

# FORUM

*for the discussion of*  
NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION  
*contents*

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R. J. Williams

**The Education of the Average Child: A Symposium**

J. W. Tibble

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by H. E. Hopper, Harold Loukes,  
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M. Collins, M. F. Welford

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## The Average Child

WHAT IS THE average child capable of achieving ? How best should he be educated ? These are crucial questions today. The traditional view—that only a small minority is gifted enough to achieve significant intellectual success—is, of course, derived from a school system still dominated by streaming, selection, and the other devices developed for the purpose of winnowing an élite from the mass.

We believe that it is at present impossible to set a ceiling to the powers of the great majority of human beings. The conditions under which their abilities can fully flower do not yet exist. The great debate on whether nature or nurture is more important is, in present circumstances, rather sterile. What matters is to give the best possible nurture to nature. Then, and only then, shall we be in a position to sit back for a moment and measure the results.

The new forms of education now developing are, however, beginning to provide the conditions where the education of the average child assumes something approaching respectability. Where the comprehensive school really puts an end to segregation, as at Port Talbot, a true unification of the educational process through the primary to the secondary school becomes possible. Mr. Williams' article shows the educational advantages of this unification. It is the kind of co-operative thinking and practice he describes which holds out the greatest promise for the future.

Mr. Rowe's forthcoming book, which prompted our symposium on this subject, may well set the world of school by the ears. For not only does he challenge a lot of current assumptions : he has proved that his idealism works in practice, under the normal material conditions of an ordinary school.

But *how well* does it work ? That this is a highly controversial topic is evident from the three contributions. To what extent must teaching—or rather learning—be individualised ? Is class teaching in fact outdated ? Can we, should we, seek to combine the release of individual initiative with an ordered framework of learning ? These are some of the questions which are raised.

Other articles deal more or less directly with the same central problem. Can or should *every* child learn a foreign language ? If so, how best can it be taught ? Can *all* children benefit from field studies in history, and, for that matter, in other subjects, and how should this work be organised ? And finally, how best can "Children who are Backward," as Mr. Segal puts it, be given the opportunity to overcome their difficulties and take their place alongside their fellows in the normal classroom ?

No final answers to these questions are given or can yet be given. This in itself underlines the necessity to carry on this discussion and to deepen its content. It is for this purpose that FORUM exists.



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## **Revised publication dates**

The following are the provisional revised dates for publication of books announced in the last issue :

*Burton* : **Handbook of English Practice 2: 7th December**

*MacGregor-Hastie* : **A Case for Poetry: 5th October**

*New Visual Geography* : **Ice-Cap and Tundra and The Northern Forests: 7th December**

*Devenport* : **The Devenport Library (Pre-Readers): 14th December**

# Co-operation with our Junior Partners

R. J. WILLIAMS

*Mr. Williams is headmaster of Sandfields comprehensive school, Port Talbot, Glamorgan. He began his career as a civil servant in the Ministry of Supply before deciding to teach. He became modern languages master at Neath Boys' grammar school, and subsequently education officer for the Port Talbot and Glyn-corrwg Division of Glamorgan*

THE SANDFIELDS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, which was opened in September, 1958, caters for the large new housing estate built at Sandfields, Port Talbot.

At the present time, the school has a ten form entry, pupils being drawn from the three contributory junior schools serving the area. These schools are all situated within a radius of a mile and a half of us.

In addition, pupils living on the estate but attending the Roman Catholic school outside the immediate catchment area may be admitted to the school, if their parents so desire.

Happily, the Glamorgan L.E.A. had the courage to abolish the 11+ examination for all children eligible to enter the school—although they were in the unenviable position of having to continue the examination in the remainder of the town!

These two factors—the proximity of the contributory schools, and the abolition of the 11+—created an ideal situation for the integration of primary and secondary education on the estate. And we were not slow to grasp the precious opportunity which the situation afforded.

From the very outset—and we must go back several months before the school opened—we have worked in very close collaboration with our colleagues in the junior schools. As a result, a most harmonious relationship exists between us. With each passing month, the bonds of our partnership are strengthened; we become increasingly aware that we are working together in this new and exciting venture.

## A sense of continuity

From our side, we owe a great debt of gratitude to our "junior partners" for the information, advice, and untiring help they have given, and are giving us at every step of the way.

They, on their side, welcome consultation, and feel a deep sense of relief that the 11+ is a thing of the past. They are alive to the opportunities offered by the new set-up. The undue emphasis upon examinable subjects has been replaced by a situation where all subjects may be given their proper place in the daily teaching. Furthermore, the teachers feel a sense of continuity. They are no longer teaching subjects *in vacuo* without any

contact with the secondary school to which their pupils will ultimately go. As a result of the consultation existing, they know that what they are teaching in *each* subject in the curriculum will follow on logically to what we are teaching at the secondary stage.

## New responsibilities

The pundits prophesied that the abolition of the 11+ would lead to irresponsibility, to a devil-may-care attitude in the junior schools. On the contrary, everyone is conscious of a widened responsibility: to ensure that *every* child's gifts are discovered and developed so that he may profit from the increased facilities offered by the comprehensive school.

Allied to this, the junior school teachers in this "experimental pocket" in Glamorgan feel that they have the added responsibility of demonstrating that the abolition of the 11+, far from resulting in a lowering of educational attainment due to lack of so-called incentive, opens up wider educational horizons for children, gives them a fuller, more interesting, more satisfying school life. The flow of new ideas stemming from the sensible study of geography and history, handwork, art, music—now that these subjects are no longer squeezed out by the exigencies of the examination—enables maximum emphasis to be laid on what should be one of the basic essentials in the educational process: self-expression.

The story of our co-operation is a very happy one. It began with the school uniform. The colour scheme, style, and badge had already been decided—we are, incidentally, very grateful to the junior school staffs for several useful suggestions they made—and the time was ripe for a little propaganda work with our future pupils. We were particularly anxious to "sell" the idea of a uniform, and requested permission from our colleagues to visit their schools.

This was immediately granted. With very great enthusiasm the heads conducted the deputy and me from classroom to classroom. To each class our little piece was said, and, invariably, the accompanying head endorsed it with the whole weight of his or her authority.

The result was most gratifying. On the one hand, the pupils were thrilled at the prospect of wearing a uniform, which, mercifully, met with their complete approval. On the other hand, we had been afforded a very early opportunity of establishing a contact—and a very happy one—with the children.

Later, sample uniforms were made up, and shown at the schools to the pupils. We were thus afforded a second opportunity of meeting the children under very favourable circumstances.

Finally, a letter was sent through the junior school heads to the parents of the children expected to enter our school. The importance of the uniform was stressed, and the co-operation of the parents sought.

Our colleagues continued the propaganda with such good effect that out of a total of 750 children entering the school, not more than a dozen were without the uniform.

We found this tremendously encouraging—our first great triumph of teamwork. The uniform created a sense of pride in, and loyalty to the school; it helped to establish good tone; but, above all, it emphasised the essential social equality which all children enjoy within the school.

Our next important “combined operation” was the initial classification of the pupils. This was not, as is generally believed in certain quarters, a higgledy-piggledy mix-up of pupils into groups irrespective of ability. On the contrary, it was a careful drafting of pupils into homogeneous groups on the basis of ability as it stood revealed at that time: a worthy aim—and here we are at one with the sceptics—both in the interests of children and teachers!

### Historic days

The task of classification brought us into the very closest contact with our colleagues. First of all, we classified the pupils as a purely paper operation on the basis of school records furnished by the junior school heads. The next step was a series of meetings with these heads, to whom we presented our lists, and with whom we discussed them in detail. With their intimate knowledge of the children concerned, they were able to make valuable suggestions—invariably after the closest consultation with class teachers—for improving the initial classification.

During this period we had ample opportunity of meeting the children, of seeing their books, of hearing them read. They were beginning to take shape as individuals whose confidence we felt we had already won.

These were, indeed, historic days. There we were, primary and secondary teachers together forging a link between our schools, conscious that

we were all part of a team working to a common end: to secure the fullest possible educational development for our pupils.

The first member of staff to go out “into the field” was the head of the maths. department. He was able to familiarise himself with the methods used and, armed with this knowledge, was in a better position to deal with his pupils when they eventually came to him.

### A new partnership

One of the important things emerging from this early contact on the maths. side was that the junior schools were given guidance by our maths. expert as to what ground he would like the pupils to cover before they were promoted to us. In other words, the abolition of the 11+ had not meant the elimination of desirable objectives!

The discussions were, of course, of mutual benefit: our mathematician learnt, for instance, a great deal about the techniques used in teaching the slower children, and was able to ensure that these techniques were continued by us so that the progress of these children should not suffer as a result of a sudden change of method.

Close on the heels of his maths. colleague went the specialist teacher responsible for the retarded children. His visits were equally of tremendous value. Apart from studying the teaching techniques used, he was able to obtain a clear picture of each child's family background, medical history, educational progress, and so on.

He chatted with the children, and emphasised how much he was looking forward to teaching them. The main object was to win their confidence. His sincerity and sympathy—allied to the active assistance given by his equally sincere and sympathetic junior school colleagues—assured the attainment of this very important goal.

As a result, the retarded children who came to us felt no sense of insecurity: one of the difficult human problems that might have faced us had been solved *before* these children entered the school.

The head of the English department, too, lost no time in gathering all possible information about the work being done in her subject. She was also able to talk to the children about books and reading, and about the wonderful library facilities in the new school. The children were then given a reading list—previously agreed with the junior schools—from which she said it was important they should read a given percentage of books of their own selection before they entered our school.

The object here was twofold: to help the junior school teacher in his work of encouraging the child-

ren to read—in many cases, a difficult task in these days of intensive T.V. viewing; and to make it possible for our English teachers to meet their pupils on a common ground of known reading, which could not but be an excellent starting point for the future development of the subject.

The partnership which characterised these early days has continued ever since the school was opened. Our science specialists, for instance, have discussed the teaching of elementary science with their junior school colleagues, to whom they have given a copy of our first year general science syllabus.

As far as music is concerned, our specialist has heard the children perform in the junior schools. He knows of the repertoire of hymns and songs which they have acquired as juniors. This repertoire will, in future, be used as a basis for the early teaching in our school. Here again pupil and teacher meet on a common ground.

The physical education specialists have seen demonstrations of the junior school teaching methods; the art mistress will be making two visits to the junior school this month; the Welsh, history, geography specialists will follow her—all have plans for the closest liaison with the junior schools.

One of the ideas we have in mind is a one day conference, when the inspectorate, the junior school teachers, and ourselves may meet together, for a series of discussions on the opportunities now presented for the “dovetailing” of primary and secondary education.

#### Future perspectives

Perhaps a word ought to be said about the social aspect of our partnership with the junior schools. The heads have been invited to our school functions as honoured guests. This term we plan to invite them to a special performance of our school concert, together with their staffs and those pupils who will be promoted to us in September.

It has appeared to us from the very beginning that this possibility for a close integration of primary and secondary education is one of the important advantages which can accrue from a comprehensive set-up.

Strangely enough, it is an aspect of comprehensive education which seems never to be given the emphasis and publicity it deserves.

On the Sandfields Estate we are already reaping the rewards of this integration. As the years go by, and the bonds and understanding between our schools grow stronger, the rewards must inevitably become greater—and our pupils will most assuredly benefit in consequence.

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# The Education of the Average Child

## A SYMPOSIUM

*A book of this title, by Mr. A. W. Rowe, was to have been published by George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd. during the summer; its publication has, however, been held up by the dispute in the printing industry.*

*The editorial board considers that this book, which is based on Mr. Rowe's experience as headmaster of a modern secondary school in Buckinghamshire, raises many important issues for practising teachers. We have, therefore, arranged a symposium around these questions.*

*These contributions are clearly controversial. We hope that readers may also feel impelled to take the discussion further in later issues of FORUM; contributions to "Discussion" should be limited to 800 words.*

*The Board wishes to thank the publishers for allowing us to go forward with this symposium in advance of publication of the book.*

### "AN EXPERIMENT WHICH AROSE FROM DEEP CONVICTIONS ABOUT AIMS AND VALUES"

J. W. TIBBLE

*Professor Tibble is Professor of Education at the University of Leicester, and Director of the Institute of Education. He has visited and taught in various European countries, the U.S.A. and Australia. His publications include books on the life and works of the poet, John Clare, and articles in a variety of educational journals*

I FOUND MYSELF saying "Hear! Hear!" so many times in the course of reading Mr. Rowe's book that I feel urged, as much for my own benefit as anyone else's, to try to set down the reasons for this hearty approval.

It is, in the first place, a detailed and practical account of an educational experiment which arose from certain deep convictions about the aims and values which should guide us in the education of that majority of the nation's children who constitute the peak of the normal distribution curve in terms of intelligence and ability. Now there is no lack on the one hand of statements about educational aims and values, enunciated on speech days or set down in print in articles and books about education; what strikes some of us most when we hear or read them is the gap between what they say and the implications of what actually goes on in schools day by day. On the other hand there is, in total, a considerable amount of experiment and invention going on in schools, but it is for the most part concerned with improvements in method or technique which take for granted and leave unquestioned the aims and values embodied in the traditional system, modifications for example in the content of syllabuses or improved methods of getting children through examinations. Attempts to state aims clearly and then work out and put into practice the best means for achieving these goals are indeed rare.

