given the power, after consultation with the Board of Education, to supply or aid the supply of higher education, which included any form of education other than elementary whether carried out in secondary schools, technical institutions, universities or adult education classes. In the 1944 Education Act, this power was made a duty and it became obligatory to secure the provision of facilities for further education, subject to approval by the Secretary of State, conceived as the third of three progressive stages into which the statutory system of public education had been organised. It was also stated in this section that "it shall be the duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their own area."^{1.} Further Education had been defined in the 1944 Education Act as:-

- (i) Full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age, and
- (ii) Leisure-time occupation, in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements, for any persons over compulsory school age, as are able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose."^{2.}

The ill-fated County Colleges were also proposed in the 1944 Act which, had they been generally effected, could have provided a means to help fill the gap between the compulsory school leaving age and adult education. York did in fact submit a Further Education Development Plan to the Ministry of Education in accordance with

1.

Education Act, 1944, Part.2, Section 7.

2.

Ibid, Section 41.

the Ministry Circular No. 133 (Draft Scheme for Further Education and Plan for County Colleges) which received official approval. 1.

In council it was later recommended that the scheme be adopted and that "the Authority may consider when the need arises the appointment of an Organiser of Adult Education." 2.

The "need", appears never to have been acknowledged - despite its presence - for no such organiser was ever appointed and how much progress in the field of adult education might have been made under such an organiser must remain a matter for conjecture. There is evidence in the 1944 Act to suggest that education was being considered as a lifelong process essential to the wellbeing of the community, but, correctly no doubt, in the immediate post-war period, primary and secondary education were to receive most of the finance available for development and reconstruction. Further education generally is highly specialised needing purpose-designed premises and specially qualified staff and there was, in any case, already in existence a rather complex system of provision for adult education. It is hardly surprising then that since the passing of the 1944 Act "consultation" had been the keynote - and indeed a legal requirement - for every local education authority so that it could join with other educational bodies in its area to avoid duplication and attempt the fullest range of courses possible.

That there was any danger of real duplication taking place in York is doubtful, for as has already been stated, York Education Authority had leaned heavily on the voluntary organisations for many years. Such consultation as there was in York, therefore, centred largely on the voluntary organisations' attempts to gain increased financial assistance from the authority to enable their

1. York Education Committee Minutes, 1947-1949, p.799.

2. Ibid, 23 July, 1948.

work to continue. While the authority was reasonably generous with grants even in periods of economic difficulty it was not always generous in granting other concessions. In 1951, for example, York's Chief Education Officer rejected a suggestion from the W.E.A. that the voluntary bodies be allowed "recruiting arrangements" at the L.E.A.'s further education centres on the grounds that it would not be practicable.¹ Perhaps part of the reason behind this refusal was that, albeit far too slowly, the York L.E.A. was beginning to recognise its role as a provider of liberal adult education itself.

POST-WAR DIRECT PROVISION

In 1945 there were the same five evening institutes in operation and they were still providing almost exactly the same programmes as they had done ten years earlier.² These junior evening institutes were, of course, primarily vocational and such classes as they offered for adults were seen simply as "service courses" held for the convenience of the community in the immediate drawing area of the evening institute. The more interesting classes in the city were still being provided only by the voluntary organisations.

In the session 1945 - 1946 the prospectuses for evening classes in the city carried a new name on their front covers. G. H. Gray, the secretary to York Education Committee for many years had retired and York had finally appointed a Chief Education Officer.

H. Oldman, M.A., the person appointed, was also to serve York for a long time but initially his impact on the direct provision for non-vocational adult education in the city was small. Evening classes were still basically orientated towards vocational provision and all advertising for classes still stated categorically that

1.

York Branch, W.E.A. Minute Book for Branch Meetings, 19 July, 1951.

2.

Fishergate School, Park Grove School, Scarcroft Road School, Poppleton Road School and Tang Hall School.

classes for adults only would not be formed unless "the number of adults enrolling justifies this."^{1.} This note, in fact, was carried by the prospectuses until re-organisation of the Evening Institutes in 1964. The prospectus was divided into sections under the headings Evening Institutes and Senior Evening Institutes and the function of these two sections was quite clearly separated. The work of the Evening Institutes was obviously continuation schooling, together with a bridging function between compulsory elementary schooling and the vocational commercial or technical education in the Senior Evening Institutes. The non-vocational adult classes held in the Evening Institutes were simply appendages of convenience designed to serve demand for handwork and domestic subjects and to provide such facilities in densely populated suburban areas. The programme at the Evening Institutes was to continue for almost twenty years in similar fashion with very little attempt at innovation until 1964, though in fairness to their head teachers, what the Evening Institutes were allowed to offer was rigidly controlled by the Education Committee which regarded the Institutes simply as primarily providing the kind of continuation classes already described above.

Fishergate, Burnholme and Poppleton Road Schools were all moved into new premises by the early 1950's and once again a golden opportunity was missed to improve provision for adult non-vocational classes.^{2.} Had a dual purpose wing been added at the time of building something similar to the evening centres of today might have been functioning twenty years ago. As it was the Evening Institutes simply retained their form but functioned from new premises.

1.

Prospectus of Day and Evening Classes, 1945-1946, p.4.

2.

Fishergate became Danesmead Secondary Modern School. Poppleton Road became Beckfield Lane Secondary Modern School.

In the session 1949 - 1950, however, a new venture was embarked upon by York Education Committee which was to prove the forerunner to the city's evening centres as they are now.

THE MARYGATE CENTRE

In 1947 in response to "requests from certain firms in York", York Education Authority established a Day Continuation School for Girls in rented accommodation at the Co-operative Society premises.^{1.} Its functions were to provide:

1. Additional accommodation for the School of Art
2. Accommodation for the Day Continuation School for Girls
3. Provision of a basic catering course
4. Daytime classes for women in Housecraft and allied activities
5. Evening and week-end Adult Education Courses 2.

In 1949 the school was able to move from the Co-operative Buildings into Marygate and in the spring of 1950 the first classes for adults were started for which 344 students enrolled. These students, not surprisingly, were mainly women as the programme and publicity emphasis was nearly all for Housecraft subjects. (The centre also accommodated a full time course for the training of House Fathers and Mothers run by the Home Office.)

The growth and development of the new centre was so impressive that it deserves special mention. In eight years membership of the centre grew to 1,137.^{3.} From the start the programme at Marygate was altogether wider in scope, more attractive and more ambitious than the restricted ones offered in the city's other Evening Institutes. The premises of Marygate Further Education Centre were

1. See File No.210.8 dated February, 1947, held at York Education Offices.

2. Report by H.M. Inspectors, Marygate Further Education Centre, York. 5-9 May, 1958, p.1.

3. N.B. Enrolments for some of the vocational classes are included in this figure.

in themselves unattractive left-overs originally erected during the war as a recreational centre for the Canadian Air Force, and later forming temporary accommodation provided for the scheme for emergency training of teachers carried out immediately after the war under the aegis of St. John's College, York. However, their central position and ease of access cancelled out their lack of physical appeal. The hitherto unfulfilled demand for a much wider range of classes was carefully analysed by the Marygate principal, Miss P. M. Everitt, and by the session 1950 - 1951, 39 classes spread over five after-noons and evenings were being offered. The very fact that non-vocational classes were now being offered during the day was in itself a most significant addition to provision in the city. Classes new to the city included Mime, Stagecraft and Drama, Know your own Countryside (Natural History), Improve Your Speech and Poetry and Play Reading. In addition a Music Club and a Social Club were also formed during the Autumn term and a canteen was opened to provide students with refreshments - a welcome innovation compared with the austere atmosphere of the Evening Institutes. Fees for one class of 25 weeks were 6s., for two classes 10s., and for three or more classes 12s.6d. The next year several more new classes including "Let's go to the Ballet", and the Appreciation of Literature were advertised. For the first time a course was also offered leading to the City and Guilds Certificate (Cookery Examination). As possession of this certificate gave the holder qualified teacher status for evening centre work, it was a valuable step towards improving the quality of non-vocational adult education in the city.

By 1953 the number of classes offered at Marygate had increased to 50, but sudden inflation had hit the fee structure for the single class fee had increased to 15s.- which was a hundred per cent increase over the previous year's fees. Evidently York's citizens

were able to afford these drastic increases for the range and variety of classes offered at Marygate continued to expand. A class which was later to develop into a full-time vocational course, Mothercraft and Child Welfare, was also first offered at this time. Already by the session 1954 - 1955 a Certificate Class was available in this subject.

By 1956 - 1957 there was a further increase in fees, the new scale running from 20s. for one subject to 30s. for three or more. Despite the increases the Marygate programme continued to develop and to find new, full-session courses to offer such as China Painting and English for Overseas Students. There was also growing provision for Short Courses, mostly of six weeks' duration, held in the afternoon which included craft courses and courses of a more academic nature such as Poetry of the Last 50 Years. "Facilities Available for Members of The Centre" in this session were advertised as Use of Library, Canteen for Light Refreshments, Social Activities and Attendance at Special Lectures."^{1.}

In 1958 Marygate Centre of Further Education underwent an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors. The Inspectors commented on the fact that many of the subjects offered were mainly women's craft subjects but felt that although "emphasis on liberal studies has been slighter", nevertheless, "some of these follow in natural sequence from the work of the Centre as demand for further studies is stimulated."^{2.} In their conclusion to their report, after praising the Principal's role in promoting the centre's activities the Inspectors found that:

"Marygate makes a very real and significant contribution to further education in York. Its development has been due in the first place to the foresight of the Authority in seizing the moment to initiate such work and subsequent moments to expand it ... This, the ninth year of the existence of the Centre, may prove an opportune

1. Marygate Further Education Centre, Programme, September, 1956,
June, 1957.

2. Ibid, p.3.

moment for critical stocktaking to develop it yet further as a central institute of non-vocational education where more advanced courses may be established and standards set which may have influence upon the work of outlying evening institutes, where the growing demand for harder study may lead to a deeper conception on the part of students of the contribution that adult studies can make to their lives^{1.}

By 1960 the Marygate programme had grown to such an extent that the programme had to be divided and advertised under separate headings such as Homecraft, English, Social Studies, Needlecrafts and Miscellaneous. Despite further increases in fees Marygate continued to provide an extremely full and well varied programme throughout the sixties and to maintain a high average attendance at its classes. Today Marygate caters for approximately 1,300 part-time students in non-vocational classes and has new premises at an advanced stage of planning.

THE RE-ORGANISATION OF THE EVENING INSTITUTES

The long overdue re-organisation of York's Evening Institutes^{2.} was carried out in 1964. The extension of day-release facilities which followed the Education Act of 1962 made the evening provision of vocational classes unnecessary. The vocational part of the Institutes' programme was made part of the new course scheme at York Technical College which was occupying its re-located premises at Dringhouses. Under the new scheme vocational course students became either full-time juniors for one or two years, or became apprenticed and attended on a part-time day release plus evening class basis. Until 1964 there had been five Evening Institutes^{3.} but under the new scheme some rationalisation took place. Scarcroft Evening Institute was closed leaving Marygate, York Educational

1. Ibid, p.7.

2. York Education Committee Minutes, 1964. p.74.

3. The five institutes are listed earlier in this chapter. See footnote 2 page 155.

Settlement, where some L.E.A. language classes were provided, and the Art School, which had offered a slightly increased number of art and craft courses open to the general public since the early 1950's, to cater for the city centre. Beckfield, Burnholme and Danesmead, all situated near the city boundaries, were to be the centres for the nearby Ridings and the populous suburbs where they were located. In order to give the centres a completely new look - they had already been re-named Evening Centres of Further Education - the existing heads' appointments were terminated, but they were allowed to apply for the new posts of Head of Centre if they so wished. Clearly, however, it was the intention of York Education Committee, guided by H. Oldman whose scheme it was, to start a new venture under new leadership. Three new young Heads of Centre were duly appointed in June of 1964. The terms of the new appointments made these Heads responsible to the Head of the day school in which the evening centres operated for five-tenths of their working week in order to provide a link between the two institutions, and stipulated that the remaining five-tenths should be devoted to the organisation and administration of the evening centre. The increased amount of time available for organisation and the new flexibility of the Head of Evening Centre's role paid immediate dividends. At the end of the session 1963 - 1964 the total number of students attending non-vocational evening classes in the three centres in question was well below 100. The following table compiled from returns made to the Department of Education and Science shows the dramatic increase in enrolments after this date.

YEAR:	EVENING CENTRE	BECKFIELD	BURNHOLME	DANESMEAD	TOTAL
1965		200	354	228	782
1966		521	478	321	1348
1967		785	745	253	1983
1968		812	884	450	2146
1969		752	758	434	1944
1970		805	843	545	2193
1971		909	878	557	2344

N.B. These figures show actual numbers of individuals attending
1.
at 1 November in each of the years shown.

New classes responsible for attracting the ever increasing number of students into the new-look evening centres were Contract Bridge, Car Maintenance, Continental/International Cuisine, Esperanto, Wine Making, Soft Furnishings, The York Concert Goer, Ornithology, Millinery, Flower Arrangement, Judge for Yourself (A class on English Law), Hair Care, Folk Dancing, China Painting, 20th Century Focus, Hatha Yoga, Gardening, Angling, Local History and many others.

By September, 1969, the work of the centres had expanded so much that the Heads of Evening Centres' commitment to the day school was cut to four-tenths of their duties to allow more time for the organisation of evening classes.

In 1969, Beckfield Evening Centre, probably because it had the largest number of students on roll, was selected for a full inspection. The purpose of the inspection was stated as "to examine the adult education provision in this centre in relation to the

1.

Compiled from copies of statistics returned by the Further Education Section, York Education Office, to the D.E.S. and held at 60 Piccadilly, York.

needs of the area, to assess the standard of work, the students' reaction and the contribution which the centre is making to the life of the community."^{1.}

During the inspection a detailed analysis of the enrolments from 1965 - 1970 was undertaken. It was revealed that a considerable percentage of the members travelled some distance to attend the centre, that between 8 and 9 per cent of the members were young people under 21 years of age and that the proportion of women to men had remained fairly constant at approximately 3.1.^{2.} In 1969 the fees were raised ten shillings and the number of class meetings per session reduced from 24 to 22. In addition those students who were under 19 but in employment were charged half the appropriate fee. After 1968 the proportion of members under 21 dropped significantly.

The Inspectors' report on premises and equipment revealed that much more could be done to make the centre more attractive to adults and recommended the purchase of a considerable amount of equipment as well as separate accommodation for the Head of the Centre. Tribute was paid by the Inspectors to the Head of Centre,^{3.} whom they described as being "refreshingly concerned with the quality of work."^{4.} "He is closely in touch with the teaching and is to be commended for the amount of time he spends in observing the tutors at work and in talking with them about what he has seen." In their comments on relations with other Further Education Institutions and with the day school, the Inspectors stated that while a good working

1. Report by H.M. Inspectors on Beckfield Evening Centre of Further Education, York. (Inspected 10 - 14 November, 1969) p.2.

2. See Appendix No.X. Photocopy H.M.I. Report.

3. Edward Atter, now Area Adviser for Adult Education, Winchester.

4. Report by H.M.I. on Beckfield Centre of Further Education, op.cit.,
p.5.

relationship had been achieved, in the future a more concerted effort still would be necessary if "the work in school is to be more closely linked with the informal work of the youth club and the more sophisticated work of the adults in the evening centre. 1.

The report on Beckfield Evening Centre, may in general terms, be considered true of the conditions and atmosphere of Danesmead and Burnholme Evening Centres also, so that the summing up in the Report contains conclusions valid for all of the non-vocational adult education provided by these centres. Its final statement was:

Beckfield Evening Centre has developed steadily over the past four years and is now providing a balanced, varied and imaginative programme of further education for adults in Acomb and the surrounding area. Much of the work reaches a very good standard and it is encouraging that members take such an active share both in planning the courses and in organising centre activities. There is now a good foundation on which to build.

When the youth annexe is completed there will be scope for expansion through the establishment of day-time classes for adults and of extra-mural activities for school pupils and young workers; from their common base the evening centre, the school and the youth club should work together on an equal footing, to enrich the life of the community still further. 2.

The great difference made in the type and quality of provision after re-organisation in York was pre-eminently responsible for the favourable report made by the Inspectorate. Many of the recommendations made for improvement of facilities and equipment have already been implemented at Beckfield and Danesmead and Burnholme Evening Centres will have been brought into line by the end of the academic year 1971 - 1972. Furthermore the three heads of centre will, from September, 1972 become full time organisers. It is to be regretted that the example of Marygate did not spur the York Education

1. Ibid, p.9.

2. Ibid, p.9.

Authority into re-organisation of its other evening centres sooner. Even now, though the system of provision for non-vocational classes is relatively well organised and comprehensive, there does not yet exist a co-ordinated scheme for both L.E.A. centres and the voluntary organisations which would allow planned progression by the student through a series of courses ranging from basic to advanced. It would seem that in the future there will be an even more urgent need for such a scheme if adult education is to supply the demand for further expansion created by the ever increasing amount of leisure time and the growing concept of community education.

CHAPTER SEVEN

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS -

- (1) YORK EDUCATIONAL SETTLEMENT
- (11) THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
- (111) SMALLER VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

(1) YORK EDUCATIONAL SETTLEMENT

Chronologically St. Mary's Settlement, so called because of the situation of its first premises in the "hamlet of St. Mary's", was the last of a series of institutions stretching back into the first quarter of the 19th century which were designed to provide education for the under-privileged. The Rowntree family had long been involved in the education of under-privileged adults and very early in the 20th century Arnold Rowntree had become aware of the shortage of suitably qualified men willing to preside over the scripture readings and discussions which followed the short lectures on historical and scientific subjects in the adult schools. After a survey conducted about that time had re-stated "the fact known to many before, that the great mass of the adult working-class population never attended any place of worship, and seem but slightly influenced by the work of any religious denomination."^{1.} Arnold Rowntree, in 1906, set out to train people to become adult school teachers by organising a series of lecture schools. If the reports in "One and All"^{2.} were correct these schools proved fairly successful, but it was also obvious that a much longer period of continuous study was necessary if Rowntree's aims were to be achieved.