If we are to account for this we must make a little excursion into educational history. There was discovered, or invented, about the middle of the nineteenth century a method of organising schools and teaching children which met an urgent need of that

time. It was sometimes called the simultaneous method and it gradually replaced the earlier device of the monitorial system, the shortcomings of which were very obvious.

The root problem was how to deal with the ever-growing numbers of children attending elementary schools within the economic limits of what the nation then felt it could afford for this purpose in terms of space, equipment and numbers and quality of teachers. Farming out to older pupils under the supervision of a master was the earlier answer. And the evolution of methods whereby one teacher could himself direct and personally supervise simultaneously the learning of quite large groups of children—60 or more—was a definite improvement on this. This system of organisation and method was the basis of the class teaching which has prevailed to the present day and with which we are all so familiar that few of us question it. We are the products of it ourselves.

The point I am making is that it arose out of economic necessity, though this was rationalised in various ways to make it seem desirable on other grounds. It did not arise from a consideration of basic educational principles; and indeed it was always recognised by some that however necessary it might be on grounds of expediency, it involved a very imperfect realisation of some obvious educational principles.

The chief of these are that learning is a process which goes on in the minds (and bodies) of individual children, that individual children vary greatly from each other in capacity, interests, pace of learning, readiness for learning this or that, and dozens of

other ways; and any system which insists on "simultaneous" learning, presenting the same thing in the same way at the same time to a group of children, must involve a large degree of waste, since only a few of them could be working at optimum capacity. Granted that in the last 50 years educational theory and research has adequately emphasised this; and granted that reduction in size of classes, streaming and setting, some provision for group and individual work within a class are all attempts to reduce the disadvantages inherent in class teaching.

But I suggest, and it is for me the main point and value of Mr. Rowe's book, that unless we start at the other end, with the individual nature of the learning process and the varied needs of individual children and relate our means and methods in a thoroughgoing way to this, we are producing but palliatives. It means placing the emphasis on learning not teaching, on the provision of incentives and occasions and materials for learning rather than on teaching methods and skills. The role and skill of the teacher is not less important but it is different and certainly not less difficult. In Mr. Rowe's words "he no longer imposes: he evokes. He is the catalyst which begins and then sustains the whole complex pattern of change that takes place in each child as he is being educated."

Books are no less important in this scheme: but they are books not text books—those by-products of the class system and simultaneous learning. And the focus of the teacher's attention can be really what it is in theory supposed to be—the optimum learning achievement of which each child is capable. "Each child in our unstreamed classes can work on his individual job-card at his own level and at his own pace. His work can be assessed in terms of his own ability and effort; he becomes his own measuring-rod." This last—the capacity to set standards for oneself and evaluate achievement—is the end product of a true education, not always achieved by University graduates.

It is not claimed that there is anything revolutionary about this book. Indeed, its value lies in the opposite direction—that the underlying aims and values are likely to be approved by most of us. But here is a sincere and thorough and sensible attempt to put into practice what so often remains as lip service. Nor is it suggested that this is the only way of achieving these ends—salvation by job-card. The moral that emerges for me is that there is a professional obligation on every school—or college or department—to re-examine its educational aims and to ask constantly whether its methods and system of organisation are the best means of achieving these ends.

## "JOB CARDS PLAY ALTOGETHER TOO LARGE A PART"

PETER MAUGER

*Mr. Mauger is head of Nightingale secondary school, Wanstead, a school opened in September, 1957, and building up by successive first year admissions. He is a past president of Chingford and District Teachers' Association, N.U.T.*

IT IS REFRESHING to read Mr. Rowe's forthright statement of the general principles that should determine the education of the average child. He believes that "the average child has an amazing store of energy and ability, commonly dammed off from his school life, but capable of being channelled into it with quite astonishing and unbelievable effect upon his growth as a person." Not enough teachers yet believe this, and I welcome a book by a man who not only says it persuasively, but quite obviously accepts it as the guiding principle of his school.

These principles led him to reject streaming by academic ability as a method of school organisation, and he records that "the relief and happiness this simple but fundamentally important action brought to our children had to be seen and lived with to be believed." Having started a new school with mixed ability groups I can testify to the truth of this statement. I am sure that security and constructive happiness must be consciously planned, from the detailed school organisation to the very inflections

of the teachers' voices for this release of the children's energy and latent ability to be achieved.

But an unstreamed class presents a new teaching problem—new, anyway, to teachers who have been brought up on the idea that one must divide children into homogeneous groups before one can teach them.

Mr. Rowe's solution is a carefully planned system of individual assignments—job cards. With this system each child can work on his job card at his own level and at his own pace. The description of how the school is organised along these lines takes up the major part of the book: it makes absorbing reading. It so happens that, months before I was asked to comment on this book, a New Zealand Inspector of Schools, a wise and far-sighted man, spent the day at my school and described in glowing terms the atmosphere of constructive happiness at Holmer Green. So I know that Mr. Rowe is describing what actually happens, and not what he would like to happen.

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Now Mr. Rowe specifically states that he is describing "a very personal interpretation of how general principles of education with which most of us would agree, have been worked out in practice in a particular school," and that its sole value may lie in stimulating the reader to criticise it "with the consequent re-examination and clarification of his own thought and practice." Taking him at his word I would say that the school organisation he describes may very well be a good solution to the problem of stimulating most of the children in a very small secondary school, but I think that there are serious objections to its wider validity.

#### Job cards or class teaching ?

Surely we are faced with the task of raising the general level of secondary education as well as giving children security and a sense of community. To raise the level we must set standards in each subject and develop methods to help as many children as we can to reach these standards. Job cards *within* the syllabuses encourage individual work and foster individual development; but if they are used as a substitute for class teaching the net result must be a mass of uncorrelated information and little real understanding of the subject. The head of my history department comments:

"The topics chosen are just the type that lend themselves to the Job Card or Assignment method. It can also be used with self-contained topics that do not involve much in the way of abstract principles, for instance 15th and 16th century exploration, but even here I find the scene must first be set by the teacher in an oral lesson with the whole class—otherwise they get the facts but not the motivation.

"I question whether the method can be applied comprehensively to all history teaching without limiting the context; could it give an understanding of the social, economic and political struggles of Stuart times—or of the complexities of Trade Union history—or of any foreign policy?

"There are also fields of history about which children should learn but where the material available for them is severely limited, such as Ancient India and China.

"Mr. Rowe does not explain how such topics are dealt with, or if they are tackled at all. The method must remain a tool—it must not determine and govern content."

This is precisely what it will do if it is not kept strictly subordinate to class teaching. Moreover, it cannot take the place of class teaching, and it does not appear that any class teaching goes on at Holmer Green. How, for instance, are new mathematical processes taught? Pages 189-193 indicate that

logarithms are introduced and taught by eight log job cards. I would like to know how long it takes a class of 35 children (no, 35 children working separately and individually—a very different matter) to gain a mastery of logarithms with this method. More, how many of them actually do master logarithms? This is the sort of question that is not answered in the book, and one could ask many such questions about each subject in the curriculum.

Again, how can children be expected to learn the structure of their language without being taught it? It is true that formal grammar is sometimes taught very badly; but that is an argument for teaching it well, not for not teaching it at all.

To sum up, the picture sketched by Mr. Rowe is of a live, human community; but it is not a satisfactory picture of the education of average children for life in the second half of the 20th century. How are public examinations prepared for? *How* successful are the Holmer Green children in G.C.E.? Mr. Rowe doesn't say.

#### A quarry of ideas

The strongest principle in Mr. Rowe's ethic contains its greatest weakness. The children are treated as individuals; it is clear that the school organisation and approach ensures that they will develop into confident, well-integrated young people, and I do not doubt that this is the most important task of education. It should not be a substitute, however, but rather the vital prerequisite for academic achievement. And I cannot help feeling that job cards play altogether too large a part for a sound education of good quality. There are essential parts of every subject that must be taught to the class by the teacher. This can be done in unstreamed classes though it demands re-thinking of method and hard work. Job cards certainly have their place *within the broad framework of class teaching*. The great weakness of teaching almost exclusively by job cards is the loss of the interaction of children's minds on each other in the questioning and discussion during the teaching of new processes. The children will become isolated and will lose the opportunity of helping and learning from each other.

Perhaps the book should have been called "The Education of the Average Child in a small Secondary School," and it may well be that this type of organisation was necessary to provide a diversity of courses for children in a small school. I understand that Mr. Rowe is now head of a considerably larger school. I shall be most interested to learn how the organisation of his present school develops, for I found his book a quarry of ideas, and it is certain that he has much to contribute to English education.

## WHAT CAN THE AVERAGE CHILD DO ?

MARJORIE COOKE

*Miss Cooke has just completed her tenth year as head of Priory Girls' School, Acton; earlier she taught for two years in Barking, and then for 16 years as history mistress in a Cornish grammar school. She is a member of the Executive of the N.U.T.*

I AM NOT VERY happy about this book, fundamentally because Mr. Rowe and I do not agree over the ability and capacity of the average child. Indeed, my impression all through the book is that these teachers are consciously superior to their pupils and there is far too much talking down by the better educated, better trained person to the less able, more limited person. This may be too harsh, but right through the book self-evident truths are trotted out as newly acquired wisdom, so that the reader is left wondering what Mr. Rowe thinks the majority of good teachers have been doing all these years.

In the footnote on page 9 he says " 'Average' will be used from now on to include those children whose intelligence ranges from E.S.N. (educationally sub-normal) level, to just below that required for an 'O' level G.C.E. course." Now, I would maintain first that it is extremely difficult to judge what level of intelligence can or cannot cope with a G.C.E. course, and secondly, that inclination to work is a factor which enters into this question of coping with examinations. Mr. Rowe believes that comparatively few children in the modern school are capable of this work. I believe that at present at least 40 per cent. are capable and that the percentage should rise when a later leaving age is compulsory.

Moreover, as he points out, more than half the nation's children are in the secondary modern schools. Actually it is nearer 75 per cent. Of these he thinks four-fifths are not capable of benefiting by an academic education and on this I would differ from him. Again it all depends on what you call education and what standard of education you intend to reach. I was horrified that a teacher of Mr. Rowe's evident calibre and standing in the profession should consider that "retarded and under-functioning children" needed "only such help as a patient or sympathetic person could give" in order to overcome their difficulties in reading. My professional instinct is aghast that he could envisage employing "a person not a teacher" to undertake this work. On the other hand I am bound to admit that he must have found a near genius, for "progress was instantaneous and rapid, most of the children functioning fully in less than two terms"!

### School and Society

This really brings me to the heart of my own problem in discussing this book. Teaching is really a very personal affair and what will bring success to one school may be impossible in another. Mr.

Rowe has an intensely personal approach which has obviously succeeded in making the children fully aware of each person's responsibility to society. But I would find it very difficult to justify the release of children from lessons for part of the morning to go and sing in a church choir for a wedding; or early in the afternoon to do the teas for an old folk's tea party as "they do so like doing it and they are so reliable." It seems to me that in both cases society is misunderstanding the function of school and education and that school is abetting this misunderstanding. The most important part of a child's service to the community lies in acquiring the best possible education, in order to serve the community in the best possible way as an adult. The real faults of an adult community begin in the child community and there are plenty of opportunities for service outside educational hours.

It was when I came to Mr. Rowe's description of the actual educational work in the school that I realised he and I are both living in different worlds, educationally speaking. I have no quarrel with his premise that knowledge should be relevant. I would add that it is the teacher's job to make it relevant. I am in complete agreement with the idea that a child must acquire a basic store of ideas and facts, but I do wonder at the implications concerning cultural value which he requires from knowledge. Moreover, who are we, the adults, to take on ourselves to decide what are the limits of anyone's appreciation?

As a practising teacher, I read the job cards with interest. I am not competent to judge those concerned with radio and electricity, technical drawing or mechanics. But I wonder what standards are envisaged in combining creative writing (by which I take it Mr. Rowe means essay work) with typing and nursing. My own experience is that typing itself as a craft requires at least one year of steady application before it can be used effectively, while nursing is a vague term which I would prefer further explained. Does Mr. Rowe mean preparation for a nursing career, in which case anatomy and physiology are really necessary and would ally themselves more with art than creative writing, or does he mean a nice homely lesson on looking after a sick person, given by an amateur?

Again, Mr. Rowe's use of textbooks differs from mine. Teaching in a traditional manner I have always used them as he uses them in his job cards,

(Continued on page 33)

# Children who are Backward

S. S. SEGAL

*Mr. Segal is head of a secondary E.S.N. school in London; he has taught in primary and secondary schools, as well as special schools. He is honorary secretary of the Guild of Teachers of Backward Children, and editor of its journal FORWARD TRENDS*

FOLLOWING UPON THE 1944 Act, ten categories of handicapped pupil were defined. For each of these the law required "special educational treatment" in either Special or ordinary schools.

By far the greatest of these categories and the one marking the greatest advance (yet creating most confusion) was the *Educationally Subnormal*.