Two years earlier John Wilhelm Rowntree had read a paper before the National Council of Adult School Associations at its Leeds meeting, in which he urged the need for such training centres.^{3.} Some five years later one of the journals published by the Lady Peckitt's Yard Adult School on 2 October, 1909, contained an

1. York Friends Sabbath and Adult School Records, (Y.F.S.A.R.) 1906.

2. e.g. One and All, op.cit., 1906.

3. J.F.C.Harrison, op. cit., p.311.

announcement to the effect that "a Settlement will be opened to meet the desire and need for training our members to fit them to take a larger part in the conduct of the classes to which they belong."^{1.} Thus the York Educational Settlement, as it was later known, came into being. The term "Settlement" was used because it was hoped that men and women would take up residence there for prolonged periods in order to study. Essential to the idea of such a centre as propounded by Arnold Rowntree were the ideas, carried over from the Adult Schools, about social activity and student participation in government. He intended the Settlement to be a centre for "the study of Religious and Social problems, and for generally furthering the desire for 'education through fellowship' among ... Adult School members and others ... It is also hoped to make the Settlement a centre of social intercourse and fellowship."^{2.} To the working class clientele of the adult schools the word "fellowship", probably stood for something much simpler than it meant to Arnold and John Wilhelm Rowntree, and perhaps something "not so different from what could be found in other voluntary and social organisations."^{3.} The social side of life was important at York Educational Settlement but only of secondary importance to extended serious study - which was the main difference between itself and the adult schools.

The choice of Richard Westrope, generally known as "Brother Richard", as one of the first wardens of the Settlement further underlined the link with York's adult schools for he was a prominent member of Acomb Men's Adult School. Before coming to York Westrope^{4.}

1. Y.F.S.A.R. op. cit., "B" Class Messenger No.1. September, 1909.

2. York Educational Settlement Records (Y.E.S.R.) Consisting mainly of four large scrap-books containing press cuttings, programmes, reports etc. held in York City Archives. See letter from Arnold Rowntree dated 10 August, 1909.

3. J.F.C.Harrison, op.cit., p.305 ff.

4. 1856 - 1941.

had been a nonconformist minister, for a time at Westminster Chapel and later between 1890 and 1896 he was minister at Belgrade Congregational Church Leeds. Westrope became a Quaker and moved to York to take up employment as a sick visitor for Rowntree and Company. Influenced by his adult school work possibly, Westrope produced monthly versions of the classics which sold for a penny each and which were familiarly referred to as "Brother Richard's Bookshelf." Westrope also lectures frequently in York and district mostly on religious themes, though his views indicate an interest in the same kind of liberalism believed in by the Rowntrees. In October, 1904, he went as an observer to the International Peace Congress in Boston, U.S.A.^{1.}

Westrope's assistant and sub-warden at this time was R. Wilfrid Crosland who had had quite an interesting career before moving to York. A Quaker by religion he was also related to the Rowntree family and had worked as a mining engineer after leaving school. Crosland was for a time secretary of the Yorkshire Adult School Union, then spent two years as assistant superintendent at the Hollesley Bay Labour Colony^{2.} after which he went to Woodbroke where he was one of the first to gain the diploma in Social Science awarded by Birmingham University.

From Woodbroke Crosland came to York and lived at 31 St. Mary's, the premises of the Settlement.^{3.}

The creation of the York and Leeds (Swarthmore) Settlements engendered a mood of high optimism and enthusiasm in the Adult School Movement. A One and All editorial of the time, said they

1. One and All, December, 1904.

2. An experiment in communal farming set up by American millionaire soap manufacturer Joseph Fels. See A.J. Peacock, Land Reform 1880 - 1919, unpublished thesis accepted for the degree of M.A., University of Southampton, 1962.

3. The Bulletin of St. Mary's Settlement, York, Vol.2.No.4.

were:-

"exactly what is needed to prepare our scholars for more active service ... 19 new schools opened this year in the County, and had we but have had consecrated leaders we might have had 59 ... And it is in order that they may be properly and efficiently equipped for this service that such Settlements are started ... We (must) have a wider knowledge of God, but also of the needs of humanity, and to this end our Settlements will very materially contribute by dealing with social as well as religious problems and in helping us to realise the importance of performing a duty rather than in claiming a right, ... let us, therefore, make the best possible use of them, and acquire that knowledge which will enable us best to help others." 1.

With a great deal of publicity and many messages of goodwill the York Educational Settlement opened in October, 1909. Present at the opening ceremony were prominent Adult School sympathisers, Sebastian Meyer, Edwin Gilbert, Arnold Rowntree, Philip Burt and Albert Mansbridge of the W.E.A. During the proceedings the Settlement was optimistically referred to as "The Working Men's University" and "The Northern Fircroft". The high hopes and ideals of those who used such imaginative terminology were immediately to encounter the same difficulty already experienced by other institutions such as the Mechanics' Institutes and University Extension Classes - the most attractive part of the programme culturally only appealed to the already educated.

Three examples of classes out of that first programme, Westrope's Monday course, described as "Ten Conversational Lectures" on "Some Doubts and Difficulties of the Democracy", G. K. Hibbert's, warden of the Friends' Settlement, Leeds, Wednesday course on "The Teaching of Jesus" and the Friday course on "Social Development in England with reference to its Literature", will serve both to illustrate the work of the Settlement and why the working class would have good reason to feel ill at ease in the Settlement. In Westrope's class, for instance, recommended books were R. Mackintosh's Primer of Apologetics, and T. Rhondda Williams' Shall we Understand the Bible? Hibbert's theme of Christianity

with a social conscience exemplified typical Quaker adult school attitudes of his time and his course included topics such as "Jesus and the Social Problem", "The Care of the Poor", "The Haves and Have-nots", "The Industrial Order", and "Law and Moral Ideas". The Friday Literature classes were reputedly popular and were taken by F. W. Kolthammer, an Oxford University Tutorial Class Leader, on "Social Development in England with references to its Literature". His reading list included two books widely used then and still to be seen even now in second-hand shops - G. Townsend Warner's Landmarks in English Industrial History and Green's wellknown Short History of the English People. The Settlement's original purpose was also not overlooked. In a programme note advertising the first session of the Settlement it was stated "The Adult School Lesson The Wardens will endeavour to assist students who may desire help in their preparation of the Weekly Adult School Lesson".^{1.} For each of the three lecture courses the fees were 1s.6d. or 2d. per single lecture. In a system similar to that adopted by University Extension Classes the Settlement held follow-up classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays where previous lectures were discussed. On Saturdays rambles and educational visits were made, and by the end of the first term a library of over 300 books had been created. Although no records remain as to how the Settlement was originally financed there is not much doubt that its main providers were York Friends and the Rowntree family in particular.

The Settlement seems to have established itself immediately and to have made good impressions on other educational institutions in the city. W. T. Phipps, Master of Method at the York Diocesan Training College, designed a course specially for Sunday School

1.

Y.E.S.R. Scrapbook, Vol.2. p.10. Settlement programme, 1909.

teachers "anxious to develop their Schools on sound educational lines" to complement the Settlement's programme. What was to be a main feature of the Settlement's programme for many years to come also made an appearance in its second term - the discussion of politics. The second programme advertised a "Discussion Circle on Current Topics", and assured prospective members that at no charge they could enjoy the benefits of a "cheerful room, bright fire and good fellowship. (Smoking allowed)."^{1.} Attendances were high throughout that first winter with "from 150 to 170 (attending) regularly week by week."^{2.}

The social life of the Settlement also came in for more than its fair share of publicity, judging by letters which appeared in the local press in December, 1910. A "Resident in St. Mary's", wrote to complain of the "singing, shouting, loud laughter and thumping" that went on until nearly midnight. "It is worse than having a public-house in the street", he went on "for a public-house has to close its door at 11 o'clock, whereas these people inflict misery upon others until close upon midnight ... the thing is an intolerable nuisance, which ought to be stopped." There was a strong hint that the camaraderie was induced by other than purely educational stimulants which prompted a reply from "One who has Been". He defended the new venture by allowing that there was singing but, he said, it was singing of a decorous kind. Classes closed at "about 8.45 p.m.", he stated, "after which a cup of cocoa (Rowntrees if you like) is handed round, and this being over the company gather round the piano and sing hymns and songs (not street-songs) from about 9.30 p.m. to 10 p.m."^{3.}

1.

Ibid, p.35.

2.

Ibid, p.44.

3.

Gazette, 3 September, 1910.

The Settlement survived such squalls with its neighbours and soon added to its programme by offering science subjects - usually geology or natural history - and courses by people such as Professor D. H. McGregor and Professor A. J. Grant on history and literature. Wilfrid Crosland himself took courses on sociology and economics and the programme was enlivened by celebrity lectures given by such eminent persons as G. M. Trevelyan and H.A.L. Fisher.^{1.}

Westrope and Crosland were supporters of the W.E.A. and by 1912 had managed to overcome the suspicion which the Association had had of the Settlement and arranged the first W.E.A. tutorial course taken by Arthur Greenwood of Leeds University.^{2.}

During the first six years of its life a distinctive pattern had evolved at York Settlement, a pattern, perhaps, still too closely identified with that common in the adult schools, (though these were by this time entering their second decline) and the Quaker movement generally to make it very attractive to the public at large. Basically the programme consisted of four main elements: the adult school work which, as already mentioned, was declining in importance, (so much so, in fact, that the Adult School Union in York had had to resort to offering "scholarships" of two free tickets per school but to little effect); the kind of remedial work other institutions, such as the Mechanics' Institutes, had originally undertaken, which was exemplified by the classes in elementary English: the work of social criticism, often radical in tendency, to be found in the W.E.A. and international affairs courses and the occasional lectures delivered by people such as

1. Y.E.S.R. Scrapbook, Vol.2. p.47. Press cutting.

2. Ibid, pp.67-68. See also account of W.E.A. below.

L. T. Hobhouse and G. D. H. Cole; finally there was the group of "luxury" subjects, similar to the scientific lectures given earlier in the Mechanics' Institutes, that, by their very nature, could only have appealed to those possessing more than a rudimentary education - the teachers, white collar workers and the professional classes. By 1914 the emphasis in the Settlement's programme had shifted. Some adult school work was still being done, but current affairs and series on international studies such as that sponsored by the Garton Foundation for Promoting the Study of International Politics, were increasing in importance. To cater for simpler tastes a number of courses on basic English and Elocution were introduced in 1914 and there almost certainly was some significance in the fact that the first language class to be started was in German!

During the first World War the York Settlement naturally featured courses concerned with the conduct of the war and the problems of reconstruction. Crosland and William A. Kay, who taught English at the Settlement, had become active supporters of the Council for the Study of International Relations and they attempted to support its work through study circles, lectures and courses. Belgian refugees were made welcome and taught English, and in 1915 Esperanto was offered - probably in the hope of further aiding international understanding. Three years after the end of World War One, Richard Westrope resigned and with the new warden, John A. Hughes, came a change of emphasis too.

A graduate of Lincoln College, Oxford, Hughes subsequently attended the Leeds Clergy School but worked as a schoolmaster before being ordained at Canterbury Cathedral in 1905 and taking up various positions within the Church. He was succentor for one year at Leeds Parish Church and a minor canon of Ely Cathedral. In 1908

Hughes became Vicar Choral at York Minster, a position he held until 1913. His next move was to Berwick where he remained until he became an army chaplain. Hughes saw service in Italy and Salonika before returning to Yorkshire as curate in charge of Kinsley, Wakefield.^{1.} Two years after his return Hughes became Warden of York Educational Settlement.

Once esconced in his new position Hughes demonstrated that he considered himself not simply an organiser for he undertook a remarkable amount of teaching at the Settlement. Speech training became his concern, he gave dozens of lectures on literary subjects, and took tutorial courses on music as well as starting a choir and making himself responsible for the classes in the training of adult school tutors. These classes were finally admitted to be a waste of time in 1928. Hughes wrote to adult school members and asked them to consider how they might make more use of the Settlement than they were doing. "There are today hardly any Adult School people who attend the Settlement classes", he wrote, "and yet the opposite surely might be expected."^{2.} Hughes' industry seems to have been infectious and was almost matched by one of his tutors G. E. Whitaker, B.Sc., who lectured on subjects as varied as "The Philosophy of Nature", "Teaching Methods", "George Meredith", and to have taken both the public speaking and sketching classes. Whitaker seems to have been eminently suited for the career he later adopted of extra-mural tutor.

Hughes' great passion, however, was for the theatre and during his wardenship the Settlement's drama group, of which he was the producer, became the doyen of local amateur dramatic societies and

1.

Yorkshire Evening Press, 19 June, 1942. Hughes' obituary notice. See also brief biographical note in Yorkshire Who's Who (London,

2.

1912).
Y.S.E.R. Scrapbook, Vol.2. Letter printed and dated October, 1928.

1. earned a high reputation well outside York and district. Under Hughes' influence even the public speaking classes, which had originally been aimed at helping the trade unionists and working class politicians became more articulate. Such was the success of the drama group that for many people it became synonymous with the Settlement itself. The programme at the Settlement in the year of the general strike, 1926 which featured courses on French Literature, Practical Psychology, Religion and Science, Philosophy, History and Drama, did nothing much to correct that impression and reflected nothing of the strife and confusion that existed in society at that time. Hughes, it seems, "was more interested in two act plays by Martinez Sierra than the investigation of important social and political issues", that had, until Hughes' accession played such a leading role in the Settlement's programme. 2.

The change of emphasis produced critics. Wilfrid Crosland and others strongly objected to the new character the Settlement was evolving under Hughes' influence. In their view the unduly academic emphasis in the programme at the Settlement, which had always been intended to have a broad base so that the working class student would feel at ease there, was becoming more and more a meeting place for the middle class and adopting its values. Many of the working class students it might have attracted in fact turned to the W.E.A. whose relations with the Settlement were severely strained and Crosland, many years later, in commenting on Hugh's wardenship made the following statement -

"I have always thought," he wrote, "his big mistake from the start was breaking the ties which we had built up with other organisations."

3.

1. See York Settlement Community Players, A Historical Note. Pamphlet produced by Y.S.C.P., 1971.
2. Extract from conversation with A.J. Peacock, Warden, York Educational Settlement, 1971.
3. Y.E.S.R. Scrapbook, Vol. 3. Letter from W. Crosland to A.J. Peacock.

Hughes might have reasoned that the W.E.A.'s expanding work in York provided sufficient justification for his re-direction of the Settlement programme in order to find a counter-attraction, but whatever his reasoning was the change of emphasis alienated many people and the relationship between the W.E.A. and the Settlement gradually deteriorated. With the appearance of pure craft courses, dressmaking, woodwork and photography, then ballet and country dancing, the Settlement programme by the late twenties had undergone a complete transformation from that of its early years. Wilfrid Crosland, the sub-warden, retired in 1925 and his place was taken by F. Sutcliffe, a product of Ruskin College, Oxford.

Annual reports, for the first time, are extant from Hughes' period as warden. There were three kinds of classes. Tutorial courses provided by the W.E.A., one year and terminal courses provided through the Board of Education and other classes - languages, speech training, crafts, for example, apparently provided and paid for by the Settlement itself. In addition to these classes a number of clubs were also attached to the Settlement and the report for 1926 - 1927 showed a "yearly average" attendance of 302 students. Income amounted to £1,431, including a very large grant of £750 from the Educational Settlements Association, £195 from the Board of Education, but only £50 from the City Council. Salaries amounted to £546, lecturers' fees £238 and establishment expenses were £349. In the 1926 - 1927 report Hughes mentioned that there existed a Students' Association, and that election to its council had been "carried out under the system of proportional representation." The council consisted of representatives from outside bodies like the City Council, Leeds University, the W.E.A. and the Trades' Council, the Adult School Union and the Educational Settlements Association as well as elected students' representatives. An executive was

elected from the body of this council, the chairman of which for many years was K. E. T. Wilkinson, the same solicitor and relative of the Rowntrees who was actively involved in so many of the other agencies concerned with education in the city of York. Moreover, he also found time to lecture frequently at the Settlement.

Predictably, the 1926 - 1927 report stressed the successes of the drama group, which, it stated, "had fully justified itself in the Settlement life", great value was also placed on "the social life of the centre."^{1.}

Hughes resigned as warden in 1930 and his place was taken by Duncan Fairn, a graduate of the London School of Economics, and his wife Marian, both of whom were Quakers. The new leadership led to an even more vigorous phase of activity where subjects established under Hughes' wardenship continued, but, because of Fairn's intense interest in politics the Settlement also became a centre for lively political discussion. On taking over at the Settlement Fairn introduced lectures, taken by himself, on the structure of the parliamentary system. "Has Parliament Failed?" Fairn took as his theme and left his students - and the press which reported him^{2.} at great length - in little doubt that he felt it had. A York Settlement Disarmament Group was created; Fairn became joint secretary of the York Citizens Unemployed Committee; he took over the public speaking courses and arranged an impressive series of free public lectures each session at which left wing celebrities such as Harry Pollitt, D. N. Pritt, Kingsley Martin and Harold Laski

1. Settlement Annual Report, 1926 - 1927. Copy in Y.E.S.R. Scrapbook, Vol.2.

2. Y.E.S.R. Scrapbook, Vol.2. Entries for 1931 - 1932.

gave their services. A document which was circulated in the city in 1932 to draw attention to opportunities in further education included a section by Fairn which could have left its readers in no doubt how he regarded the Settlement's role in this provision.