A pupil was defined as Educationally Subnormal if his attainments were 80% or less of those of an average child his age. This applied irrespective of the assumed causes of the backwardness. Such pupils could therefore range from the bright but *educationally* subnormal to the dull and educationally subnormal. Where a pupil was more than 30% below average and where no physical, sensory, emotional or cause other than apparent "low intelligence" could be found to account for his condition, he could be *ascertained* as educationally subnormal and sent to a Special school (E.S.N.). (Such schools were not however, restricted to those within the 50-70 I.Q. band.) Where the pupil was 50% or more below average he could be excluded from school altogether. It is salutary to remember that some 15,000 children of school age are at present at home, a full-time occupation for their parents, while others are in day occupation centres or mental hospitals.

With what the Ministry described as "the increasingly humane social consciousness" of the public, with the wave of post-war optimism and the new faith in human potential, new trends appeared in research while new provision was created. A renaissance was evident in the attitude towards both the children within our school system and those excluded from our schools as *ineducable*.

## New theories

The new textbook on *Mental Deficiency* by Dr. Hilliard and Dr. Kirman reflected the forward trend. Dr. Hilliard observed: "mental deficiency today is tied to out-dated procedures whose aim was to segregate the defective from the community rather to integrate him with it." Indicative of the contrary approach was the work of Dr. N. O'Connor and Dr. J. Tizard (see *the Social Problem of Mental Deficiency*, Pergamon Press). Not only did they discover that the feeble-minded were capable of greater social adjustment than was earlier thought

possible, they found that "in periods of full employment" it was "relatively easy to place defectives in jobs". Such placement was proving not only of therapeutic but of positive economic value.

With the testing of theories derived from pre-war conditions there was a re-examination of the hypotheses underlying them. The changes effected in the personality of mental deficient led research workers to express doubts about the predictive value of psychometric tests—doubts which have spread into the schools.

## New approaches

As attention began to focus on the broad band of E.S.N., the former neglect became apparent and moved a number of local education authorities into action. Of the pupils estimated by the Ministry to be *ascertainable* as E.S.N. (1.2% of the school population) a third had been placed in Special schools by the beginning of this year. The rest however, remained in ordinary schools and were possibly submerged in large classes. The difficulties faced by both the pupils and their teachers were increasingly apparent. By far the greatest problem within the ordinary school was to be the provision of "special educational treatment" for 9% or more of the school population which, though E.S.N., did not require placement in Special schools.

The bright lights on the horizon here were provided by experiments in both the form and content of teaching. Indicative was the James Wykkham Experiment devised by Dr. Stott—an experiment aimed at reducing the hard core of illiteracy in a group of primary schools and involving the co-operation of several L.E.A.s. Though this was not yet a systematic attack on the overall problem of educational subnormality it was a practical contribution. "Education for all" had produced research based on the results of such education. For Dr. Stott, however, "except for the most obvious cases of mental retardation there was no quick and certain method of sorting out the children who merely need remedial tuition from those needing long-term treatment. The children's actual progress in remedial groups is the best means of such classification."

From Bristol, too, came a *Survey of Books for Backward Children*, demonstrating the growing

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recognition of the importance of *interest* age as well as reading age in the selection of books. Within schools one can find "special" classes with remedial teachers armed with this survey and basing their selection of books for their pupils on its findings. The organisation of some of these classes is instructive. While a great deal depends on the personality of the teacher and his sympathy with the slow learner, as much depends on his classroom techniques, on his ability to help pupils co-operate with each other, on his awareness of individual differences, and so on. Often he has no say in the selection of his pupils but receives a batch of "backwards" who require widely varying treatment. If pupils of the same chronological age range considerably in reading ability, they equally range widely in social age, physical growth, emotional development and intellectual maturity. Where a withdrawn pupil requires encouragement and social opportunities, an apathetic one requires other stimulus; where one pupil strives towards manhood and wants to get away from "baby stuff" another needs careful weaning from it.

Creating an adequate social climate is only a first requirement. Many teachers go to considerable lengths to meet parents, to study the case-history of each pupil, to gain clues as to outside factors obstructing academic progress and to devise child-centred programmes which utilise the pupil's strengths in overcoming or modifying his weaknesses. More and more one sees the school walls being pushed aside, so to speak, in order that the pupils may see the purpose of schooling. By taking pupils around the locality, by making them describe their experiences, by utilising their vocabulary and making reading charts, blackboard diaries, class-histories, individual diaries, etc., they work from the concrete and visual within a permissive atmosphere where each pupil feels wanted and respected.

### Activity and logical development

In class after class one can see lists of "class helpers" indicating that every pupil has been given some responsibility. More and more, the worst of old class-teaching (with the teacher doing a great deal of talking and the backward pupil very little listening) has been displaced by busy groups of active pupils, measuring, making, puzzling, discussing—handling the reality which they are required to master. Number is given meaning. Care is taken to ensure mastery of each step before a new process is taught. A range of different activities for different levels of attainment and interest is available. The old class-readers used by the whole class simultaneously are replaced by a variety of groups of carefully graded, colourful readers, selected with the pupils' interests in mind and having a limited vocabulary repeated many times in different contexts.

A remedial class, however, is only a part of a school—and much of the effort devoted to the problem has inevitably been patchwork. The disparity between overall provision and recognised need can well be gauged from the research by the Headteachers' Association (see *Headteachers' Review*, Jan. 1958, "Provision of Special Educational Facilities").

### In the secondary schools

It is not unknown for headteachers of Special schools to be pressed to accept pupils who had been retained in ordinary schools until the 11 plus examination. In the same way, ordinary secondary schools are still, as a matter of course, expected to accept pupils completely lacking in primary schooling.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the secondary schools should focus criticism on the primary schools. What was the *secondary*-trained teacher to do with illiterate pupils of 11 plus? With the best will in the world, how many such teachers knew much about infant techniques or could adapt them to senior interests?

That this situation places an extra burden on the modern and comprehensive school is illustrated by the following. A large modern school anticipated a new intake of about 240 pupils from some 12 or more junior schools. The headmaster, keen to open up G.C.E. possibilities, was introducing smaller classes at the top of the school—which necessitated larger ones at the bottom. He accordingly divided the intake into six numerically equal classes of 40. Within a short time this organisation had to be abandoned. The F class—selected on the basis of 11 plus results—was found to consist almost entirely of illiterate pupils. Each tributary had apparently provided its quota. As many of these pupils had developed compensatory behaviour characteristics, the succession of supply teachers which was sent to this class (one heroically remaining a fortnight) was a further reflection of the complexity of the problem. The F class has since been substantially reduced and suitable teachers sought. But the headmaster was heard to observe bitterly that it was apparently easier to find probation officers than teachers.

Even in the best of such schools and with the most competent of teachers it was difficult to carry out more than an emergency programme. It was essential that the remedial specialist should take the incoming "remedial" group if the most lasting effects were to be obtained. It was his task to help these pupils adjust from being the top of a primary school to the bottom of a large secondary school. He had to help integrate them into a social group after coming from a number of differing primary schools with different methods and patterns. They

had to be assured a place within the school as well as within the class. Nor was the school the only influence to be considered. Case-studies were required for each pupil, parental co-operation won, provisional schemes devised. Whilst some pupils, in a single term, were known to gain up to three years in reading age, others moved almost imperceptibly. Were such children to be retained in the intake class for two or three years? Not only would such retention be at the expense of a possible new entrant from the primary school, it could have other adverse effects. The F streams therefore required ways of enabling pupils to pass up into a suitable environment and skilled treatment as well as passing out into the body of the school. Several schools are in fact experimenting with this kind of provision, but the more favourable position of the primary schools in this is apparent.

Time after time one meets teachers, fresh from college, who are launched on their careers in an old building and with a backward class. Sometimes miracles are performed. The ill-effects of this practice are more general. Not only do such teachers face difficulties due to their lack of infant training, they experience the emotional and social consequences of junior school streaming—whatever the educational arguments in its favour. To their consternation, they find that streaming does not provide "homogenous" groups—at least, not at their end of the scale. Moreover it sometimes results in the selection of "A" stream pupils and "A" stream teachers with an apparent rejection, stream by stream, of the rest.

### The problem of streaming

If the 11 plus selection examination was seen by many parents as an 11 plus rejection examination, it is hardly surprising that many teachers view the whole practice of streaming as "undemocratic," "unchristian," etc. (see *FORUM*, Vol I, No. 1), yet paradoxically the streaming off of the backward was an act of warm humanity.

This contradiction can only be touched upon here. Schools are no longer seen only as gateways to jobs or the answer to foreign competition. Yet such is the confusion created by the various pressures at work that a headteacher with an unstreamed junior school and a high social consciousness could advise his staff: "... not to devote much time to the very dull children with little or no number sense. It's a waste of time—and God always gives these dull ones a sense of money values. So why worry ...?" (See *FORUM*, Vol. I, No. 2.)

Few can foresee what forms of school provision and organisation will emerge in the future—as classes are reduced in size and more teachers are specially trained. As *The Times Educational Supplement* reminded us in a recent leader: "Since the 1944

Act we have new responsibilities to the individual which only smaller classes will allow us to discharge. Hitherto our education has been collective. No amount of research based on that sort of schooling will prove things about the schooling we want in the future."

The dreams of 1944 have yet to be realised. Conflicting theories continue to play their part based on various combinations of economic, social, religious and political motives. But those who concern themselves with the handicapped are not only tied to fundamental human values, they must concretely face the practical tasks involved in the all-round education of individual pupils.

### Some questions

Leaving aside the social problem, it is plain that so far as the basic subjects are concerned (if they are agreed to be basic) educational organisation must consider the child who is failing to master them. Work must be individualised whether this be termed "streaming," group-work or the individualisation of seat-work. Not only does "what to teach" require consideration, we have a considerable distance to go yet on "how to teach." While teachers themselves have begun to get together more frequently and on a national scale to discuss common problems and techniques relating to the backward, they are increasingly aware of the paucity of research and the need to experiment. How much is really known about "human potential?" Or about individual development beyond the infant stage? How much, for example, about the best time to teach number, or a particular process? Is there a best time? Will research based on individualised education yield results substantially different from research based on mass education? Will longitudinal studies of children provide insight which is obscured by cross studies of groups?

The inspiring work done with the severely subnormal is already providing pointers. The knowledge gained within the clinic and the remedial class needs to be more widely available and accessible.

If those who stream must be reminded of the social consequences, those who unstream must not evade the educational concomitants. Society is in a state of transition. In the 1954 report of the Advisory Committee on the Training and Supply of Teachers for Handicapped Pupils, the recommendations for the special training of teachers were not limited to teachers in Special schools. The report clearly seeks at least one specially trained teacher in every primary school and every secondary school with a modern-type stream. It makes it clear that this would mean some 10,000 suitably trained teachers of the E.S.N.

Is this need adequately recognised in our primary schools? Until the size of all classes is reduced and teachers are adequately trained to meet the change, headteachers of junior schools (streamed or otherwise) should at least endeavour to have one specialist in the field of educational subnormality to help children or assist the staff. How much *can* or *should* be left to life-experience? How much *must* be taught?

## Books on Backwardness

Mr. Segal has compiled a brief list of books and articles bearing on the subject matter of his article which may prove useful to readers.

*Diagnosis and Remedial Techniques in Arithmetic*,  
by F. J. & F. E. Schonell. Oliver & Boyd.

*Arithmetic in Action*,  
by E. Brideoak & I. D. Groves. University of London Press.

*A Survey of Reading Books for the Backward Child*,  
Edited by T. W. Pascoe & D. H. Stott. University of London Press.

*Progress in Reading*,  
by J. C. Daniels & H. Diack. Chatto & Windus.

*A Teacher's Companion*,  
by Gertrude Keir. Oxford University Press.

"The Wish to Learn,"  
by W. D. Wall. *Educational Research*. Vol. 1, No. 1. Newnes.

"Provision of Special Educational Facilities,"  
*Headteachers' Review*. January 1958.

"Some Special Learning Difficulties of Brain-injured Children,"  
by J. M. Williams. *Forward Trends*, Vol. 2, No. 3.

"Common Frontiers",  
by L. T. Hilliard. (Report of contribution to National Conference on the Backward Child.)  
*Forward Trends*, Vol. 2, No. 4.

*Problem Children and Their Families*,  
by D. H. Stott. University of London Press.

*The Slow Learner*,  
by F. M. Cleugh. Methuen.

*Backwardness in Reading*,  
by M. D. Vernon. Cambridge University Press.

# Historical Field Studies in Secondary Education

JACK WALTON

*Mr. Walton is headmaster of Kingsway county secondary modern school, Nottinghamshire; he has taught in Leicester modern and intermediate schools as a history specialist, and was until recently head of the history department of Great Barr comprehensive school, Birmingham. He is a contributor to the VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY OF LEICESTERSHIRE*

A MIDDLE AGED LADY with hair wisping round her face anxiously searching the hedgerows for missing Peter and Paul, absent when the bus is due, might be a picture that comes to mind when school excursions are mentioned. Memories of nature walks taken as a child or visits to dreary museums may be recalled. Nevertheless, comic as may be these recollections, the idea of taking the child out of the classroom is basically sound, and it is the intention of this article to discuss briefly the problems associated with what literally might be called extra-mural history teaching, and assess its value.

In the widest sense historical fieldwork can be said to include all work connected with the subject that is done outside the classroom. It represents in a way an escape into reality away from the confines of the textbook and embraces a wide variety of different activities ranging from work in a local reference library to the excavation of a Roman site. The term "field work" is often misleading in spite of the fact that much of the work described here is in the open and sometimes in and about fields. What is implied more often than not however, is the examination of first hand historical evidence frequently *in situ*, work which makes far greater demands of both teacher and student than does the more usual type of classroom lesson.

The desire to take some small group to examine a church, castle or village site might be keen within us, yet if we are not satisfied with merely looking but wish to encourage the children to record what they see and perhaps use the evidence they have collected to solve some problem associated with the object of the study, then difficulties begin to appear.

## The question of time

Quantitative historical work in the field offers far more rich rewards than a purely qualitative approach, but these rewards are difficult to attain. Time is required; the children must have some basic knowledge. But more of these difficulties later. The basic organisation of these courses must first be considered.

If field work is to be undertaken, when is it to be done? In some schools it is possibly quite easy to take a form away for the day during form time. Nobody really minds. In fact probably relief is felt

that there are so many less to look after in the school. Normally, however, it is difficult to take an extra period for history, never mind a day. The other subject teachers quite naturally resent losing their time. If any field work is going to be done at all it must therefore take place after school during a weekend or holiday, or time arranged by doubling up the history period at the end of a day. The field work which is described in this article was, with one or two exceptions, arranged to take place at weekends or during the Easter vacation. Other subjects did not suffer.

## Where to go

'Where' is as important as 'when' in planning a field work course. Some schools are situated in localities which offer a wealth of material. Many others are by no means as fortunate, and immediately problems of accommodation arise if the chosen area is some distance from the school. If suitable accommodation can be found it is no bad thing to get the children away from home to an entirely new environment. For the children this living away from home is probably part of the attraction of the course. For the weekend course the Youth Hostel serves as a very useful if not comfortable centre. There are inconveniences of course. All the amenities that are required for evening work are often not available. Other hostellers have to be considered, yet for 7s. 3d. a day each, both staff and children can be sure of a rough and ready temporary home.

The longer courses during a school vacation are better housed in training colleges or university halls of residence. They have to be booked well in advance and are quite naturally more expensive. Nevertheless the lecture room and other facilities which often are available really justify this additional expenditure. Local education authorities would do well to follow Derbyshire's example and provide permanent field work centres for the schools under their jurisdiction. Some old large houses can quite often be bought for a song and after some initial expenditure become a very suitable headquarters for field expeditions.

The equipment of courses might only enter the organiser's head incidentally. Little more may be thought necessary than pencil and paper and

possibly one or two maps. More satisfactory work can be done, however, if some careful thought is given to this question. There are certain essentials. At least one 35 mm. camera is invaluable. Not only can it provide a record of the course but it can also be used to make both black and white and coloured slides which can be of great service if other field work courses are going to be held in the same area. Also a slide collection made in this way can be invaluable in classroom teaching. A length of flex with plug, adapter, 100 watt bulb together with two sheets of  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick glass, foolscap size, and reflex paper provides a portable photostat unit which enables copies of documents to be made on the spot. A full account of this apparatus can be read in *Amateur Historian* Vol. 2, No. 10. Prismatic compasses, surveyor's tape, magnifying glass, bricklayer's trowel, heel ball for brass rubbing are all worthy of inclusion in any kit that is being prepared.

### Some advice

It is difficult to do justice to the field work courses themselves in a short article of this nature. The approach most economical of space and time is to tabulate certain examples selected from my own experience and consider important points apposite to them. This table is given opposite.

On glancing through this list and putting aside nostalgic memories of many good pubs which most of the names recall, several observations come to my mind :

(1) The study prepared should be so arranged that the children can achieve results quickly. As the groups engaged in these field work activities are normally voluntary, too much time spent on the "follow-up" after the return can make the thing burdensome for staff and children alike. There is much to be said for completing the work during the course wherever possible.

(2) Children should not be faced with too difficult a problem. To be asked to discover the original field system of a village is obviously an impossible assignment. They should be guided to the solution of a problem by staged questions on their questionnaire. The construction of a questionnaire is no easy task and one must be careful to take into account the ability of the children concerned.

(3) Work in small groups is by far the best. In practically all the courses that have been tabulated there were approximately 40 children of both sexes on the course with a ratio of staff of 1 to 10. This meant that guidance could be given in the often difficult work that was undertaken.

(4) The area must be known as thoroughly as possible by the leaders of the course. A pre-view by the staff should be made wherever possible

and slides made which can be shown to the children before they go. Knowledge of the area means the work set can be well planned.

(5) Care must be taken that the subject chosen is not too rich in detail. This may appear foolish but the children soon become overwhelmed unless they are very experienced and therefore gain little from the course. A village church is often more suitable than a cathedral, an early mediaeval castle than a later one of concentric design.

(6) A suitable time to begin field work is in the 3rd year. This is a year which is notoriously restless in most schools and the inclusion of field work into the history scheme gives an interest to the subject at a time when the novelty of secondary education has worn off and a rather blasé attitude becomes apparent. Also by leaving field work to the 3rd year and above, two years are available to teach the skills which are required. The analysis of photographs and the historical interpretation of ordnance survey maps add variety to the 1st and 2nd year syllabus if time permits them to be fitted in. It is useful to know in this respect that copies of the small 1 inch and 2½ inch maps used for G.C.E. geography can be obtained for the price of 6d. A whole set for a form only amounts to some £2.

(7) Co-operation with the geography and biology departments is well worthwhile. In most of the courses listed above these subjects were also studied. The children would not have been able to afford three separate courses. What is more important, all these are environmental subjects and often the opportunity for combined work on the same area presents itself, viz : a parish survey.

### Field work for all

It is worthwhile noting that field work is suitable for all levels of abilities of children. The child whose verbal ability is low can benefit as much from the course as a VIth former. In example No. 4 quoted in the table a very low ability group in the normal academic sense made a settlement survey. They had received before the course some lessons on architecture and had discussed with their teacher the character of the area they were visiting. On the Saturday they left the hostel and pinpointed on prepared maps each settlement as they came to it. They ascertained its date using architectural features as one of their main guides. They noted the prevalent occupation and from evidence available suggested what the occupation had been in the past. Very simple notes were recorded. By the end of the day, after covering some 10 miles of country, they each possessed a fairly accurate set of notes and a map with all the settlements plotted. This material was brought to school one evening after

(Continued on page 34)

# HISTORICAL FIELD STUDIES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

<i>Area</i>	<i>Aims</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Time of visit</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Assessment of Work</i>
1. Rothley Village, Leicestershire.	To trace the development of the Village from Saxon period to present day.	Two days	Week after G.C.E. Exams.	Boys worked in groups each dealing with different aspects of history of village. Teacher moved around from group to group. Work of various groups to be brought together at end.	Not very satisfactory result. Boys had very little experience in this type of work and much time lost explaining points which should really have been known. Documents received only cursory attention. Final history of village very sketchy and inaccurate.
2 Breedon Hill, Leicestershire & Melbourne, Derbyshire.	To study in separate groups a variety of different places of historical interest viz: Saxon graveyard Breedon, Norman Church Melbourne, Melbourne Hall.	Two days	Week after G.C.E. Exams.	Boys worked in groups. Teacher visiting groups in each area. Work to be completed by each group as separate piece of historical research.	Better result than at Rothley but again lack of knowledge of field work techniques great handicap. Also little of value gained from documents because of small amount of time available. Skeletal remains of Saxon monks found. This added considerably to interest of party concerned.
3 Breedon Hill, Worcestershire.	To study the field pattern of the village of Breedon and attempt to trace the open field system.	One day	School-Time	Very early part of morning spent in Worcester records office examining tithe commutation map. This checked with plan of fields possessed by children. Various problems noted. Party then proceeded to Breedon divided into groups and examined fields of village and measured in certain cases lengths of ridge and furrows.	Quite satisfactory result. Groups had clear idea of what they were looking for and some experience of techniques required. Again time too short to get really good results, though mediaeval field pattern approximately ascertained.
4 Wilderhope Manor, Wenlock Edge.	To compare the settlement pattern on Wenlock Edge in a restricted area with that in valleys on either side.	One day	Week-end	This was a combined piece of work with the geographers and biologists. Children were working in subject groups. In history extract from 6 inch map relating to area to be covered duplicated. Settlement recorded on map and dates and other information written on prepared recording sheets. Information from various groups drawn together at end.	Good. Quite accurate pattern of settlement in various areas achieved. Difference between valley and hill settlement stood out. Compilation of final report by each child took only 2 hours. Completed one evening shortly after party had returned.
5 Wilderhope Manor and Ludlow.	To study village and castle sites in area.	Two days	Week-end	On the Saturday party worked in groups. Each group possessed question sheets, the questions requiring verbal or diagrammatic answers. The sum of the answers was arranged to be a good guide to the history of the site. On the Sunday the party worked together studying Stokesay and Ludlow castles. Again question sheets provided.	Quite good. The architecture and map work which had been included in the history syllabus stood children in good stead. Rather too much attempted on the Sunday. One castle quite sufficient for one day's work. Follow-up work after return to school not too good.
6 Ludlow.	To trace the development of Ludlow from mediaeval period to present day.	One day	Week-end	Each member of the party issued with duplicated plans of town. Party split in groups, each group examining a particular part of town, recording the buildings on the map—the buildings of each century having their own particular colour. Results combined at end.	Results quite good. Painstaking work required of one or two members of party after return, to bring results together on new and larger map. Some inaccuracy. Not really sufficient time to investigate whether existing buildings built on site of earlier houses.
7 Carmarthen, S. Wales.	1. To examine field system of Laugharne. 2. To investigate the spread and influence of nonconformity in the City of Carmarthen. 3. To investigate the nature of the town and occupations of medieval Carmarthen.	Three days	Easter Vacation	(A full week was spent in this area but as geography and biology also featured in the course only a part of the time could be devoted to history). Considerable preparation went into the work beforehand both by staff and children. Area visited by staff before the course. Very clear idea of work to be done. Not too much attempted. Three teams arranged and only one topic studied by each group. Very careful follow-up, when party returned.	Results very good indeed. Some particularly excellent results in individual cases. Long follow-up however, very burdensome. The length of this course and the time devoted to the work before and after the course did mean that the documents available could be consulted with some profit.
8 Florence, Rome, Italy.	1. To study renaissance in Florence. 2. To study classical period in Rome.	12 days	Easter Vacation	Five days spent in Florence, approx. Five days spent in Rome. Considerable preparation beforehand. Recording made at each place visited, entered into diary in evening. (Children largely IVth, Vth and VIth formers).	Well worthwhile but too much attempted. A concentration of activity on either Rome or Florence would have been more rewarding.
9 Roman Road in Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield.	(a) To excavate section across Ickneild St., and assess importance of this road in Roman times. (b) To train children in techniques of excavation.	Evening during Summer Term	6-9 p.m.	Considerable preparation beforehand. Accepted technique of each archaeological excavation followed. Recording made each day, photographs taken.	Interesting but unfortunately no final report could be written up as a result of loss of the figures relating to certain sections of the dig. From the staff point of view rather an onerous undertaking. Two full evenings each week occupied throughout term.

## DISCUSSION

### THE "18 PLUS" BATTLE IS COMING warns MAURICE HOOKHAM

*Lecturer in Government, University of Leicester, and  
member of the Executive of the Association of  
University Teachers*

THE TROOPS WHO fought the battle of 11+ are now being re-formed and re-equipped to fight the battle of 18+.

As the birth rate bulge moves up through the secondary schools it is being swollen by the higher proportion of students who remain at school in the sixth forms. They represent an ever increasing demand for higher education of every type. Although there has been an improvement in the number of places at the higher education level this is not keeping pace with the increased demand for them. The universities in particular are faced already with applications for entrance far in excess of their available places.

The Association of University Teachers has been pressing for some time for an expansion of the universities, and for the foundation of new universities, because it is convinced that there is a need to increase the present low ratio of university graduates and that students of the required ability are available in excess of the present capacity of the universities. At the same time, it is realised that it is unlikely that the universities will in fact be expanded fast enough in the next five or ten years and it will therefore be necessary to pay more attention to the selection of students for admission.

When the old matriculation examinations were replaced by the general certificate examinations the universities (other than Oxford and Cambridge) accepted performance at the ordinary and advanced level as a good guide to the students' general educational attainments. A student who could produce evidence of having had a good foundation of secondary education should be able to benefit by a university education.

Experience of these examinations has given rise to a number of criticisms. The failure rate of students in universities is on the average about 15% over the three year course, and this is regarded as wasteful of our national resources. This may, of course, be partly a result of bad teaching in the universities or of the belief that one has to fail some in order to encourage the others to work. It may, however, be partly a result of faulty selection.

The advanced level examination is open to a good deal of criticism. Sixth form teachers and the school examining boards have to cater for much larger numbers of students in sixth forms, the majority of whom are not at present concerned to go on to the universities. The advanced level paper has become therefore much more of a leaving certificate. It is alleged that the advanced level papers contain questions in the main that are designed to test the student's ability to reproduce exercises that he has been formally trained to do in his class work and that they are marked in such a way as to test the teaching rather than the ability of the student. This criticism is supported by the evidence of the scholar-

ship level papers which contain questions of a different type and which are marked in a different way.

A strong movement of opinion has developed among university teachers (after some discussions with representatives of secondary school teachers) in favour of asking the boards to institute matriculation level papers, which would be taken only by students wishing to go on to universities, and designed to select those best able to benefit from a university education.