"You are puzzled perhaps, by Unemployment, War Debts or the Stars" he wrote. "The Settlement is a place where men and women, regardless of their religious or political opinions, are trying to solve these and other problems by educating themselves. It is a College of the People, governed by the People"¹. Fairn's interest and zeal in promoting classes, lectures and debates of a political nature produced conflicting attitudes towards the Settlement among its students and others - particularly those who gained their knowledge only from the local press which considered the Settlement far to the left and, for obvious reasons, concentrated on reporting the political element of the centre's programme and ignored the rest. It would be true to say that in the city of York during the 1930's the Settlement exerted an influence which extended far beyond the 500 or so students who attended it.

There were those, in fact, who "thought the Centre was becoming too political. They looked askance at the way things were going", especially when it provided a platform for local Fascists - through the medium of the debating society set up by Fairn and organised into mock Parliamentary parties - and on one occasion put up some of the Jarrow marchers for the night.²

Mr. Charles Shaw, treasurer of the Settlement for many years, recalled that, despite Fairn's efforts to attract the working class in greater numbers, the Settlement made little headway. "The

1.

Ibid, Document called What shall I do in the Winter Evenings?
See also A.S.Rowntree, Colleges for the People, (London, 1929).

2.

Ibid, Scrapbook, Vol.3. Note from a discussion between Miss Florence Fash and A.J.Peacock.

clientele was overwhelmingly 'white collar'. This was regularly a discussion point. We had too many teachers, doctors, bank managers, and not enough workers."^{1.} The famous people who went to lecture at the Settlement, Bronowski, Laski, Storm Jameson, and who gave their services free, gained the Settlement extensive reporting in the press - and probably aggravated the difficulty of getting the working class to attend because of the highbrow academic image they projected. For those students from the working class who did attend, according to Charles Shaw, the public speaking course were the major attraction initially. Having left school at fourteen, Shaw felt the need to "catch up on his education". At the Settlement he was introduced also to the delights of literature and music, the passions of political discussion and found a lifelong interest in becoming involved in the administration of the centre. For him and for many of his contemporaries the Settlement was his "university"^{2.}

In 1933 the Settlement acquired new premises and moved to Holgate Hill where it is still situated. The Archbishop of York, Dr. Temple, Arnold Rowntree, the Lord Mayor and H. Rhodes Brown, the man associated with the early W.E.A., were present to express their good wishes at the opening ceremony, and the new session commenced with a lecture by the Earl of Feversham, President of the National Association of Probation Officers, on "The Treatment of the Lawbreaker". Penal reform, in fact, was another of Fairn's main interests and he devoted a great deal of time and energy to promoting this topic in Settlement courses. In 1938 he took two courses on the same day on "Society and the Criminal". His interest in penal reform was to lead him to his next post. In 1938 Fairn resigned

1.

Ibid, Scrapbook, Vol.3. Notes from a discussion between Charles Shaw and A.J.Peacock.

2.

Ibid. Vol.3.

as warden of the Settlement to become Deputy Governor of Strangeways Prison, Manchester, and was replaced by Desmond G. Neill.

A graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, who had previously worked as an education officer at a settlement in the Rhymney Valley, Neill followed the pattern set by Fairn and no great changes occurred during his five years of office. In 1943 he left York to become warden at the Swarthmore Settlement, Leeds. He was succeeded by D. G. Ansell, a graduate of Merton College, Oxford, who had taught in a co-educational school before spending several years on the staff of the Miners' Welfare Commission and who stayed only till 1947. The Settlement's programme during the second World War was similar to that of 1914 - 1918. Towards the end of the war a "Settlement Reconstruction Forum", several more craft courses and "do-it-yourself" courses, which were a response to appeals for help with the war effort were provided. By the time that the war was over the Settlement programme bore little resemblance to that of Fairn's period and was very similar to that of a modern L.E.A. evening centre. Hull University courses in Music and Literature had been introduced, there was an active drama group and a flourishing literature club, ballet and a few language classes, plus the, by then, well established woodwork, leathercraft, dressmaking and other craft classes.

When Donald Fraser, history graduate of Edinburgh University, Socialist Parliamentary candidate for Farnham in 1935, ex-Colonial Administrative Officer, then school teacher, became warden in 1947, the York Educational Settlement had been in existence for nearly 40 years - but it was then a very different institution from the one envisaged by Arnold Rowntree. The programme offered under Fraser and his successors, Alexander and Pat Barbrook, changed little until the Barbrooks moved on to a similar settlement at

Pontypool, Wales, In 1960 the present warden, Ruskin College and Southampton graduate Alfred Peacock was appointed. He was instrumental in re-establishing the W.E.A. provided classes at the Settlement after a long absence and when the York L.E.A. re-organised its own evening centres in 1964 and was able to offer far better facilities for craft classes he allowed them to be weaned away from the Settlement and concentrated on building a programme which very much reflected his own interests of politics, social and economic history and which was almost identical to that of Westrope's time. More recently it has expanded its scope still further by providing "Gateway" courses which may lead to qualifying courses for the Open University.

The York Educational Settlement today is much larger, much more comfortable and less personal than it was. Its role is different, competition is greater, its programme and clientele have changed considerably since its inception. Relatively soon in its career the adult school work disappeared completely, together with the remedial work when the effects of an improved state education made themselves felt. Between the wars the "luxury" subjects grew greatly in importance while being presented alongside courses containing much social criticism often of a most radical kind. The period of new affluence which succeeded World War Two, however, acted as a palliative to social discontent and the subjects which once aroused such interest declined in importance. International affairs were replaced by local history, languages took over from political studies, and the proportion of white collar workers and members of the lower middle class attending the Settlement increased still further. The same process which occurred in the Mechanics' Institutes over a much longer period of time had taken place in the Settlement in approximately forty years. The social composition of students

attending the centre in the 1950's was not so very different from that attending the Mechanics' Institute 110 years earlier.^{1.} The York Educational Settlement followed the same path as most idealistic voluntary bodies in adult education. The institution which set out to promote religion and remedy a social defect in providing an education for those whom the state had ignored, now caters for the already well educated, and provides university standard education for anybody who wishes to attend.

The present Warden sees the Settlement's evolution as having had three distinct phases - "a remedial phase, a critical one, and now one of a vastly different kind. It is now a 'finishing school' catering not only for the well educated, but the very well educated." He also believes that the Settlement may still have a critical function to perform in connection with the problems of our affluent society "by directing attention to these (and) studying them at a local level in the hope that something can be done to help to alleviate them."^{2.}

John Harrison wrote that something is lost when the initial struggles are over and a place or movement becomes respectable.^{3.} If the Settlement's great years in terms of quality and numbers in attendance have been the last decade, its great years as a social centre were without doubt between the wars. Though the Settlement has changed so much its financial problems remain the same and but for the generous help of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Educational Centres Association it could not survive in its present form.

1.

See Y.E.S.R. Scrapbook, Vol.3.p.158. Results in "Phoenix", 1955 of a student survey conducted in 1952-53.

2.

Alfred Peacock, an article entitled Sixty Years of Adult Education - The York Educational Settlement 1909 - 1969 in Concern, A Journal of Social Welfare, (York, 1969) p.12.

3.

See J.F.C.Harrison, Workers Education in Leeds, (Leeds, 1957)p.11.

(11) THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

"The W.E.A. expects its tutors to engage in liberal education. It is possible to argue at length about the meanings of the three terms in this expression, but ... it is sufficient to note that the liberal demands freedom to act in accordance with relevant evidence, that adulthood is the stage of life at which a citizen enjoys authority and assumes responsibility more fully than at any other, and that education causes people to change."

1.

Founded in 1903 by Albert Mansbridge, the Workers' Educational Association was to be the great challenge to the University Extension Societies. Ironically enough the Association was introduced into Yorkshire in February, 1906, under the auspices of the Leeds University Extension Committee when a conference was called to discuss ways of promoting higher education among working people. On 20 April, 1907, a branch of the W.E.A. was founded in Leeds and in the same year a branch was opened in York. The York branch was created at a meeting held in May, 1907, which was presided over by the Rev. E. C. Owen, President of the University Extension Society and Headmaster of St. Peter's school. Other prominent local persons present were Councillors S. H. Davies, J. B. Morell and Philip Burt, a friend of the Rowntrees, an adult school supporter and deputy general manager of the North Eastern Railway Company. Organisations represented included the York Naturalists Society, the University Extension Society, the York Labour Association, the Federated Builders and Labourers Union, the Cork Cutters Union, Holgate Womens' Adult School and the York Health and Housing Reform Association. Also at the meeting were Professor A. J. Grant of Leeds, who had given some of the extension lectures in York and

1.

George Hauger, The Tutor and the W.E.A. Class (Leeds, 1971) p.1.

2.

J.F.C. Harrison, Workers' Education in Leeds, (Leeds, 1957) p.9.
See also W.E. Styler, Yorkshire and Yorkshire North, The History of the Yorkshire North District of the Workers' Educational Association, 1914-1964.

1.
Hugh Meredith of Manchester University. Just as all the other ventures in adult education so far described, the introduction of the W.E.A. into York was a middle class venture, but this time the support of organised labour had been elicited. Nevertheless, the first committee predominantly comprised middle class men and women.

Despite the fact that the Rev. E. C. Owen in his address to the meeting stressed that the W.E.A. was non-sectarian and non-political it would seem that the composition of the meeting left the political right completely unrepresented. In the following discussion one representative, Hugh Richardson, talked of the need to co-ordinate all the adult education work in the city of York and attacked the York Philosophical Society for taking no real part in the educational life of the city - "if one looked only at outward indications" Richardson said, "it might be thought that it was a Society which provided for nursery maids and children the enjoyment of some semi-private gardens and little more." Speaking for the Adult Schools, Richard Westrope said he felt "intense concern for the youths from 14 to 18 who confessed that they spent their evenings walking up and down Walmgate"². Perhaps moved by Westrope's comments, L. V. Gill referred to the W.E.A. as a kind of "Salvation Army of Education", which would take young men off the streets. Later in the meeting the same speaker pleased his audience by telling them of an early success of the W.E.A. when a group of cabbies had applied for a course on horses to be provided and had been supplied with the services of a veterinary surgeon³. Councillor Davies welcomed the new move and stated that York was "lamentably behind in its evening class organisation". As a result of this meeting a

¹. Yorkshire Herald, 2 May, 1907.

². An infamous quarter where the main street contained more public houses than any other street in the city.

³. L.V. Gill became the secretary of the North Western Section of the W.E.A.

provisional committee was appointed which included Arthur Rowntree, H. A. Skerry, S. H. Davies and three ladies Miss E. Gray, Miss E. Sturge and Miss A. N. Wilkinson, an active member of the York Distress Committee whose main concern was to try and alleviate the effects of large scale unemployment in the city.^{1.}

November, 1908 saw the first annual report of the York Branch of the W.E.A. presented to the public. Despite the short span of its existence the branch already boasted 19 affiliated societies and was able to report that a series of lectures by the eminent Professor J. H. Clapham on "Wealth Getting and Wealth Sharing" had been completed, and that a further series by Professor D. H. McGregor on "Competition and Association" had been arranged. The lectures were held on the York Railway Institute's premises and the branch recorded the gift of £25 from Joseph Rowntree. The Rev. E. C. Owen resigned as president at the end of 1908 and his place was taken by Hugh Richardson while Councillor Davies was elected Treasurer, J. W. Beal secretary and P. Newman and Councillor K. E. T. Wilkinson auditors.^{2.} At the annual general meeting a very lively discussion on the Old Age Pension Act of 1908 took place, with W. H. Farrar putting the "socialist case" very vehemently and being remonstrated with by Miss Wilkinson for having the temerity to voice such reactionary views. This came a few months after what the York Herald called Victor Grayson's "Victory for pure revolutionary socialism," in Colne Valley had made national news.^{3.} The W.E.A.'s programme and its debates offered strong evidence that it was in the process of becoming

1.

The newspapers of this period contain many reports of the state of employment and distress in the city. See e.g. the letter in Yorkshire Evening Press, 21 November, 1908.

2. Reports of the first annual general meeting in Herald, 21 November, 1908 and Yorkshire Evening Press, 20 November, 1908. There is also a very short article on the founding of the York W.E.A. by W.W.Hargrove, in Herald 17 September, 1910 Supplement.

3. Ibid, 20 July, 1908.

equated with the labour movement and its sympathisers.

Two years later, to the accompaniment of great interest by the local press, the W.E.A., in January, 1911 commenced the first tutorial course in York - a series of lectures on "English Industrial History."^{1.} Further evidence that the York branch of the W.E.A. was now, politically, moving rapidly leftwards may be seen in the fact that although Arnold Rowntree's latest venture, the York Educational Settlement, had already been in existence for over a year the W.E.A. preferred to meet in one of the local schools. The W.E.A. was to prove the great exception to the pattern which had dominated all York's adult education ventures thus far. Started by the middle class for the benefit of the working class it was eventually taken over by the workers who, thereafter, "regarded those educational ventures which seemed on the surface to be philanthropic and condescending as bourgeois and reactionary in reality."^{2.}

There were, in fact, at least two reasons why the W.E.A. might have been suspicious of the York Educational Settlement. Firstly, the Settlement was locally considered a kind of adult school and indeed, part of its original function had been to train teachers for the adult schools. Its academic standards, therefore, might not have been high enough to satisfy the enthusiastic followers of Albert Mansbridge. Secondly, the Settlement had whole-heartedly embraced the ideas inherited from the adult schools about social activity and student participation in the running of its own internal affairs - something the W.E.A. looked askance at. Other differences between the adult schools and the W.E.A. were dealt with in

1.

For example Gazette, 21 January, 1911.

2.

Y.E.S.R., Scrapbook, Vol.2.

1.
 a pamphlet published about this time. The latter organisation, pointed out the author, did not regard religion "as coming within its scope" and laid great stress on continual study in tutorial classes, whereas "The Adult Schools find that their best work, is, for the most part done among simpler folk and by more rudimentary study." Moreover, the W.E.A. did "not attempt to provide the communal life, whereas the Adult School Movement tries to meet its members on many sides of their lives, social, aesthetic and recreational, and, where there are premises it should aim at being a community-centre". There were, however, some dissidents who were believers in "pure" working class education and who, never happy with the education provided by York Settlement, criticised it locally in the way that the W.E.A. was attacked nationally later on 2. by the supporters of the National Council of Labour Colleges. By 1912, however, Westrope and Wilfrid Crosland, then respectively warden and sub-warden of the Settlement, and both supporters of the W.E.A. had overcome the suspicion of the Settlement that the Association had nurtured. In that year the first W.E.A. tutorial to be held at the Settlement was given by Arthur Greenwood, of Leeds University, who lectured on economics. Greenwood was later to become famous as a labour politician and because of his political activity was invited to become a member of the Reconstruction Committee. In 1917 he addressed an adult education conference in York and out of this meeting grew a re-organised, more durable local branch of the W.E.A. Its inaugural meeting was held on the 17 May, 1917 and within a month it had affiliated with 22 local societies. The officers appointed were President, C. G. Willey, Treasurer, Wilfrid Crosland and F. North, Secretary. 3.

1. 22 Points about the Adult School Movement (London - no date). Copy held at York Public Library.

2. J.F.C. Harrison, op.cit., pp.255-256.

3. York Herald 21 May, 1917. Third Annual Report of the Yorkshire District of the W.E.A. (June, 1917) p.5. Held in a collection at the Yorkshire North District Offices, Leeds.

During the 1920's under the leadership of these officers the W.E.A. flourished and offered an impressive programme. As early as 1918 it recorded that tutorial and sessional courses on Social History and Theory, Trade Union Problems and History, Social Problems and Elementary Sociology had been held at the Settlement and other places and that numerous lectures to union branches, week-end schools and public lectures had been given under its auspices.¹ One year later C. G. Willey, gave various lectures at Adult Schools and Working Men's Clubs throughout the city. The following year he was joined by G. E. Whitaker and together they ran five courses, mainly on economics and social problems, in York for which 110 students enrolled. In 1921, with one exception all the programmes were connected with social problems in a very direct way. Three tutorial courses were held, all at the Settlement, two in economics, and one on "English Literature". Whitaker took five sessional courses and lectured on Human Ideals at R.C.A.,² and at the Old Priory Adult School, on Social Ethics at the South Bank and Poppleton Road Working Men's Clubs, and on The Philosophy of Democracy at the Settlement. In addition to this Whitaker led a women's discussion group on The British Constitution, at another Adult School, and his wife took a similar group on Citizenship elsewhere in the city. Councillor Jack Hargrave, a wellknown local W.E.A. activist, conducted a course on Elementary Economics at the Leeman Road Working Men's Club and numerous single lectures were said to have been delivered in the Clubs. The educational work of the W.E.A. with the Club and Institute Union went on for some years and a retrospective view of the work of the W.E.A. in this period makes its success quite remarkable in view of some of the organisations it worked with. In 1928 connections with Hull University

1.

Ibid (June, 1918) p.5.

2.

It seems likely that the initials R.C.A. stood for Railway Clerks Association and that the lectures took place in the Railway Institute.

College were established when Professor T. H. Searle, Head of the Extra-Mural Department organised a tutorial class in York. Subsequently, however, when the Yorkshire North District of the W.E.A. was created, York became the boundary line between Leeds and Hull Universities and all its future tutorial classes were organised in conjunction with Leeds.

In addition to its customary educational work in the late 1920's the W.E.A. convened a special committee which functioned for a number of years. The committee was called the York Adult Education Committee and was set up in 1927 to "deal with the question of running One Year Adult Classes and Terminal Classes to be held in the City during the coming Winter."¹ The Committee which was to finance its own classes, held under Board of Education regulations for Adult Education, comprised representatives of the following organisations - York Educational Settlement, Workers' Educational Association, York Co-operative Society Education Committee, York Working Men's Clubs Education Committee, York Educational Conference, the York Adult School Union and the National Union of Teachers (York Branch). That the newly constituted committee was not without ambition is shown by the report of the meeting held on 28 November, 1927, when it decided to ask its secretary, K. E. T. Wilkinson, to approach no lesser person than George Bernard Shaw to address a public meeting in order to "stimulate public interest in adult education"! Unfortunately the minute book does not record whether the great man ever came to speak in York or even what his reply was. It was more successful in getting help and advice, in addition to lectures, from a notable pioneer of adult education, R. H. Tawney, however. The York Adult Education Committee existed well into the second World War but was

1.