Implicit in this opinion is the belief that students in the sixth forms can be divided into those who have the necessary intelligence for higher forms of continued education and those who lack this intelligence but who can merely acquire a little more knowledge with good teaching. The bright ones need a different form of examination to test that brightness and the dull ones can only cope with an examination which requires them to perform set exercises which they have been trained to do.

This argument has much of the simple, commonsense fascination which for so long carried opinion in favour of the 11+ examination and of streaming in the junior schools. A similar virtue is to be made out of an accepted necessity to restrict the number of students. The consequences of such a policy would be as damaging to higher education generally as it has been shown to be at the earlier stages. It has required the experience of comprehensive schools to shake some people out of the belief in 11+. Will it be necessary to have the same fight for comprehensive higher education to destroy the illusion of a higher form of intelligence?

The argument seems to be weakest when translated into concrete terms for particular subjects. An experienced sixth form teacher has it within his power to show that it is possible to define a syllabus for a sixth form subject group, and to set common examination papers which measure each student's ability in the subject irrespective of whether it is to serve as a school leaving certificate or as a qualification for entrance to a university, technical college or professional training institution. If convincing evidence of this is not forthcoming it looks as though our unstreamed junior and secondary students are going to be streamed willy nilly in the sixth forms. This shot and shell of evidence for a number of subjects will be necessary in order to win the battle of 18+.

### HOW DO YOU SUCCEED WITH BACKWARD CHILDREN?

asks L. F. CLAYDON

*Assistant Master, Walliscote Secondary Boys' School,  
Weston-super-Mare<sup>1</sup>*

A CAREFUL READING OF Mrs. Partington's very interesting article is provocative of speculation. An experienced teacher of my acquaintance evinced considerable scepticism upon reading that books such as *War and*

<sup>(1)</sup> Mr. Claydon has been appointed Lecturer in Education, City of Coventry Training College.

## DISCUSSION

*Peace* could be used as suitable material for backward children. Another considered that to expect them to write for 1½ hours was to preordain disaster. I believe that many teachers would make similar objections.

Yet I do not doubt that Mrs. Partington shows them to be wrong. I wonder, however, if she has not failed to delineate the essential factor in her success. I submit that this reposes not in technique and method *per se*, and least of all in the choice of this or that particular book, but in the quality of the relationship established between herself and the children. Remove that essential, that is to say, remove Mrs. Partington, and one might well substantiate the contentions cited above. In the same way it is likely to be true that Mrs. Partington would secure considerable success with whatever reasonable books and methods she might use.

It is therefore of less importance to list which books were read and how than it is to describe progress in solving the problem of presenting oneself, the teacher, as a person able to help with "emotional troubles, bad homes, and ill health." Success in this reveals the teacher as a person of value to the child and when this point is reached the academic insufficiencies of the child are placed in their proper relationship to the total human situation. Difficulties become neither mountains nor molehills but the nodal points of group endeavour.

The basic process is a social one, and this is certainly implied in the author's statements concerning "paper damnation" at 11+, emotional problems, and the necessity to assure the children that they could be significant contributors to the life of the school. Its correct management produces a modification of attitudes towards authority, towards learning, and towards the larger environment. The child's subjective estimate of himself is revised and this influences his whole behaviour, including the extent to which he is willing to work within a group, accepting guidance to attain a prescribed goal.

At this stage, and not until, matters of method and teaching technique become of vital importance. The basic, inductive process has resulted in motivating the child. The readiness to learn must be facilitated by skilful instruction, in which case it is likely that further results will now appear. Improvement in reading (or what you will) perhaps leads on to increased effectiveness, both social and intellectual, until the child moves into adolescence and beyond with powers fully developed and with the self assurance Mrs. Partington describes in the case of the girl who impressed a local reporter.

That this was so seems to indicate that what had taken place was not so much that this pupil had undergone a certain course of instruction but that, in the course of a long term personality adjustment brought about by association with a skilful and sympathetic educator, one by-product had been a considerable gain in literacy.

Consideration of a specific area of experience without sufficient reference to the total situation tends to isolate that aspect and to convey the impression, unwittingly no doubt, that within it everything is self-contained. This is to state that the fruit contains the tree because the fruit bears seed. It appears to me to be vital that attention is not diverted from the total situation and directed solely upon the specific aspect in this way. If the error is not avoided many a programme will be adopted after study of an exposition in terms of what was done and the statistics of improvement, only to end in disillusion because it was not clearly said that, "It's not what you do but the way that you do it."

## MORE ON STREAMING

from KEN FORGE

*Acting form-master, Collingwood Secondary Girls' School, London*

MY IDEAS ABOUT streaming necessarily depend on my own teaching experience, first in preparatory and grammar schools during the late '20s and early '30s, then, after a break of 18 years abroad, in a London central school and subsequently as a supply teacher in primary and modern schools in London.

There was no streaming in the schools I worked in before the war. We were expected to get all the preparatory school pupils into some public school at 13 and all grammar school boys through as many School Certificate subjects as they needed for the further education they had in view, some taking an extra year to achieve this. Classes were, of course, small; a dozen to two dozen.

In 1946 the intake to the London central school (four classes of 35 to 40) was classified according to the streets and schools from which the children came. All did a two years' "revision and consolidation" course in parallel, after which they chose an academic (G.C.E.), technical or commercial course. Since spending some years in this school I have seen over 20 primary and modern schools at work, all of which were streamed from the outset. Several heads were sufficiently ashamed of the system to attempt to disguise it from the children. Two at least would have abolished streaming immediately but for the opposition of one or more of their senior assistants. The more I see of the system the more cruel and wasteful it appears to me to be.

Under it, there is no question of giving all children the necessary help to complete their education effectively. "A" children are sure of the best the school can provide, "B" children get second best, but over and over again I have seen "C" and "D" children putting up with what is left. Only two of the primary schools in which I have taught had real "remedial" classes; and one of these began each year as a special group of 20 only to end with well over 30, having been treated as a sort of rubbish bin for unwanted oddments—naughty children from other classes, new admissions who spoke no English and so on.

In my experience it is by no means unknown for "A" children to be openly threatened—"If you don't work harder you'll be sent down among the 'duffers'."

In every "C" class I have taught enough children were sufficiently conscious, and resentful, of their situation to have a "chip on their shoulders" and to affect the attitude of the class as a whole to schooling and teachers. I have, of course, more experience of "C" classes than of others; they are frequently left to the tender mercies of the supply teacher.

An interesting point about every "C" class I have been able to test for reading and spelling ages etc. is the very wide range of ability it contains. Tests invariably showed several children well up to, if not above, the expectation of their chronological age in the usual mark-winning skills, a large middle section not so very far below this standard, and a very small section abysmally below it and in dire need of remedial treatment for at least part of each day.

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# Report from Yorkshire

ROBIN PEDLEY<sup>1</sup>

*Dr. Pedley is a native of Swaledale and was educated at a village school there (one room, one teacher, thirty children aged 3-14) before entering Richmond grammar school at the age of 14 in lieu of becoming a rural pupil teacher—a scheme abandoned just at that time. At Durham University he became a Research Fellow in history: but his interests turned increasingly to education, and he taught in various types of school before embarking on the training of teachers. He is the author of COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION: A NEW APPROACH*

YORKSHIRE IS NOT merely a large county : it is also an impressively rich and varied one. On the extreme frontiers, north and south, the flaming furnaces of Middlesbrough and Sheffield stand like guardians on the threshold of this northern Eden. Within are numberless treasures : the historic streets and towers of York; the timeless majesty of Ingleborough; the haunting loneliness of the moors, with the calling grouse—warning, tantalising—“Go back, go back!”; the warm, sleepy villages and winding streams of Cleveland and the Vale of York, which have nourished personalities as different as Captain Cook and Laurence Sterne; the brave, venturesome folk of Staithes and Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay; forthright, industrious Bradford and Halifax—the impressions tumble on one another endlessly, like the water piling over High Force.

## Yorkshire qualities

It is extraordinary that a land so diverse should manage to create for itself a strongly marked *persona*: yet it is true. Yorkshiremen everywhere are known for, and pride themselves on, certain qualities. (They don't always possess them, but they always aspire to them.) They value left-arm spin bowling, relentless captaincy, plain speaking, honesty, and

(<sup>1</sup>) I am grateful for the ready assistance given by officers of local authorities.

money—more or less in that order. Above all they are realists. Soaked in history and tradition, they yet know that without change there would be no great panorama of history. The woollen mills of Batley and Dewsbury, which once pushed off the industrial stage the little market-cum-manufacturing townships such as Askrigg and Dent, are in turn yielding place to new industries like Teesside's I.C.I. The unfortunates grumble (why not? it helps to relieve your feelings) and accept it. Mind you, they need to be convinced that a change *is* necessary, and will argue over it for a long time. But, once sure, they get down to work. Keeping what they deem to be good, they incorporate it, without fuss, in a new structure built for modern needs.

This is what is happening today with the schools of Yorkshire. Yorkshiremen aren't easy to convert—but they will listen with an open mind. And they have always been too hard-headed willingly to sacrifice their children's future to their own memories, however romantic and nostalgic, of the past.

Let us look first at the biggest and richest slice of Yorkshire : the *West Riding*. Leading the way in a long process of self-examination, re-thinking and reconstruction have been two figures : Alderman Walter Hyman, for much of the time (though not now) chairman of the county education committee, and the chief education officer, Mr. A. B. Clegg.

## DISCUSSION (Continued)

The middle group were clearly quite ordinary children who had fallen behind the best mark-getters in the infant department—very often, I had reason to suspect, because of some emotional disturbance at home. One result of lumping them all together was to breed more friction—between child and child, child and teacher, child and the system which treated him as backward—so that the handicap of being in the “B,” “C,” “D” stream was cumulative; so much so that I have seen a second year class in secondary school, most of them quite normal children, whose attainment was less than might reasonably be expected from a good second year class in a primary school.

I have recently been teaching in a new comprehensive school which also, unlike some, streams its intake. An

attempt is made to hide this by labelling the classes with odd letters but the deception becomes threadbare when, at the critical point in the scale, children ask, “Please why don't *we* do French?” It seems an enormous waste, educationally speaking, that a 9-form entry should be streamed according to 11+ marks when transfer to secondary school could be regarded as an opportunity to give those who have fallen behind a real second chance. The primary need of all children is confidence and encouragement; within this framework remedial teaching can make good gaps in knowledge or weaknesses in certain directions. But streaming undermines confidence and underlines difficulties; in other words, to classify a child as “C” or “D” because his marks have been lower than those of others—for whatever reason—is to add insult to injury and to set a premium on the possibility of making good.

## REPORT FROM YORKSHIRE

For years Alderman Hyman has dominated the scene of West Riding local government. He cares passionately about education, and he is prepared to work unremittingly, as few will (even in Yorkshire) to achieve his aims. As leader of the Labour group in the county council his forceful personality and outspoken comments have not only kept the political pot boiling but have reminded the apathetic that reform was needed. (It is to the credit of both Conservative and Labour parties in the West Riding, however, that they agreed ten years ago not to overturn each other's arrangements concerning school organisation whenever power changed hands, as it has done every three years during the past 15 years, but to base local arrangements as far as possible on local wishes.)

### A seed-bed of experiment

Officials, of course, are tied to no party. Their function is to advise the lay members and then to implement the council's decisions, whatever they may be, as efficiently as possible. But knowledge is power, and specialist knowledge can almost always be used by an ambitious chief officer to build something approaching absolute power—certainly domination—over a relatively ignorant committee. That the West Riding colossus is not only free, but everywhere recognised to be free, of any such danger is the best possible tribute to the quality of its chief education officer. Mr. Clegg is interested in ideas. As listeners to his broadcasts know, his breadth of experience, national and international, enables him to see the pros and cons of any proposal in perspective. He is no advocate of a universal panacea.

The result is that the West Riding today is the seed-bed of a whole variety of educational experiments. The college for art, music and drama at Bretton Hall; the investigation and comparison of different "11+" selection procedures at Thorne—the results now applied in modified form at Batley also; Calder High School—one of the earliest comprehensive schools, formed by combining under one head a large modern building at Mytholmroyd with the little grammar school of Hebden Bridge two miles away; Colne Valley High School in its new, specially designed premises high above Huddersfield; these and other achievements are well known.

But the West Riding has not stopped there. The past four years have brought home the need to consider other ways of organising our secondary schools than as either "segregated ability" schools on the one hand or large comprehensive schools on the other. One of these new ways is to combine the selection of children by the Authority with the selection of courses by parents.

The West Riding is now pioneering this arrangement at Cleckheaton where, following several years'

experience at Thorne, children from certain primary schools are being admitted to the local grammar and modern schools on the recommendation of the primary school heads. But—and here is the significant new feature—parents have also been asked whether they want their children to follow a long-term (11-18), a medium-term (11-16) or a short-term (11-15) course. Regardless of the school in which the children are placed, the parents' wishes will be met by means of overlapping courses, and the children will continue on the course chosen for them until they prove to the satisfaction of their teachers, and it is hoped of themselves and their parents, that they can or cannot profit by it.

In this first year 34% have chosen a long-term course, 26% a medium-term course (making 60% who wish to keep their children at school at least to 16), and 40% a short-term course. Diagnosis and individual guidance will continue in the secondary schools, with a view both to possible transfer and to future employment.

The great virtue of this scheme is that it should involve parents with the schools much more closely than we have ever attempted to do hitherto in England. Cleckheaton, in fact, gives real significance to the neglected section 76 of the 1944 Act, which says that "so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents."

A further recommendation is that the reform can be introduced at once, with existing staffs and buildings, and will indeed cause the minimum of disturbance to present school communities—a point which must commend it to the present Government. Again, those who value continuity of schooling through adolescence may well prefer it to two-tier arrangements.

### The two-tier system

The Wharnccliffe divisional executive recently put forward a plan for converting the modern and grammar schools at Ecclesfield into junior and senior high schools, with transfer of *all* pupils at 14. It did not find favour with the county council, because it would have meant that a number of these children would have attended the senior high school for one term only.

There are, however, other two-tier versions which might be adopted. One, of course, is the Leicestershire compromise of transferring at 14 only those who promise to spend at least two further years at the grammar school—though the divisional executive had hoped to improve on this. A second is to turn some of the modern schools into two-year intermediate schools (11-13) leading to high schools (13-15 . . . 18)—a solution discussed favourably in

the British Psychological Society's 1957 report *Secondary School Selection*, and one which works well in New Zealand.

A third, also based on general transfer at 13, is to end junior schooling at 10+ and so give everyone a three-year course in the middle school. It is true that this would mean transferring half the children from primary to secondary schools below the legal minimum of 10 years 6 months. The Minister, however, has long permitted many authorities to do just this for a minority of clever children. If the law is to be ignored, it may just as well be ignored for the many as for the few. Further, according to the Ministry's own ruling, it seems that a local education authority need not refer two-tier reorganisation to the Minister at all, provided the opening, closure, or substantial enlargement of a school is not involved. Lord Hailsham made this clear when he said in 1957 that Leicestershire did not need to seek his approval, and that in fact it neither sought nor received it. It is difficult, therefore, to see on what grounds the Minister could now intervene to forbid a proposal for general transfer at 10+ if it were made.

It is in the county borough of *Rotherham*, in the same area, that the case for and against two-tier secondary education is being most furiously debated. Rotherham's director of education, Mr. R. Bloomer, has prepared a plan for converting the present tripartite pattern into a comprehensive one, with eight high schools to which all children would go at 11. The present boys' grammar school would be developed into a large mixed school for older pupils only, retaining the name "grammar school," and recruiting "flyers" at 14 and all other pupils at 15 who wished to continue their education.

To the great credit of the education committee, this proposal was made public last February. The opinions of teachers, parents, and other interested parties have been sought and are still being carefully considered before any decision is taken. What a splendid essay in the education of the public about education! And what a lesson in truly democratic procedure for some other local authorities!

### Comprehensive schools

The approach of the other West Riding towns to secondary re-organisation is more orthodox and, on the whole, disappointing; for the appearance of one or two large comprehensive schools in new housing areas, though welcome, has little impact on the overall picture. Progress of this kind is inevitably slow.

*Bradford's* development plan provides for the erection of nine comprehensive schools within 20 years. By 1961 an existing boys' grammar school will be rebuilt as a three form entry grammar/technical school, and a new modern school extended

to become a mixed 10 form entry comprehensive. *Leeds* has received Ministry approval for two new comprehensive schools (at Holbeck and Cross Green) to be built during 1960-2. Meanwhile G.C.E. courses have been developed in the large modern schools, and pupils who gain a reasonable 'O' level certificate can transfer to grammar or technical high schools for sixth form studies. Boys gaining satisfactory R.S.A. technical certificates can enter S.1 courses at the college of technology; an corresponding facilities in nursing and commercial work exist for girls. *Sheffield*, like Bradford, wishes to extend a new modern school to become comprehensive, but awaits final approval from the Ministry. The other county boroughs of the West Riding have yet to move significantly from their basic tripartite structure.

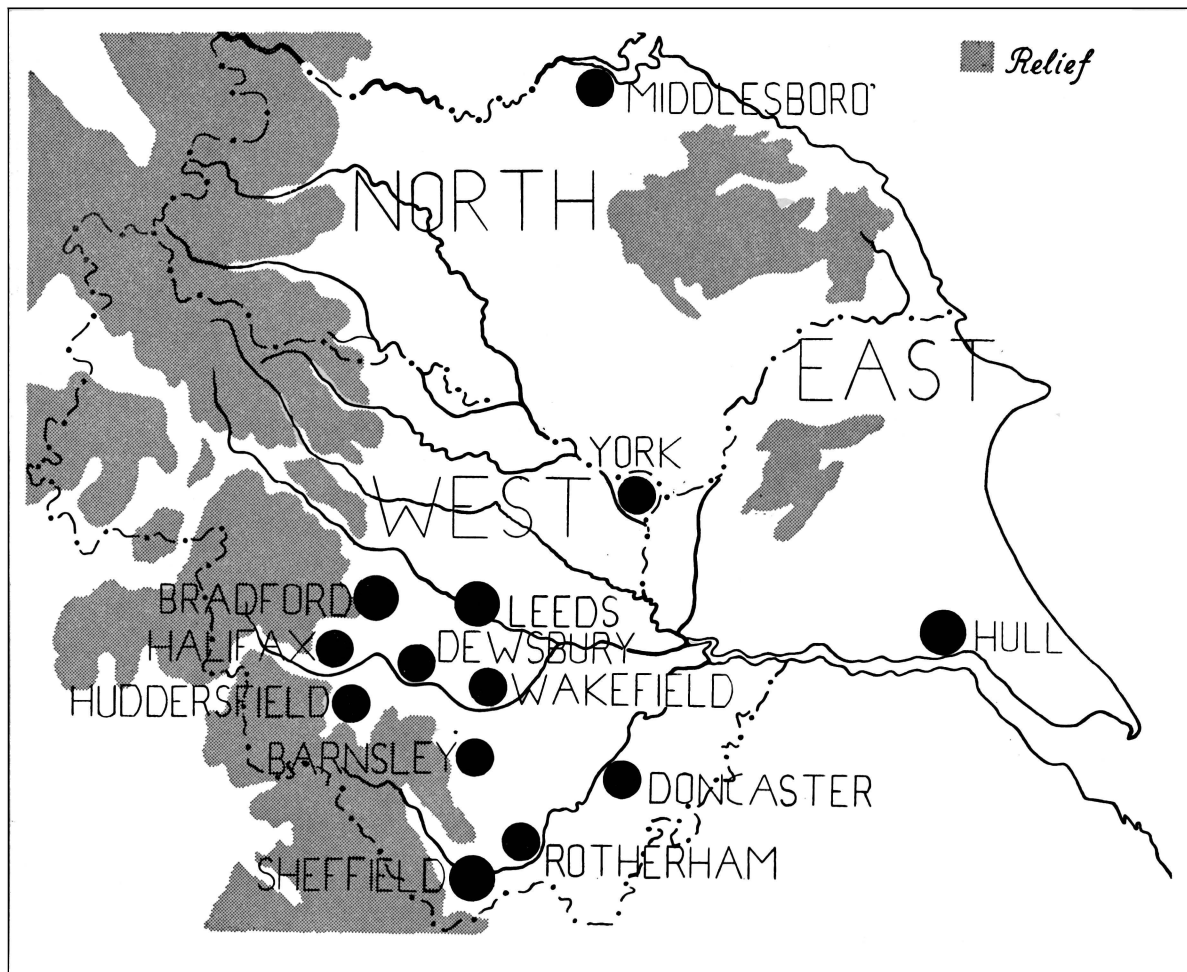
### A rural area

When we turn from the smoke and clatter of west and south Yorkshire to the more peaceful, isolated *East Riding* we see the problem of secondary school organisation in a rather different light. Progress along lines which have recently become fashionable has been taking place steadily for many years. There is comparatively little controversy, but no lack of ideas and thoughtful discussion. This happy state of affairs largely reflects the outlook of the Riding's chief education officer, Mr. Victor Clark, who believes in evolution and persuasion rather than revolution and imposition.

The East Riding has anticipated the Government's White paper by at least ten years. Its policy has long been to provide general secondary schools which normally take the great majority of pupils up to 17 if necessary: they are not regarded as "secondary modern" schools for pupils mainly practical in aptitude or inferior in general ability. Indeed the number of pupils from these general secondary schools taking G.C.E. up to ordinary level and other examinations is impressive—so much so that the problem now under urgent consideration is how best to provide for the increasing number of pupils who obtain good G.C.E. results at ordinary level and are ready to proceed to advanced level work or other sixth form studies. The grammar school is regarded as the place for the academic élite, and sixth form work is usually concentrated there.

There is, however, one exception: Withernsea High School, an interesting example of the smaller-sized comprehensive school of some 900 pupils. (Similar examples are to be found in the Isle of Man, Anglesey, North Riding, South Staffordshire and Bristol.) This is the type favoured by those educationists who dislike a break in secondary education and who yet say that a large school is unnecessary. Their reasons are: (1) that more children are staying to 18, and this trend will continue—so the total

## REPORT FROM YORKSHIRE



intake necessary to yield a large sixth form is constantly falling; (2) that anyhow we need less specialisation in the sixth form—so a great diversity of courses at that stage is not only unnecessary but undesirable.

I would concede the first of these arguments more readily than the second. Although a common core of studies should certainly be continued throughout the sixth form, this does not dispense with the need for a great diversity of optional courses to fit the very different requirements of individual pupils—all the more varied as a bigger proportion of each age-group goes on to more advanced education. In our anxiety to make the conversation of humanists and scientists mutually intelligible we must not lose the virtues of education in depth which we now possess. The English rightly prefer the master

craftsman to the jack of all trades; and the craftsman's training must often begin long before he is a man. We cannot postpone the development of special aptitudes and abilities in order to fit schooling into a tidy blueprint. Largely for these reasons, I have yet to be convinced that comprehensive schools of 900 pupils aged 11-18 can offer an adequate sixth form programme.

The temperate intellectual climate of the East Riding is paralleled both in the great port of Hull and in the cathedral city of York itself. *Hull* has recently opened two large campus establishments each offering grammar, technical and modern schooling. Three new comprehensive schools, each for 1,440 boys and girls, have been included in the Authority's five-year building programme. The first of these is in the approved programme for

# FORUM

1960-1. G.C.E. courses are being developed in the modern schools, as is flexible transfer between schools of different types. "A little of everything" (to quote Mr. S. W. Hobson, chief education officer, in a Press interview) sums up Hull's *à la carte* provision for its 55,000 school children in the years ahead.

Apart from one small school scheduled for eventual closure, all the modern schools in York have started a five year course leading to G.C.E. 'O' level. At present there are a number of junior full-time courses in further education for pupils aged 15. It is noteworthy that, taking this further education provision into account, over 45%

of the age-group are in full-time education at least to the age of 16.

And so I come to my native *North Riding*: love-liest and most conservative of all the ridings. The education committee and its secretary (chief education officer), Mr. F. Barraclough, make no bones about their belief that children should be educated in different secondary schools according to their ability. At the same time, in those areas so sparsely populated that the building of separate modern and grammar schools would clearly be wasteful and inefficient, the committee has sensibly decided to establish bilateral (grammar/modern) schools. These new schools are beautifully designed and equipped.

## Comprehensive, Bilateral and Campus Type Schools in Yorkshire, 1944-60

Authority	School	Type	No. of Pupils	Sex	Year opened (or to be opened) or changed to present type
East Riding	Withernsea	comprehensive	900	mixed	1946
North Riding	Easingwold	grammar/modern	600	mixed	1954
	Thirsk	"	600	"	1957 (first instalment for 300)
	Pickering	"	600	"	1958
	Scarborough	grammar/technical	700	boys	1959
West Riding	Calder	comprehensive	1,123	mixed	1950
	Tadcaster	"	997	"	1955
	Colne Valley	"	1,540	"	1956
	Penistone	"	935	"	1956
	Settle	"	260	"	1958
	Elland	"	520	"	1959
(Only Colne Valley is as yet fully comprehensive. The other five at present take selected children from a wide area and all the children over 11 from a smaller area.)					
Huddersfield	Salendine Nook	campus	900 boys' grammar/technical 720 girls' " 600 mixed modern	}	1957-8
Hull	Greatfield	campus	3 form entry mixed grammar		
			4 " " " technical		
			3 " " " modern		
	Bricknell	"	4 form entry mixed technical		1957
			3 " " " modern in association with two existing single-sex grammar schools		
Leeds	Foxwood	comprehensive	1,400	boys	1956
	Allerton Grange	"	1,020	mixed	1958
Middlesbrough	Stainsby Boys'	technical/modern	605	boys	1955
	Stainsby Girls'	"	590	girls	1955
	Brackenhoe	"	4 form entry	boys	1960
Wakefield	Thornes House	grammar/technical	700	mixed	1956

Notes : (1) Some recently established schools are building up their numbers gradually and will eventually be much larger than they are now.  
(2) The following local education authorities have no schools of any of the above types : Barnsley, Bradford, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Halifax, Rotherham, Sheffield, York.

(During the upsurge of new school building during the middle 1930s the North Riding was one of the first local authorities to commission distinguished architects nominated by the President of the R.I.B.A. for the building of particular schools, and a high standard of school architecture is now taken for granted there.) Internally, as has been the case at Easingwold under one, at least, of its successive headmasters, these nominally bilateral schools may in fact be comprehensive; but the title "grammar and modern school" remains to testify to the faith of the authorities at County Hall.