See Minutes Book, York Adult Education Committee, 27 July, 1927.

wound up when impending re-organisation of provision by the voluntary bodies made it redundant. During its existence it had at least served a useful function as co-ordinator of Adult Education provision and as an agency for initiating new ideas within the city of York.

The pattern established by the York branch of the W.E.A. in the early 1920's continued without any really significant change into the thirties. In 1931, although York was experiencing the same difficulties as the rest of the country, which was in the grip of a major economic depression with unemployment rife, the W.E.A. Yorkshire North District was able to encourage members by stating in the introduction to its annual report "It is difficult in times like these to get enthusiasm for almost any cause, and for education perhaps the most of all ... nevertheless no set-back has^{1.} been suffered and substantial progress made". Branch membership had been held steady and York with 80 branch members and 12 affiliated societies stood fourth in a table of financial contributions from branches and classes - which meant that it was distinguishing itself in comparison with branches from much more densely populated areas which were well down the list. At York, Tutorial Classes conducted by Leeds University lecturers were held in Social Economy, Modern History and Literature. There were also six weekend schools held on themes such as "The India Problem", Russia and Co-operation, or The Re-conditioning of Industry in addition to several single lectures held during the year. A breakdown by occupation of the students attending W.E.A. tutorial classes was also published in the 1931 report which showed that the title "Workers' Educational Association" was no misnomer, for manual workers represented a very high percentage of all enrolled students and not one "professional

1.

Yorkshire North District W.E.A. Seventeenth Annual Report and Statistical Returns, (Leeds, 1931), p.1.

1.

person is on record as having attended any class.

Some concern was expressed by the W.E.A. in 1936 at the tendency of University Extension Classes, which had been injected with new life by the recently altered Adult Education Regulations allotting them a higher rate of grant, to squeeze out Tutorial classes and other W.E.A. classes. Consequently a decision was taken to impose obligations upon students in Extension Classes "at least as onerous as those in a One Year Class."² York W.E.A. still had Councillor J. Hargrave as district representative - his office at the time was co-vice chairman on the District Committee - and still offered much the same range of courses which were held in a variety of premises throughout the city including Tang Hall Working Men's Club, St. Mary's Settlement, Scarcroft School and even Rowntrees Factory Dining Block. A rather curious feature of the 1936 session though, was that two parallel terminal courses on "Modern Problems," conducted by a Miss I. Howard, had 22 all women students on one course and 24 men on the other - which seems to indicate that unless the decision to segregate the sexes was purely coincidental or an administrative device, segregation was necessary to the solution of "Modern Problems"!

By 1941 with World War Two well under way the W.E.A. had to admit "shrinkage", but continued to look optimistically to the future, though it acknowledged the need to adopt and carry out special measures and warned that "normality would not suffice".³ The "cordial co-operation" with L.E.A.'s and other bodies in adult education, upon which its continued existence was to depend more than ever in the future was also formally acknowledged in the

¹. Ibid, p.27.

². W.E.A. Annual Report, 1936, p.12.

³. W.E.A. Annual Report, 1941, p.7.

Association's 1941 Annual Report. The York branch then had 45 members and 18 affiliated societies and was able to offer Tutorial Classes in Biology, Political Theory, Local and Central Government and the Appreciation of Music. Terminal courses featured Philosophy and, appropriately enough, "International Relations".

No great changes in class provision occurred during the war years, but the York Branch of the W.E.A. was able to survive and prepare to meet the challenge to its existence in the state of educational flux which existed in the late 1940's. At this time the local classes of the W.E.A. were held almost without exception in the Queen Anne Grammar School and continued to be so until the last tutorial course held in York - entitled "Government and the People", conducted by Leeds University lecturer Tom Caldwell^{1.} - finished in 1960. Some years earlier Ministry of Education Inspectors had in fact reported after an inspection of W.E.A. classes carried out in 1952 - 1953, that they saw a need for classes which would prepare students for "an enriched use of leisure rather than for participation in more advanced courses."^{2.} After a period of decline during the fifties it had become obvious that for many areas the end of the W.E.A. Tutorial Class was predictable. Professor Styler commenting on the decline in his jubilee History of the W.E.A. Yorkshire North District recognised this fact when he wrote "The truth is that the tutorial class does not fit as satisfactorily into the age in which we live as it did^{3.} into the age in which it was born". After 1960, in the face of strong competition in York from the Extra Mural Classes of Hull University, the W.E.A. was forced to realign itself, to make policy

1.

York Branch W.E.A. Minute Book for 1960.

2.

W.E. Styler, Yorkshire and Yorkshire North, op.cit., p.39.

3.

Ibid, p.30.

changes and offer classes of a more popular and less academic nature such as Ornithology and Local History. At about this time too, with the advent of a new warden at the York Settlement, Alfred Peacock, M.A., who was a W.E.A. sympathiser, the repairing of the rift between the W.E.A. and the Settlement began. This rift had taken place after a period of strained relations during the middle and late 1920's. The warden then, John A. Hughes, had been interested in drama, literature and music, but not so interested in political history and social and economic problems and gradually the W.E.A. felt itself becoming alienated. Moreover, the Settlement was, in the opinion of several prominent members of the W.E.A. in York, fast becoming equated with middle class views and values. Councillor Jack Hargrave, perhaps the city's best known W.E.A. activist, mocked the Settlement and called it "the W.E.A. in plus fours"¹. Hughes' influence was later to be much regretted by W.E.A. members in York. It was not until 1960 that there was any fruitful discussion about the possibility of holding W.E.A. classes in the Settlement again. Although the warden during the middle 1950's, Donald Fraser, had been approached by the W.E.A. and had entered into negotiations with them, negotiations which dragged on through the period of his successor A. Barbrook also, these attempts bore no fruit. After another change of warden in 1960, however, the rift was finally healed in 1961 when it was able to be recorded that ...

"The York Branch of the W.E.A. welcomes recent co-operation between the Association and the York Settlement and wishes to see it developed ... recent changes in the functions of the Educational Centres Association, with consequent changes in its role as a providing body in the Settlement may give the W.E.A. the opportunity to provide classes in co-operation with the Settlement." 2.

¹Y.E.S.R. Scrapbook, Vol.3. Notes of a conversation between C.J.Minter, sometime chairman of York Settlement Council and A.J.Peacock current warden of the Settlement.

²York W.E.A. Minute Book, 16 October, 1961.

The proposal then went on to suggest that terminal and sessional classes should be tried at the Settlement for a period of two years with both bodies advertising the classes and sharing the fees. This proposal was put into effect and from this point on, although all the classes were not immediately successful, the relationship between the W.E.A. and the Settlement improved considerably. The fact that the new warden of the Settlement, A. J. Peacock, began to attend W.E.A. branch meetings meant that difficulties arising could be dealt with on a personal basis and was no doubt a very important factor in the healing of the breach between the two bodies. Relations in fact improved so dramatically, that for a short period in the middle sixties the Settlement was the only institute in York holding W.E.A. classes. This fact caused the warden of the Settlement to express at a meeting of the York W.E.A. in March, 1965, the opinion that, "although the classes at the Settlement were a success some of the new classes should be given outside the Settlement so more people could be reached and the danger of the W.E.A. losing its identity be avoided"^{1.} As York had re-organised its non-vocational adult class into three new evening centres in 1964 it was resolved that the heads of these centres be approached and a meeting arranged between them and representatives of the W.E.A. to establish contact and discuss possibilities. The branch secretary of the York W.E.A. at this time, Edward Atter, was in fact one year later appointed Head of Beckfield Evening Institute and although W.E.A. classes were tried at all three of the authority's evening institutes the only one to achieve any real success after a faltering start was Beckfield. In 1971 Beckfield Evening Centre - as it is now called - was

1.

Ibid, 22 March, 1965.

offering five W.E.A. classes in its programme. The L.E.A.'s present arrangement with the W.E.A. is that premises and advertising are provided free of charge and a subsidy amounting to about 33 per cent of the lecturers' fees is paid at the end of each session. Class fees, slightly higher than those charged by the L.E.A. are paid by W.E.A. class members directly to the Association's local treasurer.

Currently the W.E.A. in York is offering a varied programme of 27 courses and is playing a useful supporting role in providing classes midway in the range of courses open to adults in the city.^{1.} Since 1970 the W.E.A. has sponsored some of the "Gateway" courses held at the Settlement for students of the Open University in Social Science, Mathematics, Economics and English Literature. Providing that the Open University is successful this provision could well be the main function of the Association's York branch in the future. As long as the W.E.A. continues to receive adequate financial assistance (bearing in mind the impending re-organisation of local authority areas) the W.E.A. could make as valuable a contribution to liberal adult education in the future as it has done in the past.

^{1.} There are no Tutorial Courses in the city now. Sessional Courses last for 20 weeks., Terminal for 10-12 weeks and Short Courses 3-9 weeks.

(111) SMALLER VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Several of the smaller voluntary organisations both indigenous and national have also contributed in some measure to the provision of liberal adult education in the city of York. The York Railway Institute was opened in 1875 by the North Eastern Railway Company primarily to provide educational, recreational and social facilities for its own employees though certain sections were open to the general public. As the York Education Authority began to take an interest in the provision of adult education some degree of co-operation was established between themselves and the committee of the Railway Institute. In 1903, official recognition of the Institute's contribution to adult education in the city occurred when the York Education Authority decided to make an annual grant of £50 to the Institute - which some time later stated that: "The Educational Aim of the Institute is to provide classes in trade subjects particularly applicable to trades of the City"^{1.} In 1910 this grant was increased to £250 to enable the Railway Institute to provide a new mechanical laboratory, add to its equipment and increase its classroom accommodation. In addition to this money received from the York L.E.A., as the Railway Institute had achieved recognition by the Board of Education they also received substantial grants from it. An unusual feature of evening school enrolment at this time was that during the first five years of the York Education Authority's existence it had been easier to enrol in certain classes at the Railway Institute, because there were no entrance qualifications required, than in similar classes in the Authority's own evening schools. It was decided to hold a meeting to overcome this anomaly. As a result of consultation between the York Authority and

^{1.}

Prospectus of Evening Schools, 1911-1912, p.4.

the Railway Institute, and advice received from the Board of Education's representative, the Institute's classes in question were included in the Education Committee's Prospectus of Evening Schools, 1911, despite the fact that they were still held on Railway Institute premises. Subsequently, in 1920, they were moved to join the list of classes held in rooms at the City Public Library although the Institute continued to hold in their own building some vocational classes which were restricted to London and North Eastern Railway employees only.

Three of the Institute's non-vocational classes, Woodcarving, Photography and Elocution, were open to members and others had also been advertised in the city's Evening Schools' Prospectus since 1911, together with a scale of charges. Members of the Institute paid only 3s., employees of the railway company 4sd. and all others 5s. per year per class. Other non-vocational classes available at the Institute in this period, and open to members only, included a Dramatic Art Club and the York Railway Lecture and Debating Society. Unfortunately no attendance figures are in existence for these last two activities. The evolution of these and other similar "club activities seems to have followed a pattern of development similar to that of the earlier Adult Schools in having a core of educational classes complemented by recreational societies or clubs. The Institute supported a Swimming Club, the North Eastern Railway Angling Society and the North Eastern Railway Carriage and Wagon Cricket Club. Early in 1920 the Institute also formed a Golf Club whose declared objective was "to bring the game of Golf within the reach of all Railway employees"¹. The annual fee was £1.1s. and although this was considerably less than normal golf club subscriptions, in a time of depression it was still a significant sum for a working man.

¹. York Railway Institute, Annual Report, 1920.

As with most similar institutions of the period the Railway Institute supported a library and reading room. When the library was made a free library in 1921 it housed about 12,000 volumes and is on record as having issued 34,000 books at a time when the Institute membership was approximately 1,900. The reading room contained an extensive spread of 44 magazines and 51 weekly newspapers which ranged from Tit-Bits to the Times Literary Supplement. Daily newspapers also available for readers included the Daily Sketch, The Times and The Newcastle Chronicle. Also in 1921 the Institute had initiated an annual series of lantern lectures which ranged over topics as diverse as "The Garden of Allah", "The Master Mind of Napoleon", and "Mars, Our Neighbour World". There were twelve of these lectures held each year until 1926 when, because of dwindling support, they were reduced to six. Despite the lecturers giving their services without charge and the lectures being made free, attendance became so poor that no lectures were given in 1927. Although the writing was clearly on the wall by this time the Institute committee tried to revive the flagging interest in educational courses by offering six talks on English Literature in 1928 and 1929.

1930 saw yet another tack tried when four series of lectures were arranged on the respective topics of Elocution and Dramatic Art, English Literature, Economics and Psychology. Again the overall attendance was poor and "Enquiries revealed that many members of the staff (i.e. railway employees) were taking advantage of similar courses of instruction in the city"¹. After 1930 no more classes of an educational nature were offered at the Institute but two clubs, Wireless and Photography, continued to flourish and each had over 100 members early in 1930. A large, well-equipped

1.

York Railway Institute Annual Report, 1930.

gymnasium was opened in 1925 which catered for a multiplicity of indoor sports and the provision of magazines, newspapers and books by the library was maintained.

Gradually, as the Workers' Educational Association increasingly took over the education role of the smaller voluntary bodies in the city (the Institute had been represented at the meeting of interested bodies convened to initiate the W.E.A. into the city in 1907) the Railway Institute suffered the inevitable decline of its original commitment to education experienced by many similar institutions and became simply a social and recreational centre, in which capacity, though not exclusively to British Rail employees, it still functions today.

THE HOME READING UNION

Formed in December, 1907, the aim of the York Society was expressed as "to guide readers of all ages in the choice of books, and to direct and assist self-education ... to group readers wherever possible, into circles for mutual help, and to interest and unite them as members in one great Reading Guild."^{1.}

The York Union was a branch of a national society which drew up reading courses each year on a wide variety of subjects, and published magazines and explanatory articles on them. These subjects were grouped into three classes:

- "1. Special Courses, designed for more advanced students and those who can spare at least half an hour a day regularly, for reading.
2. General Courses, which are easier and require rather less time.
3. Young People's Section, in which the subjects are quite easy, and can well be used by classes in Elementary Schools."

2.

1. Hargrove, Yorkshire Herald, 30 January, 1909.

2. Ibid.

There was also an introductory course which dealt with General Literature, Open-Air Life, and Social Questions, suitable for readers who had "neither time to read nor the money to buy more than two or three books a year"^{1.} The last category is more than a little confusing for it is difficult to understand just why anybody with no time to read should buy even "two or three books" a year!

Nevertheless, the Union appears to have been relatively successful for a while for during 1908 three Reading Circles were carried out by the York Branch with a total membership of fifty. Fees varied from 6d. to 3s.6d. per year according to the course selected and a further subscription entitled a member to the book lists, and magazines of all the sections. A good example of the kind of reading matter recommended to members is provided by the list selected for the year 1907 - 1908.

Special Course

Greek Dramatists, Carlyle, Oriental Literature, History of the Netherlands, Tennyson, Wealth of Nations, Marco Polo, Goethe and Schiller, Heredity, Origin and History of Cultivated Flowers.

Ordinary Course

The Open Air, Early Man and his Life, Citizenship, The Anti-Slavery Movement, Social Life among European Nations, Germany, The Story of the English Bible, Words and their History, Old Greek Life, Some Social Movements as reflected in Novels, Shakespeare and his Dramatic Art, General Literature.

2.

On examining these lists there does not appear to be a great deal of difference between the reading matter of the Special Course and that of the Ordinary Course - in fact the Ordinary Course list is longer - for people who had less time to read! With all its anomalies, however, the Home Reading Union was making some attempt

1.

Ibid.

2.

Ibid.

to provide a liberal education through reading and by self-study. However, "after the First World War the development of other forms of adult education made the work of the Union less necessary, and publication of the reading courses ceased in 1930"^{1.}

THE YORKSHIRE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The discovery, in 1821, of the Kirkdale Cavern near Kirbymoorside by three York men, William Salmond, F.G.S., Anthony Thorpe and Jame Atkinson led to the suggestion by their friend the Rev. William Vernon^{2.} (son of the Archbishop of York) that the valuable collection of fossils found in the cave should be kept together to form the nucleus of a Yorkshire museum. Thus the three donors and the Rev. William Vernon became the original members of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society whose first meeting was held in 1822.

The prime object of the newly constituted Society was stated to be "The promotion of Natural Science and the study of Archaeology and Antiquities in the County of Yorkshire and elsewhere."^{3.} Other "Objects of the Society" according to a list drawn up in 1823, were "to facilitate the mutual communication of philosophical opinions and facts, by holding General Meetings, at which papers may be read and oral information received", and "to establish a Scientific Library including Works on Arts, Antiques and Natural History"^{4.} These books were available for consultation at York in the Society's reading room or could be sent out to "Subscribers residing at a distance". Information was exchanged with similar societies in

1.

T. Kelly, op.cit., p.239.

2.

He later became known as William Vernon Harcourt when his father inherited the estate of Earl Harcourt.

3.

See Laws of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, (York, 1856).

4.

Report of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, Annual Meeting, 1824.