At *Middlesbrough*, though unofficial interest has been shown locally in the possibility of two-tier reorganisation, no action has yet been taken on these lines. The development plan envisaged four school bases, on which schools of different types would be grouped.

I must sum up. Yorkshire as a whole has been slow to react to the challenge of new evidence and events in the field of secondary education; and one of the most curious features of this local apathy is the contrast between the avowed policy of the Labour Party and the inaction of local education authorities which are under Labour control. Labour controls ten of the sixteen L.E.A.s in Yorkshire; but very few of these are as yet showing the kind of initiative in planning a comprehensive system that a Labour Minister will presumably expect if he finds himself in office later this year. His main pre-occupation will presumably be with authorities which firmly believe in the tripartite system; he will not expect to have to dragoon those which, nominally at least, are already on his side.

Despite all our provision for education, no one has yet succeeded in stirring the average man and woman to take an active, responsible part in local affairs—even those affairs which most nearly concern the welfare of their own children. Until this happens, Yorkshire education (good though it is in parts) will continue to be like contemporary Yorkshire cricket: nobbut middlin' (despite occasional successes), and a long way to go.

*Wolverhampton* has a second bilateral school in addition to the new one, Highfields, referred to in the last issue of *FORUM* (page 95). Known as Northcote, it was built as a modern school and converted into a bilateral school three years ago. Both these schools have two grammar and three modern streams. The city's development plan includes also an eleven stream multilateral school; permission to start building this school is awaited from the Ministry of Education.

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# French Teaching in Non-Selective Schools

## (1) THE MODERN SECONDARY SCHOOL

E. M. HOPWOOD

*Miss Hopwood is deputy head of Greaves county secondary school, Lancaster. She attended courses at the Sorbonne prior to taking an honours French degree at Manchester University*

A VISIT TO PARIS towards the end of my school career revealed to me with startling clarity that French was not only a subject on a timetable with success in an examination as its ultimate goal, but also a means of communication and a way of life. I decided, therefore, that I would try to teach a living language, a people and a country, and that is the intention of the course at this school.

This is a three stream mixed school of over four hundred pupils. Of these the "A" children learn French. The junior forms average about forty and the senior forms less. There are four lessons of 35 minutes per week. One per day would be ideal but this unfortunately is not practicable.

The classes come to the "French Room" for their lessons. An atmosphere of "France" is created by means of posters, wall pictures, library books, periodicals and other extraneous material acquired from pen-friends and visits to France. Work written and illustrated by the pupils is also attractively displayed on the walls, and frequent changes of this are made.

### Teaching conditions

The conditions for teaching are by no means perfect, since this is an old building situated on the busy A6 road. The classrooms are built round a central hall used for all types of physical education. Thus noise from outside is obviously a disturbing factor.

During the course there is an unfortunate "break" at the end of the second year's work when pupils leave for the local technical and commercial Schools and are replaced in the class by others who have done no French. The majority of these newcomers cannot be assimilated into the class and so sit in a group at the back of the room doing other work. Their presence takes away some of the "French" atmosphere of the room and creates a feeling of disruption and disunity since the class has no longer a common purpose. Again, in the 4th year there is a decrease in numbers due to Christmas and Easter leavers, resulting in a very reduced class during the final term of the course.

While all this is to be regretted it cannot be avoided and is therefore regarded as a challenge to both teacher and pupils which must be met.

The aim of the course is threefold—to present the language as a living thing; to help the pupils to

understand, within appropriate limits, the language whether written or spoken, thereby leading to an active interest in the people using it; and finally to give them a knowledge of the language sufficient to form a reasonably sound basis for the requirements of a more advanced study of French.

### The methods used

The G.C.E. examination in French is not at present taken in the school. Some of the pupils continue the study of the language after the course here and take external examinations with success.

Since, however, only a select few will wish to do this, French is not taught as an examination subject but as a means of communication and understanding. This does not mean that the work is regarded as purposeless or as a little extra sandwiched between the more vital parts of the curriculum. On the contrary, a tradition of hard work and intelligent interest has established the language course as a valuable part of the life of the school.

The teaching is a compromise between the "Old" and the "Direct" method since some knowledge of grammar, especially the formation and use of the verb, is essential. Isolated grammar exercises, of little use in any language, are not done. The point of grammar to be studied is prepared beforehand and recognised in the text, thus forming an integral part of the general understanding of the text.

Oral work, especially vocabulary and speech patterns, forms an essential part of the course. Great attention is paid to intonation, pronunciation and expression. From the beginning every pupil is encouraged to speak and to take an active part in the lesson. This obviates all feeling of embarrassment or awkwardness and thus the first obstacle, that of breaking down the reluctance to speak in a foreign language, is overcome from the start.

Very little text-book work is done in the first year. There is so much material around us, so much to talk about, that a text is not very necessary. Each pupil has a "formal" exercise book, a personal note-book and a scrap-book, and to a large extent the work in these forms a text-book of its own.

For the older pupils the text is not too advanced and is chosen to suit their interest. No direct translation of whole passages is done in the first two years. This is done towards the end of the third year and in the fourth year, and then to a limited extent.

The meaning of the text is conveyed by the use of simple gesture, interchange of question and answer between teacher and pupils, illustrations, and any other available material in the room. The English equivalent is only used to avoid blankness of incomprehension. The pupils frequently work in groups with a leader. Active and constant repetition of words, phrases and idiomatic expressions connected with the text leads to familiarity with the text and fluency in the use of the language.

Other aspects of the oral work include dramatisation which is done on a modest scale, the pupils themselves writing and acting the playlets; recitation of simple poems including some of La Fontaine's fables, and the singing of carols and songs.

In the third year use is made of the B.B.C. series of broadcasts "Early stages in French." The lively, interesting and up-to-date material in the pamphlets is used to supplement the "course" book. Careful preparation is done so that the class is able to enjoy and participate fully in the broadcast, and a useful oral and written follow-up completes the lesson.

Much of the written work, apart from frequent dictation, is done as homework to afford more time for oral work in class. The composition is "guided" and may take the form of a questionnaire on the text, a description of a picture or series of pictures leading to the telling of a story, or an account of personal experience. A class effort on the black-board forms a "cadre" around which the essay is written.

The pupils are encouraged to read for themselves and a small library is kept in the French room. This contains attractively illustrated stories, books on French life, history and customs, and various periodicals. These are all within the scope of the pupils at some stage and are very popular.

During the course talks in English are given on the French way of life, the regions of France and its history. In the third and fourth year the pupils are introduced to French literature, music and art. Occasionally a French film is shown after careful preparation.

Many of the pupils have pen-friends in various parts of France but our most useful connection is with a "Cours Complémentaire" in Normandy. At the meeting of the "Correspondence Group" letters are read and discussed and help given in their replies, greetings cards and presents are admired and French stamps exchanged.

Interchange of visits between pen-friends is encouraged and visits to Paris arranged. For these much preparation is done so that the pupils can obtain full benefit from them. Moreover this ensures that although the country is foreign it is not altogether "strange." Such visits provide a stimulating experience for all concerned.

Thus, the concern of the course is to gain the interest of the pupils, to foster and encourage it and to see it develop, to give them the feeling of pride and the sense of achievement which comes with the ability, however limited, to speak and write French, and to help them to look with understanding and appreciation on the people and country of France.

## (2) THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

### C. B. P. HANDS

*Mr. Hands is head of the French Department, Caludon Castle School, Coventry. He has taught there since the school opened in 1954, and previously in primary, secondary modern and grammar schools. He is founder and secretary of the Coventry Spanish Society*

IN ANY CONVERSATION about Caludon, sooner or later someone always asks, "Oh, you teach French there, do you? You must be in the grammar school section, then?" At that point I usually murmur that we are neither a bi-lateral nor a multi-lateral but a true comprehensive, that there are no water-tight grammar, secondary modern or other compartments, and that every boy is taught French for at least his first three years. To anyone who is still listening after that, I then have to explain what really matters, which is that every boy is given the type of French lessons suited to him.

It is not my purpose here to analyse the internal organisation of the various comprehensives in the Midlands, nor even of this school, although I must make the point that most of the following observations will apply to the majority of comprehensives

and secondary moderns anywhere, and also that my remarks about boys (our sole raw material) are equally true of girls. All I need say here about organisation is that the basic principle for most of our subject teaching is setting, with a complete freedom of movement up and down the sets either on a single-subject basis or in conjunction with the other basic subjects of English and mathematics.

Our top sets begin a normal G.C.E. course in their first year and continue on it until their fifth year. As I write these words, our first comprehensive intake (admitted in 1954, when the school was opened) are attacking their Ordinary Level G.C.E. papers. Incidentally, we take the A.E.B. Certificate—widely held to be the hardest. Our sixth-formers, survivors of a grammar school which

was absorbed into Caludon in 1954, take the J.M.B. examinations at advanced and scholarship levels. Our second sets aim at the R.S.A. examinations: the Technical Certificate, which can include French as an option, and the single-subject examinations. Our best linguists take additionally German and/or Latin, while in the past Spanish has appeared on the time-table for boys in all sets—as a second language for the ablest and as the only foreign language for the middle and lower sets.

Therefore, G.C.E. considerations apart, our language problems are those of many secondary moderns, multiplied and complicated by our setting considerations and our numbers.

This article is not the place to discuss why French is our first foreign language, or why it is taught to everyone down to an I.Q. of 73, the lowest we have yet had: but I do think that a consideration of our aims with the lower sets is relevant. These aims are *not* the A to Z of all language teaching, but simply six principles which must form a basis for any non-academic course.

The first is to speak the language—not, however, to the complete exclusion of everything else. The virtues of oral work are obvious, but this should not be the sole aim: something must be read, copied and studied in any worth-while language course, something permanent must remain in notebook,

desk or satchel, or on blackboard and wall, if not in the boy's brain, when the master has gone; and in any case the interests of youngsters aged from 12 to 16 are not best expressed in the vocabulary of a (French) six-year-old. The man who devotes too much effort to attempts to prove the contrary will run a grave risk in failing in the teacher's first and second duties, which are to stay alive and in good health. The old-style grammar-grind can easily become the new-style oral-ordeal, with just as dire effects on pupil, teacher and subject. In this judicious choice of a balance between the spoken, the written and the printed word, and in the methods of applying it, lies the whole art of language teaching with the non-selectives.

The second aim is an extension of the first: the pupil should be able to pronounce fairly correctly any French words and phrases, wherever they may be encountered. I quote the following from a single issue of a popular daily paper, which appeared the week before I wrote this article: de Gaulle, Brigitte Bardot, Prince Rainier, Simenon, Christian Dior, Renault cars, Dubonnet, the Tour de France, les Vingt-Quatre Heures du Mans, *c'est si bon*. The least we can do in the schools is to send out pupils who can attempt to say them properly—or do the television news-readers achieve more than we do?

Thirdly, the emphasis should be shifted from translation to comprehension. Second—and third—

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best classes of any age begin to flounder to an extent which is in direct ratio to their distance from "the cat sat on the mat" stage. I attach infinitely more value to the type of work where the pupils answer English questions about a French story, or for that matter where information about a car or a camera has to be extracted from a magazine advertisement. This sort of thing is, after all, one of the most practical applications of a knowledge of any language.

Fourthly, we should stress some of the general principles of linguistics. Now I am fully aware that this sounds very pretentious when speaking of "C-streamers" and their ilk, but nevertheless I have noted time and time again how readily all types of class appreciate that (for example) "the boy's bike" becomes "the bike of the boy," or that French has two words for "you" and Spanish has four, or that "n'est-ce pas?" has about a hundred English meanings, or that the Spanish have curious methods of dealing with question and exclamation marks. There is a multitude of points of this nature, easily presented to all types of pupil and leading to direct comparisons with English grammar, to the mutual benefit of both language courses.

A fifth aim should be to lay some sort of linguistic foundation, sufficient to be built on later if need or opportunity arise. In Coventry, thanks to the initiative of the languages department of the technical college, we are fortunate in having a wide and flourishing range of adult evening classes in all the major European languages. We also enjoy evening institutes and community centres where language classes are held. At the technical college I often have the pleasure of meeting Old Boys who tell me, "I never was much good at French at school, Sir, but I'm going youth-hostelling over there next year and I'd like to brush it up," or else they say, "I always liked French at school and I thought I'd do some German this year in case the firm ever sends me there." And of course, with whatever background we have succeeded in giving them at school,

with a more mature outlook and a personal purpose, they do "brush it up" or "do some German"—and jolly good luck to them, too.

### French for all

Finally, however little else they retain, our fourth-year leavers should take with them some appreciation of France and some sympathy towards the French. Every week brings fresh news of channel tunnel plans, of common market agreements, of estimated hovercraft fares, closer N.A.T.O. links, additional no-passport trips, heavier continental bookings and all the other thousand and one signs that we are inevitably being drawn ever closer to all our European neighbours and to the French in particular. Whether we admit it or not, our besetting national faults are insularity and mistrust, the cure for which begins in the schools.

Caludon has now been functioning for five years, and our methods—a mixture of the time-tested and the experimental—are now beginning to crystallise. Our languages staff have their individual and collective gimmicks, many of which we have evolved and invented ourselves.