Sheffield and Bristol and as it was the Society's intention to erect a building to house its growing collection of geological and natural history specimen, a fund, initially started by members' donations, was opened in 1823. At this time the Society rented a house in Ousegate but by 1824 it was able to claim that -

"The Society has already proved, during the two years which it has existed, how capable it is of storing such a building with the materials of knowledge and how desirous of encouraging, by all means in its power, those honourable and useful studies the cultivation of which, in their various branches, has raised to so high a pitch both the intellectual character and the commercial prosperity of this country."

1.

In 1827 the Yorkshire Philosophical Society acquired the use of the land on which stood the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey, St. Leonard's Hospital and the Multangular Tower. On this plot of land, in 1828, it erected the building subsequently known as The Yorkshire Museum which comprised a library, a large lecture and demonstration room, a laboratory and numerous small rooms.

By 1830 the Society had 277 members and one year later was instrumental in forming an association later to become very famous - the British Association for the Advancement of Science, whose objectives were said to be "for the discussion of scientific subjects and the holding of annual meetings for the inter-change of thought".² Although in the future relations between the Society and the Association were strained to breaking point by rather petty differences of opinion over procedure the differences were eventually settled, the British Association celebrated its 50th Anniversary in York, and thereafter relations returned to normal.

In 1833 an observatory was added to the Society's facilities at the suggestion of members of the British Association. Eminent

1.

Ibid.

2.

Yorkshire Herald, 1 July, 1905.

patrons of the Society at this time included the King and Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and Dr. Tempest Anderson the Dean of York. Such wealthy, influential patrons would, no doubt, have been included in that category of the Society's supporters which, Hargrove said, would "extend the boundaries of Knowledge" by encouraging the "prosecution of ... researches by others ... to concur in furnishing those facilities to scientific enquirers which a Philosophical Society is capable of doing"¹. The Society relied almost entirely on donations from wealthy sympathisers and consequently was often in financial difficulties during the 19th century. In the 20th century two world wars, separated by a period of severe economic depression, and then steeply rising expenses for the maintenance of the museum buildings and botanical gardens eventually forced the Society to offer its museum and gardens to the city of York as a present in 1961. The gift was accepted by the city council on condition that the Society made an annual contribution to the upkeep of the gardens.

In its early years the Yorkshire Philosophical Society was often severely criticised for being too selective in its membership. A correspondent to the Yorkshire Observer, "Epicurus", advised "the three gentlemen who manage the Society", to "throw the doors open to trades and professions, and intelligent aspirants from all classes to become members of the Society"². The editor of the paper backed up the letter with an article of his own:

1.

Ibid.

2.

A.D. Orange, The Early History of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. Unpublished thesis accepted for the degree of Ph.D. at London University, 1970, pp.42-43.

"(the prospectus) abundantly proves that (the founders) aim is neither to benefit Society, instruct the ignorant, nor amuse the learned ... With them no man can be a Philosopher who is not in the rigid case of 'gentry'. And should a Tradesman, of virtue and intelligence far superior to themselves seek admission into their school, they tell him in advance that he may expect to be lapidated by two Black Balls. We respect these men in their private capacity, but as public teachers of Philosophy, we hold them in utter scorn and contempt".

1.

Dr. Orange, who has made a study of the Society's early years, suggested that the criticism levelled at the Society for not opening its doors wider was "rather unfair", because the Society was "not a mechanics' institute". He believed that the Society's main concern was the construction of an attractive programme for "cultivated amateurs" and not a comprehensive system of utilitarian instruction for ... rude mechanicals".^{2.} Nevertheless, Dr. Orange conceded that the Society appealed largely to "gentry and nobility", throughout the 19th century, though he also felt that "the obligation to disseminate natural knowledge as widely as possible did not go unregarded among its officers and its subscriptions were deliberately fixed at a level not prohibitively high for citizens of modest prosperity".^{3.}

Although there was some justification for the early criticism the Society did try later to broaden its appeal and co-operated with both local authority and voluntary organisations by loaning its premises and sending representatives to meetings convened to promote adult education in York. Today, the Yorkshire Philosophical Society contributes to provision for adult education in York by arranging a series of individual lectures, open to members and the

1.

Ibid, p.42.

2.

Ibid, p.48.

3.

Ibid, p.48.

general public, on subjects such as Genetic Coding, Rockingham Pottery, Wild Flower Hunting in South Africa and the Roman Army.

YORK EQUITABLE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY LIMITED

One of the results of a determined socialist effort to improve the lot of the working man in the fight against capitalism, poverty and ignorance was the evolution of the Co-operative Movement which became widespread particularly in the north of England. Its trading premises became universally known as the "Co-op" and such an enterprise was established in York in 1859. From the start the Society showed it intended to become involved in education for its members because the original rules stated that two and a half per cent of trading profits should be set aside to establish and maintain an Education Department. The York Society was to take some time to find its feet financially, however, and initially its accountants refused to set aside any money for education. Although there were some attempts to hold classes on a voluntary basis, which failed through lack of support, it was not until 1899 that an Education Department proper was begun. At about the same time the society's lady members formed a Women's Co-operative Guild and by joint effort with the Education Department several classes were provided. A reduced fee was charged to co-operative members and the class programme included knitting, dressmaking, sick nursing, specialist trade classes for society employees and ambulance classes. Other activities available were adult and children's choirs, Co-operative propaganda meetings, single lectures with guest speakers on various topics and occasional concerts. The Society also recognised the importance of education to its employees in encouraging its members to attend local authority evening schools by paying full class fees for them and half fees for members' children attending science, art or shorthand classes at these schools.

Piano lessons also qualified for a half-fee grant. How many members took advantage of this help may be judged by the accounts published in 1908 which showed 750 payments for evening school attendance had been made. In the Jubilee Handbook of the same year the Society's Education Committee stated that they were "pleased to see that the members are taking greater advantage of facilities offered, but they would like to see the whole of the various sections utilised to their fullest extent"¹. The 1914 - 1918 war, as it did to all the small voluntary bodies, severely curtailed attendance figures. At the end of the war, however, the York Equitable Industrial Society's education department and its Women's Guild were still carrying out a creditable programme of classes, lectures and concerts and revealing a flair for topical titles with a class in their 1918 - 1919 prospectus called "War Time Cookery". The running down of the Society's main contribution to adult education in York came during the following decade and though today its Education Department is still in existence, its activity at the time of writing is restricted to one dressmaking class and an occasional lecture series.

THE YORK YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The York branch of the Association was undoubtedly, numerically and financially, the weakest of the small voluntary organisations to have contributed to adult non-vocational educational provision in the city. Such activities, though part of the Association's aim, were really only ancillary to its main, more social, purpose. Nevertheless some educational and recreative provision was undertaken.² When the York branch moved to fresh premises in Clifford Street in 1907, the new building contained facilities for coffee,

1.

G. Briggs, Co-operation: Jubilee History of the York Equitable Industrial Society Ltd., (Manchester, 1909) p.239.

2. The Association's main aim as stated at the Y.M.C.S. International Conference, Paris, 1855 was "Christian Discipleship developed through a programme of religious educational, social and physical activities".

reading lectures, smoking and a recreation room as well as dormitories.

A number of Elementary Schools in York had founded Old Scholars' Associations and in 1919 Haxby Road Old Scholars' Association formed an alliance with the York Y.M.C.A. Their intention was to raise funds with the objective of building a combined centre on a site adjacent to Haxby Road School, provided that the York Corporation would give them the land. When the Corporation refused their request the project was abandoned.^{1.} The York Education Authority was not entirely unsympathetic towards the work of the Y.M.C.A., however, for in 1918 - 1919 two classes of an educational nature and a Club Night were advertised as open to members of the juvenile branch of the York Y.M.C.A. The Authority provided the teachers and the members paid the usual fee. The York City Year Book shows that by 1920 the Y.M.C.A. programme was heavily weighted towards sport and recorded that "winter lectures were held for members" who "could enjoy cricket, tennis, golf, bowls, angling, cycling and summer camps".^{2.} After this date, although it was asked to send representatives to sit on committees set up to discuss the reorganisation of adult education in the city, the York branch of the Y.M.C.A. made little further effective contribution to adult education. In 1926 in an attempt to recruit new members, fees were reduced, though with little success. Its last flourish was to support Hull University College Extension Lectures in the Spring and Autumn of 1934, but its educational activities ceased to function completely in 1938 when there were less than 150 members over 21 years of age.

1.

York Council Minutes, 1919-1920, p.150.

2.

York City Year Book and Business Directory, 1920, p.172.

THE YORK YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

Club activities for the above organisation began in 1887 and residential provision was first made in 1891. The Association's aim was similar to that of its brother association "Christian, but not primarily educational ...^{1.} Consequently, the Y.W.C.A. as a national body, has been assessed as "not significant as an agent of adult education".^{2.} It was not until 1918 that the York branch organised a variety of courses for its members, although there had been a class in singing before the war with some instruction also in swimming and tennis. During the war classes of a more utilitarian nature such as needlework and St. John's Ambulance classes had been introduced with social evenings and occasional concerts to add spice to the programme.

By 1920, however, Y.W.C.A. members in York "the business girls of the city", teachers from schools and nurses from hospitals were able to take part in classes for needlework, dancing, psychology, physical culture and join the choir.^{3.} There was also a Bible Study Class which was looked on "as being the most important (of the classes) forming the ground work on which our association was built".^{4.} A stimulus to the handicraft classes such as toymaking, sewing, leatherwork, crochet work, drawing, painting and practical classes such as country dancing, elocution and drama, was given by a competition held among branches of the Y.W.C.A. from several Yorkshire cities. The York branch held the shield awarded for

1. T. Kelly, op.cit., p.313.

2. Ibid, p.206.

3. Annual Report York Branch, Y.W.C.A., 1920-1921.

4. Ibid.

these competitions for the five years 1920 - 1925. Other successful classes held were pewter work, metalwork, weaving and French. After this period of high activity, Y.W.C.A. educational provision in York followed the usual trend towards the merely social and recreative, interspersed by sporadic attempts to provide classes and lectures. At the time of writing a new building is going up in Water Lane, Clifton, which may result in a resurgence of some interest in adult education on the part of the Association.

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Owing to a federation ruling that no branch should be set up where the population of a village or town exceeds 4,000, York has never had a branch of the Women's Institute of its own. Nevertheless, there seems to have been a tenuous connection between the W.I. and York Education Authority (possibly owing to York's geographical location at the meeting of Yorkshire's North, West and East Ridings) because classes in Dressmaking and Leathercraft for the W.I. were advertised in the three Prospectuses of Evening Classes from 1927 - 1930. York is possibly the poorer for having had no W.I. branch of its own for valuable work in adult education has been carried out elsewhere in the country by this body.^{1.}

OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATIONS

Old Scholars' Associations were voluntary organisations but the Education Committee provided the premises, paid the teachers and then restricted entry to classes to members of the O.S.A. who paid normal evening school fees.

The most flourishing of a number of such Associations formed by old scholars of several Elementary Schools in York was the Haxby Road Council School Old Scholars' Association and its

1.

See J.F.C.Harrison, op.cit., pp.319-321, for an account of the growth of the W.I.Movement.

activities were typical of all such associations. The Association's aim seems to have been a rather basic one of encouraging recent school leavers to attend classes of a non-vocational nature in order to keep them from aimlessly roaming the streets at night. At Haxby Road initially classes were not arranged in courses but were offered as single subjects such as Handicrafts, Physical Training, Needlework, Singing, Country Dancing, Literary and Dramatic Class and History classes."¹ Classes were first arranged into general courses in 1921; one for boys and one for girls under 17. Other members over 17 were allowed to enrol for single subjects (though they were allowed to join any Course-classes also). There followed a lapse of three years, as part of an Authority economy drive, in the provision of classes at Haxby Road, though classes were still in existence at other centres in the city, notably Priory Street. Following this lapse, classes were re-started at Haxby Road and gained a favourable mention in the Report on Further Education in Yorkshire, during the session 1925 - 1926. One year later, classes there were divided into two categories; those provided "by the Education Committee in conjunction with the Haxby Road O.S.A.", and those "conducted by the Haxby Road O.S.A."². Despite this separation, which implied some considerable financial contribution by the O.S.A., and their recent favourable report, the Yorkshire Gazette reported that classes at Haxby Road had been voted out of the prospectus for 1927 - 1928 at the appropriate York City Council meeting. The vote had been close - it was carried by only two votes - and as a result of the press publicity and the strength of the O.S.A's supporters in Council, after a letter from the secretary of Haxby Road O.S.A. had been read at a subsequent meeting of the

1. Prospectus of York Evening Continuation Schools, 1919-1920, p.18.

2. Prospectus of York Evening Continuation Schools, 1925-1926.

Further Education Sub-Committee, it was resolved that Evening Classes at Haxby Road be re-opened. After only two more years in the prospectus, however, classes at Haxby Road disappeared for good. Their disappearance reflected the York Education Authority's lack of real interest in directly providing classes of a non-vocational nature at this time.

Other voluntary organisations which while not having a specifically educational aim, may still be considered as having contributed towards the provision of liberal education in York, were organisations such as Brass Bands of which York had six in the middle 1930's; various choirs with a total membership of 600 just before the Second World War; York Music Society; York Playgoers Society; York Symphony Orchestra; York Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society and York Arts Society, all of which were active between the wars. The number and variety of this type of organisation offers at least some evidence that there was during this period a reasonably large proportion of York citizens who sought some kind of cultural fulfilment.

There are at the moment, perhaps, some workers in the field of adult education who feel that there should be a comprehensive national scheme that would include all the various forms which adult education now takes and place their administration under the control of one central body. Others would acknowledge that such re-organisation could have the advantages of being neat and orderly, but would fear that the present degree of commitment, involvement and concern engendered by the voluntary organisations might disappear. Certainly diversification seems to be part of the essential quality of liberal adult education in England. The state

has much to gain by a continuing association with the voluntary organisations, who, in their turn, can benefit from professional support and guidance for -

"... voluntary organisations are organic; they are born, they grow, they reach maturity, and are bound to die when they no longer have a *raison d'être*. By the same token, if the spirit and the will is there, new organisations will arise to meet new needs and demands." 1.

1.

F.W.Jessup, Lifelong Learning, (Bletchley, 1969), p.137.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ROWNTREE FAMILY AND QUAKER INFLUENCE

THE ROWNTREE FAMILY AND QUAKER INFLUENCE

ROWNTREE & CO.

The considerable Quaker contribution to non-vocational adult education generally, and especially in York, has already been referred to several times during the course of this thesis. Despite the foregoing statement it might seem to the present day student of adult education that in the past the Friends have been more conscious of the welfare of the microcosmic Society than of the tensions and problems of society at large. The directive energy of individual Friends, groups of Friends and the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, however, alerted Friends to their new duties, responsibilities and possibilities with regard to education. Although this new awareness was obviously most clearly expressed in concern for the Society's schools nevertheless Friends were considerably affected by contemporary forces outside their Society and by educational ideas at large. The Quaker historian, Professor W. A. Campbell Stewart, wrote that "by assimilation and accommodation into society at large, the separation of the Society of Friends had been changed. Friends had to find new modes of perpetuating their message and belief both in society and in their schools."¹ The efforts of one Quaker family in particular, however, the Rowntree family, and subsequently the company it founded to express its belief in an educated society is such that its merits special and separate mention. The Rowntrees belonged to that order of employers which had developed a strong patriarchal attitude towards its workpeople. Such employers wished to discipline their employees as children are disciplined - for their own sakes. They wanted order, decency and thrift which they

1.

W.A.Campbell Stewart, Quakers and Education, (London, 1953), p.230.

devoutly believed were the concomitants of success and prosperity. The Rowntrees, therefore, used much of their time and money to work for the creation of a more ordered society based on industry, thrift and godliness. The wealth which the family accumulated through astute trading was to be the principal means whereby Joseph, Arnold and Seebohm Rowntree were able to devote so much of their time and financial resources to the cause of adult education.

The cocoa business which is today a huge international concern began very modestly in 1862 when Henry Isaac Rowntree bought the cocoa and chocolate making department of the business of the York tea merchant, Samuel Tuke. He was joined by his elder brother Joseph Rowntree in 1869. When Henry Isaac died in 1883, leaving Joseph in sole control of the firm, there were only 300 workers. During the rest of the 1880's and the 1890's Joseph was responsible for the rapid developments effected by improved and diversified products and astute reading of the market plus shrewd accounting. He was, however, "always something more than a businessman",^{1.} even in difficult times and soon became an active worker for York's Adult Schools. He also had an avid interest and wide taste in reading, as well as writing several papers of a social and political nature parts of which were read to his adult school classes. In 1862 he established a reading room and library "where young people working in York shops and offices could study in quiet".^{2.} Professor Asa Briggs believes that in Joseph's early writings were born "both the seeds of Joseph's later social philosophy and action and the origins of Seebohm's own teachings."^{3.}

1. A. Briggs, Social Thought and Social Action, A Study of the Work of Seebohm Rowntree 1871-1954 (London, 1961) p.5.

2. Ibid, p.5.

3. Ibid, p.6.

Much later, when the firm had grown considerably, Joseph wrote in an early number of the Cocoa Works Magazine, "I am very anxious that those who are employed in the Cocoa Works may never merely be regarded as cogs in an industrial machine but rather as fellow workers in a great industry, and that the conditions of service shall be such as to quicken the desire of each for self-development^{1.} in all that is best and most worthy".

Arnold Rowntree was born on the 28 November, 1872, the son of John Stephenson Rowntree. He left Bootham School in 1889 - he was no great scholar - and began to learn the grocery trade, first with his father then with a Quaker firm in Birmingham, but in 1891 was invited to join the Cocoa Works and did so early in 1892. At this time H. I. Rowntree and Company was still a private company and the partners in the business were Joseph Rowntree and his elder sons John Wilhelm and Seeböhm. John Wilhelm, who was also interested in adult education, was to become "an outstanding figure amongst the young people of his generation in the Society of Friends,"^{2.} a strong formative influence upon his cousin the young Arnold Rowntree, and a fluent interpreter of the socio-educational philosophy which the Rowntree family was developing. All the young Rowntree men Seeböhm, Frank, Arnold and John Wilhelm were involved - as their fathers were - in adult education in York, each of the cousins running an Adult School in York and district.^{3.} Arnold's school was Leeman Road, then a very squalid district. Eventually he even moved into the area, and shared a pair of adapted

1.

Ibid, p.99.

2.

E.Vipont, Arnold Rowntree, A Life, (London, 1955) p.35.

3.

See Appendix No. XI.

cottages with his older sister Gertrude, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the way of life of his students. It was during his period as leader of the Leeman Road School that his powers of leadership developed, together with what has been described as "... a faculty all too rare amongst great men in influential positions, (that) of delegating work to the right people"¹. Although he tried for years to institute a kind of non-sectarian Christian Union to link Yorkshire Adult Schools together, the Society of Friends would not accept his plan because it involved a form of pre-arranged worship and the National Adult School Union deliberately refused to sponsor it officially lest it should be thought they were "trying to found yet another Christian sect."² Nevertheless, in 1906, when others were more successful at linking the schools, he accepted the position of president of the Yorkshire Adult School Union and served for some years in this capacity.

His interest in education generally was widespread. From very early in the 20th century he was active in university and school education as well as with the Flounders' Institute - an institution planned as a Quaker training college for men students desiring to become teachers in Friends' schools.³ Later he served on the Leeds University Council from 1933 - 1946 and was chairman of the York Schools' Committee (the two Quaker boarding schools) for 42 years. The Quaker College, Woodbroke, of whose history and aims he wrote an account which was published in 1923, was another institution with which he was intimately concerned. In 1910 Arnold Rowntree, as Liberal candidate, became one of York's Members of Parliament

¹ E. Vipont, op.cit., p.29.

² Ibid.

³ This institute was later closed and its funds used to provide Exhibition scholarships for Friends wishing to enter teaching to train at the University of their choice.

and once in the House showed his main interests to be "social reform and conditions of labour, housing, education, child health and international goodwill."^{1.} Shortly before he became an M.P., Arnold, in conjunction with his uncle Joseph Rowntree, had been instrumental in the setting up of his first Educational Settlements in York and Leeds. In 1909 he had called together his secretary, F. J. Gilman, Wilfrid Crosland and Richard Westrope and asked them to share in planning the new scheme in York which was to be financed by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. (The development of the Settlement is dealt with at length elsewhere in this study.^{2.} Later he was also able to give considerable assistance, especially financial assistance, to the Beechcroft Settlement experiment which had been set up by Horace K. Fleming and had eventually attracted the attention of Friends by its steady progression and its educational philosophy which was, basically, "that every human interest could have an educational value if only it were rightly directed".^{3.} It was also Fleming who pleaded for the creation of wide interests as the aim of settlement work and who held out as the ideal of a settlement that it should be pre-eminently the institution in the community that had a universal outlook. "Our task" he said, "is to jolt men and women out of the insular, sectarian and personal ..."^{4.}

When the Scalby (near Scarborough) Adult School Guest House had to be given up, Arnold Rowntree persuaded other members of the Society of Friends to buy the nearby Cober Hill and Court Green Estate at Cloughton and put in as Warden Helen Andrews, daughter

^{1.}E. Vipont, op.cit., p.55.

^{2.}See account of York Educational Settlement in Chapter 7 (i).

^{3.}E. Vipont, op.cit., p.61.

^{4.}See article on Educational Settlements, Times Educational Supplement, 2 July, 1921.

of the headmaster of Ackworth Friends' School, to run a residential adult school for the study of handicrafts, citizenship and natural history. It was at Cober Hill that the conference was held in 1920 which led to the formation of the Educational Settlements Association. Arnold Rowntree became chairman and in 1924 the Association was recognised as a Responsible Body under the Adult Education Regulations. His position as chairman led to his being elected to serve also on the national Advisory Committee on Adult Education as the Association's representative. While Arnold Rowntree's initiative in the field of adult education earned him respect in his own right it must be owned that much of the early work he carried out had been anticipated in the ideas previously thought out by Joseph Rowntree.

Long before the first Educational Settlement was founded, Joseph had expressed his opinion that such a new venture should be undertaken and that it should qualify for recognition and support from the Local Education Authorities.

At a meeting of the Association for Education in Industry and Commerce held in 1925, Arnold S. Rowntree in a presidential address pointed out that the extension of the franchise had outstripped facilities for popular education and he particularly drew attention to the fact that nowhere was this more evident than in adult education. Furthermore, he pointed out, that increased political democracy would be reflected in an insistent demand by the working class for industrial democracy. He believed that at best these symptomatic movements showed the desire of the workers for a means to a higher life and if the workers were left in ignorance then chaos would result. These statements about industrial democracy provide corroborative evidence for his policy of student involvement in the governing bodies of the Educational Settlements. One of the basic essentials of adult education Arnold Rowntree

thought, was to establish an atmosphere of co-operation between teacher and taught which should very largely allow the principle of self-determination as to what should be studied. A group of students should be a self-governing community, and discussion and interchange of experience should play a large part. Controversial subjects should not be ruled out: the experience of the Workers' Educational Committee (at the Cocoa Works had showed that such subjects could be dealt with in a true educational spirit.

It is ironic, therefore, that his wealth and the influence arising from it should have most inhibited an important aspect of his philosophy for educational democracy. Indeed his lot was much closer to that assigned to men in positions such as his own by the president of the 1924 Conference for Education in Industry and Commerce, who, though urging a spirit of "adventurous courage" in industrial education wanted to maintain the distance between employer and employee. She did this by astutely appealing to her audience's vanity through their business instincts by using such phrases as "you are the inspirers, the moulders of men", and stating that "the inspirer of men in the long run controls both men and money"¹. Although this association vowed its true interest was in raising the educational and cultural levels of the working man, the manipulative method advocated could not have found favour with Arnold Rowntree when he felt so strongly about self-determination in industry and education.

He was keen to point out that he considered it necessary to base technical education on the humanities and said that it must be remembered to what extent the State operated over a large sphere of industrial life. Furthermore, he suggested that Whitehall was one of the institutions which itself needed a considerable amount of

¹ Mrs. M.A. Cloudesly-Brereton, Sixth Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Industry and Commerce, York, 24 June, 1924. Inaugural Address.

educational effort. Whatever the State or the Universities might do to assist industry, Rowntree averred, the fundamental aim of education must not be forgotten, nor that education was a lifelong process, a permanent national necessity which was concerned not only with one's livelihood, but with life itself. In a speech made in 1920 he quoted a passage written by the famous Dr. Arnold almost a century earlier -

"every man has two businesses. The one is his own particular calling, be it what it may ... the other is his general calling, which he has in common with all his neighbours, namely the calling of citizen and man. The education which fits him for the first is called professional. The education which fits him for the second is called liberal".

1.

In 1931, the year of his retirement from executive office at the Cocoa Works and the year in which he was Sheriff of York, Arnold also became President of the Friends Guild of Teachers. In his presidential address he reminded his hearers of -

"the many experiments that were needed ... in the right use of leisure and in social service" and won their sympathy in expressing his support for all who were engaged in the teaching profession by referring to that profession as "a great work which requires a dedicated personality."

2.

Though he was not particularly well versed in all the technicalities of education, his understanding of his own field of service and clarity of conception of his own ultimate aims "helped establish his position as an educationist both within and without the Society of Friends."

3.

Arnold Rowntree had fully accepted Joseph Rowntree's ideal of "business regarded as a public service which all activities of social value would enrich".

4.

1. Yorkshire Herald, 13 August, 1920.

2. E. Vipont, op.cit., p.87.

3. Ibid, p.109.

4. Ibid, p.87.

This ideal was shared also by Seebohm Rowntree whose exhaustive researches into the causes of poverty, and in particular the two surveys conducted in York itself, form a distinguished contribution to the efforts made during the 20th century at solving social problems.¹ Seebohm and Arnold, of course, were comparatively wealthy and therefore of necessity, initially, they had to observe the poor from a distance. It was to be their adult school work which led them into contact with the poor and which stirred Seebohm into beginning his research into poverty. Once aroused, his interest and his convictions strengthened, but the findings of his first survey of poverty in York, which were made public in 1901, were to remain with him for the rest of his life. The break with his active work for the adult school and Sunday school movement came about 1912, by which time he had become a respected national figure, and partly reflected a change of emphasis in his interests but was largely occasioned by his much greater involvement in politics and the amount of time it consumed.²

As might be expected of men such as Joseph, Arnold and Seebohm Rowntree they practised what they preached. Working conditions in the early 20th century at their factory in York were generally recognised as among the best in the country.³ Nor was education neglected. Classes for older men with little or no basic education were held in writing and arithmetic twice weekly during the winter months and later "continuation classes" in arithmetic, English and woodwork were added and shorthand writing was introduced. As early as 1896 a dressmaking class which had to be limited to thirty members had been initiated and when cookery

¹. See Professor A. Briggs' book Social Thought Social Action, op.cit., pp.344-348 for a comprehensive bibliography of B.S. Rowntree's writings.

². He had become friendly with Lloyd George who had asked him to sit on the Land Enquiry Committee which was a big political issue. See A. Briggs Social Thought Social Action, op.cit., pp.60-73.

³. Ibid, pp.97-100.

classes were begun they too proved very popular. By 1905 educational activities had become so organised at the factory that a "Domestic School" was started and an element of compulsion introduced. Girls below the age of 17 who entered the factory were obliged to attend the cookery class and boys of the same age group had to attend "continuation class". Swimming and gymnastic classes completed the educational programme but recreational pursuits were not overlooked. Recreational clubs of the time were boating, angling, cycling, photography, bowling, cricket, football, tennis, chess, plus two bands - drum and pipe, and a brass band. In addition there were literary evenings held at Seeborn Rowntree's own home and many parties and excursions, socials and an annual sports meeting.¹ By 1904 nine "social helpers" - five men and four women - were employed to look after the social interests of the Rowntrees employees as well as -

"to suggest and advise any improvements in conditions of work. As the representatives of the employees it is the duty of the social helpers to be instantly in touch with them ... and to give effect to any reasonable desire they may show for recreative duties, educational classes, etc., and to give advice and assistance in matters affecting them personally or privately".²

These helpers were carefully chosen people whose previous experience seemed to qualify them for the job and included a graduate who had been associated with university settlement work, a man with experience of "boys' clubs" and a "labour colony" and a woman who had formerly been a worker with the Charity Organisation Study in London. From 1909 industrial conferences held at Scarborough, Blackpool and then at Balliol College, Oxford, were regularly attended by directors, administrators and senior workers alike - all at the firm's expense. This practice continued until the

¹. In 1904 32.3 per cent of male employees and 82.9 per cent of the female employees were members of one or more clubs and classes.

². Industrial Betterment at the Cocoa Works, (1905) p.9. See also M.E. Sadler, Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere, 2nd Edn., (Manchester, 1908) pp.300-303, 307, 308, for an account of the organisation at the Rowntrees Domestic School.

second world war.

The system of social helpers together with the Works Council, instituted after World War One and on which every department was represented, worked very well and remained in operation until a report from a representative committee set up to investigate the Company's educational policy was submitted to Seebohm Rowntree in April, 1922. The committee had been formed largely at Seebohm's instigation in his capacity as director of labour, as part of the normal democratic process of "industrial betterment" at the factory, and because he realised that his adult employees disliked going into local authority provided evening classes where they usually had to mix with very young people. In explaining his motives for setting up the committee he also said that a section of the workers was demanding some form of further education within the factory.^{1.}

One section of the report's conclusions reflected the inadequacy of the state provision for adult education at this time. The feeling expressed was that industry should not really have to be responsible for providing education out of its own resources as the education of the citizen "should be the primary responsibility of the state", but as:-

"the state (had) neglected its responsibility in the case of all ... adult employees and ... (as) we cannot expect our junior employees to receive such training from the state within any reasonable limit of time ... (then) the interests of the firm broadly understood, would lead the Directors to support, stimulate and supplement the efforts of the Local Authorities".^{2.}

The committee recommended that two trained adult education lecturers be appointed in a full-time capacity as it was felt that voluntary teachers would not cope with the demand. Their function would be to develop voluntary classes for adults, to give advice to

^{1.} B.S. Rowntree, The Human Factor in Business: Further Experiments in Industrial Democracy, 3rd Edn., (London, 1938) pp.165-166.

^{2.} Rowntree and Co., York., Report of the Committee on Education, Unpublished Ms. 1922, held in the Technical Library Rowntree-Mackintosh Ltd., York.

employees on any educational matters and to liaise with the Local Authority and other educational organisations. The first education officer to be appointed, A. R. Pelly, stayed with the company only for a very short time, but his assistant, H. W. Locke, M.A., was appointed his successor and he stayed with Rowntree and Co. until his retirement in 1954.

Under Locke's guidance the educational provision at the Cocoa Works eventually developed along five lines - classes open to all in, for example, Industrial History, Economics, Psychology, French; lectures for administrative staff; lectures for overlookers (foremen and women); lectures and secretarial classes for clerical staff and a continuation school for boys. The two most successful sections of this provision were; firstly, the continuation classes in basic subjects and secretarial duties which operated in the factory until 1969 when, by arrangement with the York L.E.A., the works school was wound up and arrangements made for employees to attend - compulsorily until the age of 18 - the Department of Business Studies at York Central College of Further Education, on a part-time release basis; secondly, the non-vocational classes, which proved extremely popular and ran with good attendance figures until H. W. Locke's retirement. After his retirement the educational programme at the factory continued under the administration of a Works' Education Advisory Committee advised by Locke's successor, Mr. R. E. Horne. He inherited somewhat wider duties when he was also given responsibility for the continuation work within the factory. By 1955 only girls were involved in continuation classes. The boys had been hived off in 1938 when the old Bluecoat School in Aldwark became vacant and the York L.E.A. took over the responsibility and financing of boys' continuation work while the factory paid the boys full wages during their day

release. The girls' school at the factory was intended to be absorbed under a similar arrangement, but the L.E.A. gave backward and so the Company decided to continue with its own school as something like 400 factory girls and 100 office workers were involved.^{1.} Continuation classes were obligatory until the age of eighteen - unlike the firm's adult classes where the 1922 report had been careful to stipulate that "no sort of pressure should be exercised upon the workers and that facilities should be provided only where there is a demand".^{2.}

The inaugural lecture to the first Workers' Educational Programme, in 1922 was given by Arthur Greenwood. Greenwood was the first of a succession of eminent guests such as Sir Henry Hadow and Ernest Bevin to perform a similar function in the years to follow. Albert Mansbridge opened the programme for the session 1923 - 1924. The cover of an early programme carried a note which urged "If this programme doesn't interest you, please pass it on. It may interest another. If it does interest you talk about it".^{3.} The programme included a vocational element of instruction in business procedure for administrative and clerical staff, but mainly concentrated on subjects such as Psychology (taken by S. Rowntree, Junior), Self-Expression, Correspondence Courses for people on shift work, lectures on Shakespeare, Economics and Physiology (the last subject was for girls only and was taken by the education officer's wife.) Many of the lectures were delivered by employees of the company who gave their services voluntarily. No fees were charged for these classes but any necessary text books had to be

1.

See article on continuation schools in Jubilee Edition, Cocoa Works Magazine, 1955.

2.

Report of the Committee on Education, 1922, op.cit., p.5.

3.

Rowntree & Co., Educational Programme at the Cocoa Works, Winter Session, 1923-1924.

purchased by the student. Even when fees were introduced at a later stage they were always within the reach of the workers and never more (often less) than the L.E.A. charged for its classes. Some classes started as early as 5.30 p.m. others at 6.45 and 8.00 p.m. and classes for overlookers were held at 2.00 p.m. in works' time. Very quickly the number and variety of classes offered at the Cocoa Works expanded to include Gardening, German, Woodwork and Metalwork. Also included were The Art of Listening to Music and several sporting and recreational clubs. By 1928, when Sir Henry Hadow delivered the opening lecture, the programme had already been enlarged to 30 classes not including Open Lectures, lunch time talks and recitals and the recreational clubs. By 1924 a link had been formed with University Extension Work - the W.E.A. had contributed classes almost from the outset - and in 1930 classes conducted by lecturers from Hull University College, mostly on economic or social history topics were a regular feature of the programme. By the middle 1930's the programme was at its peak. Eminent public figures were still giving the opening address (Sir George Newman spoke in 1935) which was followed by a popular social and throughout the years of depression, and even during the Second World War, the education officer never felt that he was "under any financial restriction and his programmes were always accepted."^{1.}

During World War Two the accent was on encouraging workers to keep attending classes. The programme for 1940 - 1941 exhorted workers "To keep physically and mentally fit", and went on to say -

"in war-time we must do something effective with our leisure-time - take up a hobby or a study or social activity which will give us something to do and to think about apart from the war."

1.

Extract from conversation between H.W.Locke and G. Renshaw, present Head of Danesmead Evening Centre, York, 1970.

"Can we use our leisure in a way that will make us feel next Spring that we have achieved something worthwhile? That is a question that we must answer for ourselves".

1.

Classes were kept on and reasonably well attended throughout the war and one of the features of the programme after the war was a celebrity studded "Calendar of Special Events" - open lectures given at intervals during the session.

Some of the famous people who came to York included Learie Constantine (Black and White Problems), L. Du Garde Peach (A Playwright Explains), Len Hutton, Victor Barna, Lady Isobel Barnett (T.V. from the Inside), Mortimer Wheeler (Digging up the Past), Ralph Wightmann, Raymond Glendenning, Sir John Glubb and several other extremely well known people. The company also advertised in its programme other educational classes taking place in the city and encouraged its employees to attend them:-

"The company will gladly consider applications for reasonable opportunities of further education and training both on general and technical lines".

2.

It was further stated that the company was prepared to refund fees and other necessary expenses - a policy which is still in effect today - even to the extent of supporting students taking courses through the Open University. There was also a thriving film club which showed a varied programme including films of educational interest and documentaries in addition to a children's theatre. In its busiest period the factory's educational programme catered for more than 500 students out of a total of 8,000 workers.

1.

Rowntree & Co., Educational Programme for Winter Session, 1940-1941.

2.

Rowntree & Co., Educational Programme for Winter Session, 1946-1957.

Relatives and friends of employees were also permitted to attend classes and lectures.

The last, and much depleted, programme was carried out in the session 1965 - 1966 after which the Works' Education Advisory Committee met for the last time in order to recommend that, in view of the increased provision offered by the L.E.A. and other institutions for adult education within the city of York, classes at the factory should cease. Its resolution was accepted by the Central Works' Council and its affairs, sadly, wound up.

The cynic reading the statement "Our hope lies in steadily increasing the capacity of each individual",^{1.} made in 1923 by a wealthy director of a chocolate firm might well attach ulterior motives to such a statement, though in fact Seeborn Rowntree was referring to the capacity for educational self-development when he made the statement. There are, no doubt, those who would argue that a better educated man is simply another way of increasing productivity - however, whatever the motives of Rowntree and Co., or its directors, there can be no disputing the fact that they provided an extremely comprehensive educational programme of both a vocational and non-vocational nature at a time when state and L.E.A. provision was very patchy indeed. Even much later, when the state and the local L.E.A. had considerably improved its service, Rowntree and Co. Ltd., continued to make praiseworthy attempts to supplement such provision within the city of York. These attempts together with the very generous provision for recreational clubs and societies deserve recognition.

1.

Rowntree & Co., Educational Programme, 1923. Introduction by B. S. Rowntree.

CHAPTER NINE

THE FUTURE OF LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION IN YORK

THE FUTURE OF LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION IN YORK

The main purpose of the preceding chapters of this study has been to make the point that liberal adult education in York today is in many respects a product of its historical origins. It would have even been possible to claim that in a general way the origins of liberal education in York might be attributed to Alcuin in the early Middle Ages.

As early as 675 there was a school in York which had been established by Wilfrith, Bishop of York. The school gained a reputation for providing a liberal education whatever career was later to be established by its pupils. Its most renowned scholar was Alcuin, who later became headmaster and keeper of its excellent library and continued the school's traditions. He saw that "a liberal education could not be obtained only from a study of classics but necessitated also the practice of the arts and crafts, the breath of Humanism, and the spirit and method of science".^{1.}

For the most part, however, the 19th century is early enough to comment on those characteristics of the development of adult education in York which played a prominent part in the formation of the attitudes and expectations of the present. It has been mentioned that religion played its part in imbuing the individual adult with a desire to be at least well enough educated to understand the elements of his faith. The Nonconformists, in particular the Quakers, who laid great stress on the need to fight evil with knowledge were especially active in York and the Adult Schools of the early 19th century, although they established the important fact that adults, even those who were illiterate, could learn, drew their force from the religious and social zeal of their founders.

1. Sir George Newman, A Quaker Centenary, an address delivered at Bootham School, York, 21 May, 1923 (London, 1923), p.9.

Although it has been stated that the origins of adult education were rooted in religion, the secular impulses of the industrial age provided much of the direction and definition of organised adult education. The leisure time pursuits of the rising commercial and professional classes in the second half of the 18th century were shaped by the increasing circulation of newspapers and periodicals, the popularity of circulating libraries and the formation of literary, musical and scientific societies. For a relatively short time during the first half of the 19th century, the Mechanics' Institutes became the focus of a movement to include the skilled workers and craftsmen of an increasingly industrial society in the development of these secular interests.

Self-improvement, the acquisition of knowledge to change the individual's place in society, and a demand for political change were all part of the *raison d'être* of the Mechanics' Institutes. Sadly, in York as elsewhere, the lack of a state system of public education led to the early demise or radical change in function and clientele of the Institute. A similar change was experienced by the other early organisations for adult education.

The number of different voluntary organisations concerned with the education of adults in the 19th century reveals the variety of needs and purposes which gave rise to their creation. Well into the second half of the 19th century, perhaps the most ambitious of these experiments in adult education, university-extension classes, came into being. Thomas Kelly has written "At a time when many adult education movements were tending to drift in the direction of technical and vocational education, ... the universities clearly restated the concept of liberal study". Furthermore, "... the universities established a tradition of liberal study which has ever since been the distinctive work and special pride of English

1. adult education". After the initial phase of the extension classes perhaps the classes in York were at their closest to expressed adult needs and the realities of the adult world when provided jointly with the Workers' Educational Association. After the turn of the century the voluntary bodies concerned with liberal education for adults revealed a conscious awareness of the need for democratic action enlightened by knowledge and the fact that adult learning was ready to partake in the pleasures of serious study.

It is quite clear that the York School Board, who began the Evening Continuation Schools, established a pattern which was to change little over the years. The Board's Successor, York Education Authority, was content to continue providing a rudimentary education in English and Arithmetic, give some training in Commercial and Domestic subjects and add to their scheme piecemeal as the need arose. The ideal of a liberal education for adults as envisaged by A. H. D. Acland was not evident from the programme of classes arranged and those adults who did attend classes in their leisure-time were placed alongside youths and girls for whom the service was an educational necessity.

The decision to separate vocational classes from non-vocational study in 1904 would have been admirable had it succeeded. In fact vocational classes were allowed to expand at the Evening Institutes until the whole emphasis of their work was preparatory trade training, commerce and domestic crafts. The Institutes undertook work more suited to a technical and commercial college - but, of course, there was no alternative in York at that time. The North Eastern Railway had provided facilities for technical training for

1.

T. Kelly, *op.cit.*, p.237.

their own employees and city students. The York Education Committee did make an annual grant towards the cost of this establishment but this was little more than conscience money - a point clearly made by an Inspector in the Committee's Annual Report of 1907 - 1908.

The Special Committee's Report on Technical Education in 1912 came too late to redeem the situation and the Evening Schools were committed to providing vocational education until the end of the First World War. Even after the war when York Technical School was finally established there was still a dearth of direct provision of non-vocational classes for the city's adults. Throughout their history the Evening Schools suffered from poor attendance and the factors contributing to this were many and varied, but there is little doubt that the main reason for a lack of enthusiasm in York was the uninteresting classes which were offered.

It was not to be until 1964 some seventy years after their inception, that the Evening Schools were able to shake off the shackles which had hindered the development of non-vocational courses for so long. In that year all vocational courses were transferred to the Technical College and full time Heads appointed to breathe new life into the Evening Centres. The results were quite remarkable. In two years enrolment figures quadrupled and continued to increase substantially as new courses in all manner of subjects appeared in the programmes. There was an awakening interest in non-vocational adult education and a sudden demand for classes which the new-style Evening Centres were able to at last fulfil.

Until the Education Act of 1902 the Local Education Authorities had hardly concerned themselves directly with the education of adults. From this time their role gradually became greater and they began not only to make grants to voluntary bodies, but also to seek their own premises and became direct providers themselves.

The Education Act of 1918 encouraged the L.E.A's to provide more adult education and the 1944 Act quite definitely gave them the main responsibility for it, so that clearly adult education was intended to be an integral part of the national system of education. Good intentions, however, without the deeds or the money to back them up were not much comfort to the adult seeking an outlet for his energies and interests. There has been an attempt earlier in this study to show that liberal adult education in York bears out C. J. Chenezix-Trench's comment that "It is hard to think of any other educational service which has been given lower priority in national policy since 1945 ... "^{1.} Since 1945 the main blame for the situation which has existed in many places, including York, until very recently, must be attributed to the Ministry or Department of Education which has never given enough lead and encouragement to the local education authorities as it could have done, had successive Ministers chosen to exercise the power granted to them by the 1944 Act. Although the present volume of work undertaken by the L.E.A. is gratifying - considering its historical development - there remains something missing in the world of non-vocational adult education. A sense of purpose and value is lacking and somehow "local education authorities have still to be convinced that adult education is normal - as normal as schools for children or as technical education."^{2.} If these attitudes were more widespread among local authorities they could be left to look after provision so that workers in the field could turn their attention to other pressing problems.

One such problem which may be considered relevant to this discussion is why, with a growing (though far too slowly) volume of

1.

F.W.Jessup, Lifelong Learning, (Oxford, 1969), p.139.

2.

Ibid, p.147.

provision for liberal adult education in the community there is so much apathy towards it. Mr. Chenevix-Trench would offer two possible answers.¹ Firstly, as adult education is one of the main vehicles of expression of the idealists in our society, he feels that the idealists act as a "sort of leaven which the lump is never sure it wants but who will continue to campaign against odds to bring opportunities to the people for the uses of mind and body which lend quality and significance to individual living. As these idealists are such a minority group in the community, any provision they succeed in securing tends to interest only a small section of the population. Secondly, in educating the young, the main characteristic of formal education this century has been the steady development of an intellectual élite. Consequently, there has been a virtual take-over of adult education by the professional and middle classes "They are the ex-grammar school boys and girls to whom along formal education has given any propensity for self-education through life."² The ex-grammar school contingent represents a highly favoured articulate minority group in society and the much larger proportion of secondary (formerly elementary) pupils find themselves equipped to undertake a vocational training and little else.

Other adult education not provided by the L.E.A's (that is to say, that provided by University Extra-Mural Classes and the Responsible Bodies) though it is in many ways most adventurous and successful, really only serves to aggravate the situation for it caters largely for an already well-educated section of the public. Thus the dichotomy in non-vocational adult education is further emphasised.

¹. Ibid, p.140.

². Ibid, p.141.

Local Education Authority provision for liberal adult education, it seems, is a good example of the observation that "... it often happens in education that the most socially desirable provision is the most expensive: (therefore) it usually receives low priority."¹ It would, however, be possible for an education authority to greatly improve its provision without drastic increases in expenditure if it were to make better use of existing premises, facilities and equipment. Moreover, despite economic restrictions, some L.E.A.'s notably London, Cambridgeshire, Leicester and Nottingham have pioneered new concepts in adult education which other L.E.A's have been slow to learn from, let alone act upon.

Although in the past York L.E.A. has, regrettably, often been slow to adopt new policies for non-vocational adult education, at the moment considerable changes in the authority's provision are afoot. From 1972 the city will have for the first time three heads of centres employed full-time in organising liberal adult education. For the first time also, there will be a purposeful effort to establish better communications in sections of the city's population in order to attract to adult education some of that large, and apparently apathetic majority of the community which remains indifferent to present provision. The fact that there are dangers inherent in such a departure have not been overlooked. Raymond Williams criticised the missionary approach to adult education for the working class more than ten years ago.² He was at pains to point out that if the approach were too paternalistic, too concerned to give "them", what is considered worthwhile in "our" culture, it

1.

D.F.Bratchell, The Aims and Organisation of Further Education, (London, 1968), p.15.

2.

R.Williams, The Common Good, Adult Education, Vol.34, No.4. (November, 1961).

would be greeted with vigorous scepticism not the apathy which is generally regarded as the main cause for the failure of the adult education movement to evoke any response from the majority of the population.

Tom Lovett, W.E.A. Tutor Organizer in Liverpool and Head of Adult Education Division "Priority" - a centre for urban community education - while basically agreeing with Williams, nevertheless believes that he underestimates the inadequacies of the present educational system. Lovett, therefore, approves of missionary work - not in a paternalistic sense "but rather in the sense of recognising the problem for what it is - a major defect in the educational system at primary and secondary level. His version of missionary work would entail ASSISTING those who have suffered from the system and moulding "the adult educational provision to the needs of adults - rather than imposing preconceived notions of what they need"¹. This kind of approach is exactly what York L.E.A. has in mind for its new programme in the session 1972 - 1973 for it would not dispute that "The choice to continue to be educated remains voluntary in adult life"².

In non-vocational adult education "liberal education" is more usually considered to be the kind of provision organised by the university extra-mural departments and the responsible bodies rather than the kind of provision organised by the L.E.A's, but the writer has not made any such distinctions in this study. Although the L.E.A. provision may operate at a humbler level than university extension work and usually has to take place in ad hoc conditions, "Whatever the context, adult education is of necessity

1.

T. Lovett, Light at the End of the Mersey Tunnel, Education and Training, Vol. 14 No. 2 (February, 1972).

2.

N. Dees, Approaches to Adult Teaching, op.cit., p.3.

concerned with the interrelations between individuals in groups and with changes in the individuals themselves."^{1.} The local authority's task, therefore, is to establish points of contact with the community whose lifelong education it is responsible for and to harmonize its work with that of the responsible bodies. There should be an attempt to regard classes in dressmaking, woodwork or costume jewellery etc., as having valid dignity and importance in themselves. Chenevix-Trench has described these classes as "bridgeheads: points from which perhaps one day, a man or woman may move on to bigger adventures of the mind and the soul".^{2.} Such classes then surely deserve to be considered as affording a liberal education.^{3.}

Nationally during the last ten years or so, and in York since 1964, there has been evidence that the evening centres are gradually fulfilling a role more suitable to liberal adult education. A brighter, more flexible programme, combined with better publicity has led to an improved public image and a larger, more socially representative, clientele. Despite an improved flow of statistical information also, "The factors which determine the adult's choice in education and indeed his decision as to whether he will seek formal assistance at all are (still) not wholly known ...^{3.} It may be that it is the formal, organised element in adult education today which makes it difficult to attract adults in greater numbers and from a wider cross-section of the community. Michael Pedlar, warden of a community centre in Derbyshire thinks "Perhaps one of the reasons why adult education only touches a small percentage of the population is that its structure is such that it attracts mainly

^{1.} C.J.Chenevix-Trench in Lifelong Learning, op.cit., p.148.

^{2.} See also N. Dees, Approaches to Adult Teaching, op.cit., p.19.

^{3.} N. Dees, op.cit., p.5.

the "outsiders", rather than those who normally find their expression in group activity"¹. The problem is, of course, that "the outsiders" constitute such a tiny percentage of the adult population. Another problem is that the adolescent and young adult is not particularly well catered for in non-vocational education and often the dismaying experience of the hard slog of part-time vocational education prevents his seeking any kind of adult education for several years. Perhaps in the future with some answers provided by research into the prediction of vocational suitability and sociological studies of adult education, plus the greater occupational choice available, there will be a much greater congruence between liberal and vocational education, which in itself will stimulate adult education.²

Some adult education workers, however, feel as Dr. J. Lowe feels, that it is not enough to research attendance motives and to provide attractive programmes. He states that there are other, perhaps more important, considerations to be taken into account. In his opinion, which is shared by the Principals of the City Literary Institute, London, whom he praises as progressive innovators, "a programme of adult education does not touch people and hold their permanent attention if it is merely confined to offering classroom work. In addition, it must enable students to feel personally engaged in a corporate social and intellectual effort"³.

One possible solution to these problems, which it appears that Dr. Lowe is recommending, is the community centre, which wants

¹. M. Pedler, In a Town Like Alfreton, Alfreton Hall Community Centre, (Ripley, 1969), p.21.

². See for example J.H.Eyre, "The prediction of vocational suitability from Secondary Modern School record cards". Thesis accepted for the degree of M.Ed., at the University of Manchester, 1968.

³. J. Lowe, Adult Education in England and Wales, (Woking, 1970), p.67.

people to become involved in its affairs rather than simply to be regarded as providing an impersonal service. Robert Atkins, Director of what is possibly England's most ambitious new community centre at Kendal, in describing his plans said, "Our long-term aims are to develop outlets for the arts, but it seems that what we need to do in the first place is to start building a foundation of community use"¹. Undoubtedly other areas will be watching closely Kendal's interesting experiment which will involve its members in converting an old brewery into a centre.

Since 1860 the average industrial worker has gained approximately 500 hours a year of non-work time, and at each stage of this increase some public concern has been expressed about the social and moral consequences of the increase in leisure time. In Great Britain the decrease in the working week has now reached the stage where in many industries the basic week is 40 hours. In the United States of America the car industry has achieved a working week of 35 hours and there is every reason to believe that a similar cut will soon follow here:-

"As a result leisure is no longer the privilege of the few and the dream of many: it is now a right expected and demanded by all. The purposeful use of leisure is the main responsibility of Adult Education and the increase in leisure will carry with it an increased demand for non-vocational courses in every subject".

2.

If, as the above statement predicts, there is such an increased demand, perhaps we shall see the present-day evening centre superseded by something like the Cambridgeshire Village College system, in the not too distant future. Certainly a good proportion

1. Yorkshire Post, 30 March, 1972.

2. National Association of Schoolmasters, Proposed Submission to the Russell Committee - Revised Draft. Appendix "Z(d)" (12/69). (22 November, 1969), p.108.

of the new purpose-built community centres are making an attempt to provide a service that exists to initiate education, not just to continue the education of the already educated. They are aiming to do this partly by involving the students as directly as possible in the running of their own affairs - as the Adult Schools and Settlements did long ago.

York has seen a variety of different and earnest attempts to provide a liberal education for adults and though, as has been pointed out, not all of them have been successful, they nevertheless form a valuable store of experience upon which future attempts may draw.

The University of York, finally founded in 1962, after many attempts to create a university in the city, although it provides cultural "fringe" benefits and occasional facilities for adult education by special request, as yet plays no real role in liberal adult education in the city. It may be that once initial priorities have been fulfilled York University will feel able to establish something akin to an Institute of Continuing Education (vis a vis Ulster) which incorporates departments of Community Studies and Liberal and Contemporary Studies. It would then be admirably placed to help co-ordinate the work done in the city by the Responsible Bodies, the Settlement and the other smaller voluntary organisations. A communications and study centre for the mass media and facilities for short residential courses, summer schools etc., could also develop quite naturally once such an institute had been established. Now it is necessary for the fine phraseology which has characterised official pronouncements on adult education as a whole since 1919, and has been echoed in several major reports since then, to be replaced by positive deeds on the part of the central government and the release of sufficient funds to back them up.

It may still be fairly stated that the future of liberal adult education in York rests where it rested principally in the past also - in the relationship between tutor and student, with the tutor initially shouldering the major responsibility. Perhaps the final statement should be left to George Hauger, one such tutor in the field of adult education.

"In the end, any tutor must be judged by the effect he has on his students. If he is helping them to realise their potentialities, to become themselves, he is being fair to the liberal. If he is helping them to acknowledge and profit from their actual experience and their status he is being fair to the adult. If he is helping them to change as persons, he is being fair to education".^{1.}

1.
G. Hauger, op.cit., p.18.

APPENDICES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Name	Residence	Date of entering school	Date of leaving school	Time spent in school	When born	Where born	Previous attendance at Sunday schools	Previous attendance at day schools	Denomination	Employment	Remarks
William Lawson	Bishophill Junior	7 April			1819	Crake nr. York.		Nil		Sawyer at Baynes & Duffils	Has learnt to read little since he was 43 years old and had 15 children
John Laverick	Marygate (married)	28 April 1861			1834	Selby		None as a child		Tanner	Learnt to read since he was partly Selby Mechanical Institution
Boocock Edward	15 Nunnery Lane (married)	10 April 1859	5 July 1859	3 months	1835	York		Hope St. (Crosley)		Painter	Served the Criminal Unsatisfactory character

Name	Residence	Date of entering school	Date of leaving school	Time spent in school	When born	Where born	Previous attendance at Sunday schools	Previous attendance at day schools	Denomination	Employment	Remarks
Morley Job	Eldon St. 21 Bootham Square after marriage in 1856.	previous to Jan. 1856			1833	York	Attended F.S.S. Hope St. from its origin	Bootham National Salem.	Church?	Wood carver	
Whitehead Robert	11 Mill Lane (married)	"	5 July 1857	1 year 9 months		Selby	Learnt to read at a S.Sc. Selby	Nil		Iron moulder	Went work a Factory about yrs. age. Learnt to w. fair in t. clas of a more disp itio

Extracted from York Friends Sabbath and Adult School Records 1848 - 1948.

Public Notices - Yorkshire Evening Press - Saturday, 25th November, 1893.

Y O R K S C H O O L B O A R D

FREE EVENING CONTINUATION CLASSES
for Males and Females will be held
in the Shipton Street and George Street
Board Schools during the coming Session

Commencing 11th December, 1893.

The classes will be held on
MONDAYS, TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS
from 7.30 p.m. to 9.

PRELIMINARY MEETINGS

At the respective schools, to consider subjects
and to distribute Free Admission tickets, will be
held at 7.30 p.m. on

Monday December 4th 1893 for Males and Females over 18 years of age
Thursday December 7th 1893 for Males and Females under 18 years of age

NO DAY SCHOLARS WILL BE ADMITTED

Subjects to be taught:-
(from which candidates will select not more than three)

Writing and Composition, Arithmetic, Algebra, History, Geography,
(illustrated with Lantern views), Shorthand, Elementary and Experi-
mental Science, Life and Duties of a Citizen, Physical Exercises,
Music and Book-keeping.

Subjects for females only:-

Needlework, Domestic Economy, Cookery, Dressmaking, Cutting Out and
Musical Drill.

The Instruction will be made as bright and interesting as possible.

The attendances of Persons over 21 years of age, as well as under, are now
recognised by the Government.

No examination at the end of the Session will be held, except for Pupils
who wish to obtain Pitman's Shorthand Certificates.

Appendix IV

YORK SCHOOL BOARD - EVENING CONTINUATION SCHOOL ENROLMENTS

at 18th October in

	1893 1894	1894 1895	1895 1896	1896 1897	1897 1898	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902
<u>SHIPTON STREET</u>										
Class enrolments	1294	512			228					
Individuals	428	258			-					
<u>GEORGE STREET</u>										
Class enrolments	1110	414								
Individuals	330	176								
<u>PRIORY STREET</u>										
Class enrolments		583	1414							
Individuals		253	347							
<u>PARK GROVE</u>										
Class enrolments			1495	642	184	219	413	410	497	524
Individuals			460	225	-	92	176	184	207	290
<u>FISHERGATE</u>										
Class enrolments			1240	414	511	233	287	328	368	254
Individuals			342	137	-	75	130	150	170	128
<u>SCARCROFT</u>										
Class enrolments				808	328	328	552	508	497	552
Individuals				332	-	135	233	301	280	305
<u>TOTALS</u>										
Class enrolments	2404	1509	4149	1864	1051	780	1252	1246	1362	1330
Individuals	758	687	1149	694	496	302	539	635	657	723

I includes figures for Shipton Street.

II Session divided into two terms; figures include count in both terms.

YORK SCHOOL BOARD.

EVENING CONTINUATION CLASSES

Will be held at PARK GROVE BOARD SCHOOL,
at FISHERGATE BOARD SCHOOL,
and at SCARCROFT BOARD SCHOOL,

DURING THE WINTER SESSION,

COMMENCING ON OCTOBER 5th, 1896.

THE CLASSES WILL BE HELD
ON MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS.

An Entrance Fee of 1/- for every subject taken will be charged for the whole Session of six months. Fees will not be returned, and Students must take not less than Two, nor more than five Subjects, exclusive of Woodwork and Drill.

At the Scarcroft School instruction in Science (Science and Art Department) and in Ambulance Work will be given, and Special Fees will be charged. For particulars application should be made at the Scarcroft School, and see advertisements in local papers.

PRELIMINARY MEETINGS

For selecting Subjects, and at which Entry Forms will be distributed, will be held at the respective Schools, from 7-30 to 9 p.m.,

On MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th, for Students over 17 Years of Age;

On TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29th, „ „ under 17 „ „

SUBJECTS TO BE TAUGHT:—Writing, Arithmetic, Shorthand, Vocal Music, French, Mensuration, Dress-making, Needlework, Drawing, Cookery, Science, Musical Drill, Book-keeping, Woodwork, Decorative Work, and Ambulance.

The attendances of persons over 21 years of age, as well as under, are now recognised by the Government.

No Examination will be held at the end of the Session, except in Drawing; and of those Students who wish to obtain Pitman's Shorthand Certificates, or of those who desire to obtain Science or Ambulance Certificates.

YORK EDUCATION COMMITTEE - EVENING CENTRE ENROLMENTSas at 22nd October each year

	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914
<u>FISHERGATE</u>											
Class enrolments	301	175	318	267	327	411	643	335	385	340	278
Individuals	171	152	248	228	276	364	411	320	318	298	263
<u>PARK GROVE</u>											
Class enrolments	221	242	368	311	357	363	394	265	317	293	244
Individuals	123	184	275	271	306	311	311	263	299	240	234
<u>SCARCROFT</u>											
Class enrolments	598	400	564	585	622	746	779	652	624	549	541
Individuals	231	318	464	460	489	592	599	551	615	531	525
<u>SHIPTON STREET</u>											
Class enrolments.	-	-	-	-	-	89	96	82	76	92	96
Individuals						57	60	74	71	80	96
<u>ST. BEDERN</u>											
Class enrolments	-	-	-	-	153	149	114	41	-	42	26
Individuals					104	122	114	21		21	13
<u>ST. DENY'S</u>											
Class enrolments	-	-	-	-	169	51					
Individuals					94	51					
<u>ST. BARNABAS</u>											
Class enrolments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78	54	40
Individuals									62	54	39
<u>TOTALS</u>											
Class enrolments	1120	817	1250	1163	1306	1809	2026	1375	1480	1370	1225
Individuals.	525	654	987	959	1269	1497	1495	1229	1365	1224	1170

All figures taken from the Education Committee Annual Reports for the respective year.

† Classes on Thursdays held for men only in Arithmetic and English.

‡ Opened November, 1908.

SYLLABUS OF SUBJECTS AND COURSES.

I. ARITHMETIC.—(Course 1) Simple and Compound Practice; Bills; Rule of Three.

(Course 2) Vulgar and Decimal Fractions; Interest; Proportion.

(Course 3) Percentages; Profit and Loss; Stocks; Averages.

II. WRITING AND COMPOSITION.—

1. Dictation; Transcription; Spelling; Hand-writing.

2. Story-writing; Rules of Composition.

3. Essay and Letter Writing.

III. SHORTHAND.—Pitman's System, Elementary and Advanced.

IV. SCIENCES.—Chemistry, Practical and Theoretical. Physiography and Hygiene (at the Scarcroft School only, *see Special Leaflet*).

V. BOOK-KEEPING.—Commercial Terms. Use of Cash Book, Purchases Book, Sales Book, Double Entry, Bills of Exchange, Bills Receivable Book, Bills Payable Book, Ledger Accounts, Bad Debts, &c., &c.

VI. FRENCH.—Grammatical Rules; Easy Conversational Phrases and Sentences; Correct Pronunciation. Macmillan's First French Course will be used for beginners.

An Advanced Class will be formed, if necessary.

VII. MUSIC.—Tonic-Sol-Fa and Staff Notations; Time and Tune; Ear and Voice Training; Gleees and Part Songs.

VIII. DRAWING.—Freehand and Geometrical Drawing; Drawing to Scale; Plans and Elevations.

IX. NEEDLEWORK AND DRESSMAKING.—Plain Needlework; the Cutting-out and Making of a Dress.

X. COOKERY LECTURES AND DOMESTIC ECONOMY.—

XI. MENSURATION.—Triangles and Parallelograms; Use of the Chain and Field Book in Land Surveying; Duodecimals; Measuring Brickwork and Timber.

XII. WOODWORK.—Use of Tools taught and the Making of Useful Articles.

XIII. DECORATIVE WORK.—Artificial Flower-making, &c.

XIV. AMBULANCE.—This Class will be taken by D. S. Long, Esq., M.D. (who kindly gives his services), in connection with the St. John's Ambulance Association, which will award Certificates to successful Students.

APPENDIX IX

ENROLMENTS AT EVENING SCHOOLS AND EVENING SCHOOL OF COMMERCE 1914 TO 1935

1914 - 15	1334	1925 - 26	1419 *
1915 - 16	1232	1926 - 27	1550
1916 - 17	1081	1927 - 28	1732
1917 - 18	1286	1928 - 29	1726
1918 - 19	1793	1929 - 30	1846
1919 - 20	2001	1930 - 31	1945
1920 - 21	1905	1931 - 32	1967
1921 - 22	1478	1932 - 33	1591
1922 - 23	1237	1933 - 34	1547
1923 - 24	144	1934 - 35	1897
1924 - 25	1238	1935 - 36	1843

* Includes special adult Cookery and Dressmaking Classes from 1925 - 1936.

ENROLMENTS IN THE SPECIAL ADULT COOKERY AND DRESSMAKING CLASSES - 1925 - 1935.

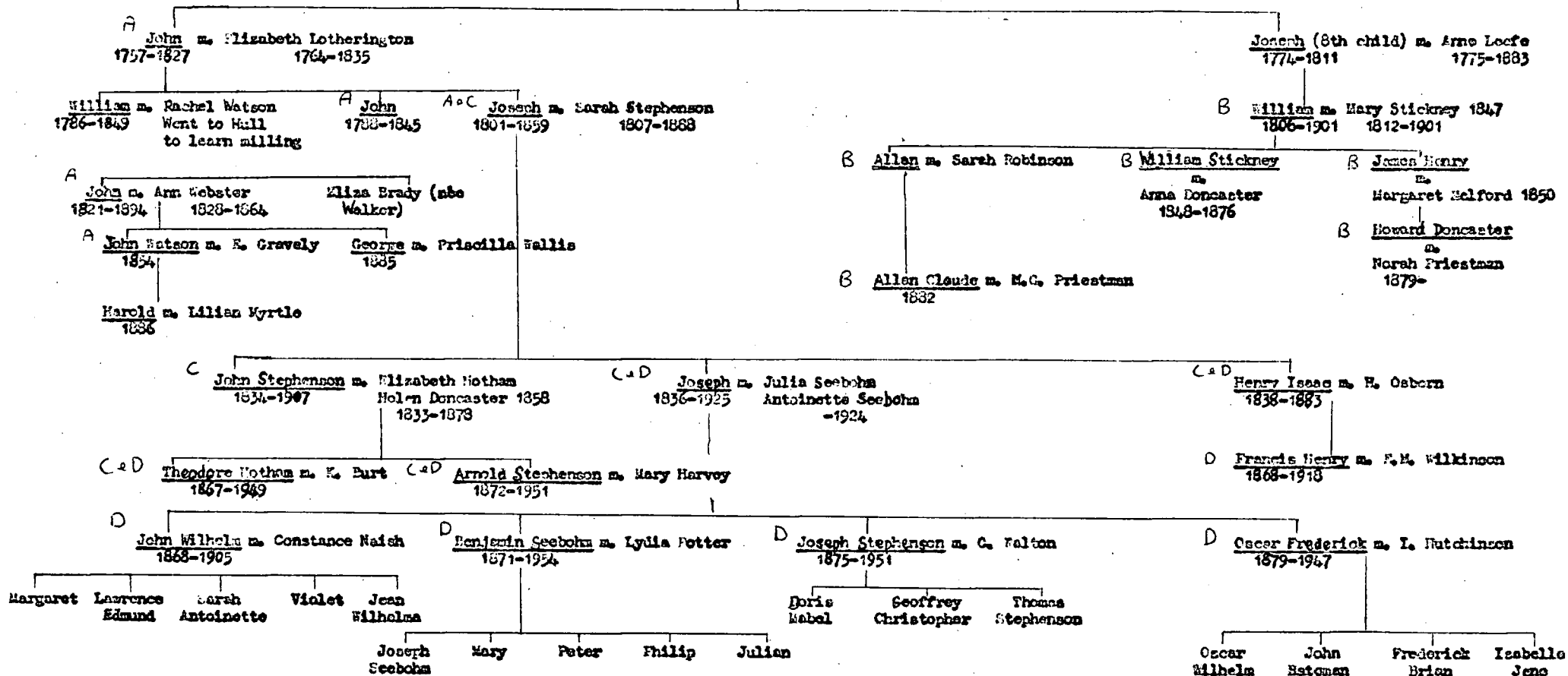
1925 - 1926	64	1930 - 1931	155
1926 - 1927	153	1931 - 1932	107
1927 - 1928	206	1932 - 1933	107
1928 - 1929	95	1933 - 1934	86
1929 - 1930	129	1934 - 1935	50
		1935 - 1936	49

Appendix No. X

Analysis of Student Enrolment According to Sex and Age as at 1st November in each year

Educational Year	Sex	Ages of Students								Totals	% under 21	Proportion male: female (approx)
		Under 15	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 and over			
1965/66	Male	-	2	4	3	2	1	-	40	52		1:3
	Female	-	4	9	5	4	6	3	117	148		
	Total	-	6	13	8	6	7	3	157	200	21.5	
1966/67	Male	-	3	4	9	4	1	1	117	139		1:3
	Female	-	5	11	11	11	12	11	521	382		
	Total	-	8	15	20	15	13	12	438	521	15.9	
1967/68	Male	-	14	10	6	11	3	5	182	211		1:3
	Female	-	18	13	15	12	19	17	480	574		
	Total	-	32	23	21	23	22	22	662	785	18.2	
1968/69	Male	1	6	6	4	4	2	2	170	195		1:3
	Female	-	12	9	8	8	3	4	573	617		
	Total	1	18	15	12	12	5	6	743	812	8.5	
1969/70	Male	-	4	5	6	5	3	1	156	182		1:3
	Female	-	5	6	4	13	8	5	529	570		
	Total	-	9	11	12	18	11	6	685	752	8.9	

William Rountree m. Hannah Hobron
1723 - 1793
Farmer at Riseboro, Parish of Normanhby, Vale of Pickering



In the interests of clarity, this table has been abbreviated and does not necessarily show all the children of each marriage.

To the Editor of the Yorkshire Gazette

Sir,

I am, upon the whole, friendly to Mechanics' Institutes, as I think they are a means of conveying much useful knowledge to the lower classes; but I think the mode of conducting them might be improved. You must know I am one of the old school, and of course am in the habit of having my family about me at nine o'clock for prayer, and to retire to rest. I have several apprentices, some of whom are members of the Institute; and there are lectures and classes three or four times a week which begin at eight o'clock, and do not generally leave before ten; which I humbly think is much too late for apprentices to be out of their masters' houses. If they were to begin at half past seven, and conclude at five or ten minutes before nine, it would, I think, be much better; and those who attend them would have an opportunity of being at home at a proper time. Those who are single, are surely much better at home than being late in the streets; and those who are married, set only a very poor example to their families, by being out late. I should be sorry to hinder any over whom I have control from obtaining what knowledge they can, but if I cannot have them at home by nine o'clock, I shall be under the necessity of putting a stop to their attendance altogether.

There is also another thing of which I much complain. I mean the astonishing numbers of loose girls who openly and wantonly parade not only the back, but even the most public streets of the city; insulting and ensnaring those who are about their lawful callings, and this in the face of open day, - for I understand that after ten o'clock (when the police are sent out) they generally retire to their dens. Almost all travellers agree, that York is one of the worst places in the kingdom for girls of this description; but is it either wise or consistent with Christianity to suffer these things? - to allow such characters to carry on their abominations and corrupt the morals of the rising generation without restraint? - might this not be driven entirely from our streets or at least out of the public ones? Might not the police have leave to act and be sent out at six o'clock as well as at ten? Is there no way to stop the evil and retrieve the character of our ancient city? If you could by means of your useful paper, suggest any ideas, or be the cause in any way of redressing those grievances, you will confer great favour on the public, and especially on yours.

A CITIZEN.

P.S. Those girls at present laugh at the police, and dare them to touch them before ten o'clock.

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