I began this article with an extract from the sort of conversation in which I so often find myself involved, and I will end in the same way. People ask me: "Can these lower sets really do French, when English is virtually a foreign language to them?" Obviously I think they can and my questioners don't, unless they come from Wales, Jersey or any other bilingual region. Our Midland teds can translate "grass," "nick," "bird," "chiv," etc. better than most readers of this article, while all modern children can rapidly learn and correctly intone the mysterious language of: "Hill and gully rider, day-oh, day-oh," "Gillie-gillie-assenfeffer-katzen-allen-bogen-by-the-sea," "Ooh-bang, jiggly-jang," "Giddy-up a ding-dong," or for that matter, the Young Lady of Kew's lament, which are all as difficult to memorise as the present indicative of "aller."

## (3) SOME PROBLEMS

### GEOFFREY RICHARDSON

*Mr. Richardson is a lecturer in Education at the University of Leicester; he has taught in a special school at Sheffield, and later in grammar schools in the West Riding. He is joint author of HISTOIRES ILLUSTRÉES, PETITES HISTOIRES, ILLUSTRIRTE GESCHICHTEN*

BY TRADITION, LANGUAGES are "difficult subjects"; considered typical subjects for the grammar school; one of the signs by which the grammar school may be known apart from the other branches of secondary education. (By and large the grammar school boy does French, and by and large the

secondary modern boy doesn't.) And to the outsider—e.g., the present writer, who has never taught in a comprehensive school, though (perhaps for that reason?) he has had both time and the opportunity to observe and examine (and act as G.C.E. examiner to) a considerable number of them—it

seems that many of the problems confronting the present-day comprehensive school in its teaching of languages are difficulties which it has inherited from the grammar school and which might, if we came to them with a completely fresh mind, prove not to exist as problems at all.

### Who should learn French ?

The first such is the problem as to "Who is to do French?" In the grammar school this is a very real problem, because grammar school French means G.C.E. "O" level French, and we have to decide, often as early as the third year, who is to sit for the examination. We assume, in fact, that a proportion of our pupils—usually about a fifth: say one form in our five form entry—are not going to profit any further from their French after "Mock G.C.E." has revealed that they are unlikely to achieve a pass at "O" level. This, of course, if they have not dropped the subject even earlier. Now this assumption, that certain pupils are unsuited to the study of a language beyond a certain level, has found its way into the comprehensive school, where it has become a major issue. The question there is not when the less linguistically-minded shall drop their French, but how many of them shall ever start it. In a great many comprehensive schools at least half of the pupils never study a language other than their own, and to find a school where a language is taught throughout is a rarity. One frequently hears that "our grammar streams do it, and of course the modern streams don't"—or that the "borderline stream" is included in the French programme for a year or two, "just in case there is the odd child who will move up later." Quite often not even the borderline stream do French, which is then limited to approximately 25% of the intake.

It seems to me that by very definition a truly comprehensive school must teach French to the whole of its intake, at least for the first two or three years. To do otherwise—to decide on entry that some children can and will do French whilst others cannot and will not be given the opportunity—is surely to apply at 11½ the principles of selection which the comprehensive school condemns at 11+.

Opinions here will vary according to one's own side of the fence, one will feel either that the comprehensive school has great opportunity and freedom and must experiment—or that it has "talked itself into a spot." Either way, it is difficult to see how it can logically refuse to teach a language throughout.

There is as yet very little real evidence on this problem of how much French can be learned, and by how many—there is on the other hand a wealth of guesswork and prejudice. Language teachers will remember, however, the exceptional experiment

of Mrs. F. M. Hodgson<sup>1</sup> in the teaching of French to the eleventh form of a London comprehensive with a fourteen-form entry. In this school the first nine forms only took a language: the eleventh form had thus done no French. They had four lessons from Mrs. Hodgson, and there was then a complete break of three months before they had any more French teaching. Her fifth lesson was observed by a teachers' discussion group, and neither they nor Mrs. Hodgson could have had any idea of how much or how little of the language would have been retained by the girls after such a long and complete break. Within a few minutes it was obvious. "The language that had been learnt was there, functioning correctly and being confidently used."

As Mrs. Hodgson says, no one would wish to generalise on the basis of this one experiment, but we are forced "to subject to very careful scrutiny any preconceived ideas as to many children's inability to learn a foreign language, and to examine whether it is not the way in which we attempt to teach them which determines the success or failure . . . It may be, though it is still to be proved, that some children will not be able to travel very far. It is obvious that some will travel further than others, but the evidence we have indicates that however short or long their journey it can be for them an experience in which they find enjoyment, satisfaction, and a sense of achievement."

The second problem—the question of "How much French then do they learn?" is likewise only a problem in the grammar school. Once the external pass/fail examination is removed, and other criteria apply, the answer becomes relatively simple—they go as far on this road towards understanding, speaking and reading simple French as they are able. In other words, we restrict our syllabus to what the pupil can do, or a very little more, and help him to achieve his utmost, instead of placing before him an "O" level examination, with a clear indication of our conviction that he could never pass it. Formal grammar will go, as will sentence-translation, word-by-word renderings, complicated tenses and constructions—to be replaced by comprehension, reading, and free composition, all three predominantly (and in the initial stages exclusively) oral.

### Dead wood

This is not to say that *no* grammar will be taught or learnt, nor that an oral method is a soft option for the backward, nor that we should substitute, for the teaching of the language, the collection of foreign stamps or the dressing of dolls in national costume. Such activities may be valuable aids to the language teacher, who will wish to teach "France" as well

<sup>1</sup>*Modern Languages*, XXXVIII, No. 3, Sept. 1957, pp. 107-110.

as "French"; they will never be a substitute, however, for the language itself. Our aim should be, instead of this artificial lightening of the syllabus until it becomes not French any more but "Ways of Life in Foreign Lands," or "French Wine" and "Where it Comes From," to continue to teach the language itself (in addition to the background of the country) but to teach half of what we now attempt, and to teach it twice as well.

Just how much of the traditional, five-year, grammar school course, leading to "O" level, is dead wood, only becomes obvious when we place our candidate's performance at, say, the oral examination, by the side of his textbook (Books 1, 2, 3, 4, and possibly 5); his Preparation Book; his verb tables; his five lessons a week for five years. When candidate after candidate proves unable to understand the simplest question or to devise the simplest answer, when five years' work have failed to teach him the vocabulary of the classroom or that "ou" does not mean "who," then something is desperately wrong with our language teaching. And some of the failures may be due at least in part to the fact that the pupils have been "taught" (but not learnt) five times as much vocabulary and twice as much grammar as they need for "O" level work.

There is a fine statement of what the French Ministry of Education considers the Basic French requirements in the way of grammar and vocabulary, in "Le français élémentaire," published by the Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique, 29 Rue d'Ulm, Paris Ve., and an account (by Dr. E. Astington)<sup>2</sup> of a practising teacher's insight in composing, and success in teaching, a basic vocabulary. Dr. Astington's basic *active* vocabulary, which he finds ample for use up to "O" level, comprises 1,350 words! The scale of this achievement may be assessed by reference to the vocabulary list of the nearest French course—it will be found that Book I frequently contains nearly that number of words—for assimilation in the first year!

### French as a tool

Now one result of reducing the scope of both our vocabulary and our grammar teaching would be to make repetition possible on a scale hitherto impossible, when the only measure of progress has been pace. And it is possible that repetition would prove more successful than the traditional methods in teaching the language in general (and grammar in particular) to the less gifted pupil.<sup>3</sup> What the effect would be of teaching "Le français élémentaire"—the minimum of vocabulary and grammar—across a comprehensive school, with energy, con-

viction, patience, endless repetition and an active, oral approach, making French a tool used by the children in handling concrete situations and in describing everyday actions and interests, we shall not know until someone tries it and presents his objective findings. The possibilities however merit earnest thought.

### Where are the teachers?

The final problem is far less easy to solve. Who is to do the language teaching of the linguistically less able classes? Language teaching in general requires great patience, energy, and stamina, and the oral approach presupposes great facility and fluency in elementary everyday French—not a synthetic "baby-talk," or "pidgin French," but a French simplified and repetitive, yet at the same time living and genuine. Such a control of spoken French is usually associated with a year's residence abroad, and teaching experience in a French school, and this in turn usually goes with an honours degree from an up-to-date university. Teachers of calibre, with this kind of training, are of course rare, and in my experience they go into grammar school teaching. The demand still far exceeds the supply, and none of our students in modern languages is still unplaced at the end of his training year. Most of them have a job soon after Easter, or earlier.

In these circumstances it is difficult indeed to see where the new exponents of the new teaching in the new schools are to come from, and this of course must be one of the factors influencing heads, when they have to decide to what extent they can include a language in the timetable. I am not qualified to assess the level of recruitment to the comprehensives from the grammar schools, though one does know of gifted and well-qualified teachers who make such a move from conviction; speaking on the basis of my own experience within an Education Department, however, I would say that the language students going straight into comprehensive schools are in a very small minority indeed, and that the position shows little sign of changing.

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(Continued from page 12)

but for homework. Although it is obvious that in certain difficult circumstances the job card—or to give it an older name, the Dalton Plan—is of great help, yet it should never supersede classroom teaching. In mathematics and languages there is, of course, a real difficulty in teaching an unstreamed class, but there are certain subjects in which this difficulty does not operate until late in the course, for instance, housecraft and indeed any practical subject. This apart, the job card can never take the place of a lesson by the teacher.

<sup>2</sup>*Modern Languages*, XXXIX, No. 3, Sept. 1958, pp. 102-107.

<sup>3</sup>See the Scottish Education Department's *Modern Languages in Secondary Schools*; and the thesis of E. F. Thompkins, M.A., University of Sheffield, 1952.

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The bulk of the subscribers to FORUM took out subscriptions commencing with the first number last September. A leaflet was inserted into those copies of the Summer number going to these subscribers, including a form for renewal of subscriptions, and a request for comments on the journal.

The Editorial Board would like to thank the many readers who sent in their suggestions and comments. These were discussed at the last meeting of the Board, and several of the suggestions will be taken up—the provision of bibliographies (as in the case of Mr. Segal's article) being only one of these. Other suggestions concerned future articles and the general question of the 'balance' of the journal; many of these were very useful and will certainly be acted on in the future.

Many subscribers said they enjoyed the journal and found it useful. However it can certainly be improved, and we should welcome comments and suggestions from any reader who cares to send them in. It is above all important that the journal should not ossify, but maintain a live contact with its readership. We should welcome, in particular, more contributions to the DISCUSSION from practising teachers.

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(Continued from page 18)

their return. The findings they had made were discussed and they were able to draw a section across Wenlock Edge illustrating the pattern of human activity at the different periods in its history. The variation in type of occupation and settlement between the valley and the higher ground on the edge was very clear. Naturally great care had been taken in the selection of an area suitable for these children and verbal recording was reduced to a minimum. Nevertheless the reasoning ability required was of no small degree higher than one would expect of the children concerned, judging by their classroom performances.

Field work in history is not easy. To be accurate, historical records have often to be consulted. The geographer and the biologist, as far as secondary education is concerned, find all their evidence on the spot and can immediately interpret that evidence or carry it away with them. Not so the historians. Much painstaking and skilful work is required where documents are involved. Often there is no time to consult them properly and so the solution of the problem becomes practically impossible. Nevertheless in spite of this and other difficulties it is essentially worthwhile. The children of all abilities from 13 upwards are learning how to conduct historical investigations. They are facing real problems and in finding the solutions can consider themselves, if only in a small way, as historians.

# Book Reviews

*Educating One Nation*, by John Sharp. Max Parrish (1959), 134 pp., 12s. 6d.

MR. SHARP NOT ONLY chews over many current controversial matters, but also inserts some provoking points in other directions where re-thinking may be worthwhile.

That we are now, broadly-speaking, one nation socially and economically is largely accepted; Mr. Sharp shows how we fail in our educational system to achieve anything near unity. A two-nation outlook manifests itself often: in our two differing types of teacher-training; the independent schools and the state system; treatment of the select and the rejected after 11 plus; and, an instance which is understated in this book, the different qualities of teaching offered in too many junior schools to those being groomed for selection and to those already cast aside.

The breadth of Mr. Sharp's educational awareness cannot be questioned. He has taught, and studied education, in different parts of Britain, a Nuffield Fellowship has taken him to North America, the four Scandinavian countries, Germany, Holland and Belgium, and he is now headmaster of one of the boarding comprehensive schools of the British Families Education Service in Germany. From this experience comes thoughtful, sensitive suggestion. There is little of "Thou shalt . . ." and much in the spirit of "Should we not . . .?"; not the bludgeon answer to the over-simplified question.

Mr. Sharp openly discloses his personal deviations from the logical educational ideas he puts forward; his belief now, after earlier rejection, in the "Croydon plan" for locally centralized Junior Colleges, as a means of reducing the size of comprehensive schools, whilst still exposing the hypocrisy of the attack on size by opponents of the system. To quote Mr. Sharp: "Nobody, as far as I know, objects publicly to the size of Eton, Dulwich or Manchester Grammar School"—to which could be added hundreds of other grammar and secondary modern schools whose totals near or exceed the four figure mark. Many such schools have grown, or indeed bulged, from modest beginnings, and their organisation and buildings have not been planned to cope with their inflated numbers; by contrast, the comprehensives were assailed on this point before they were built or opened and accordingly have, in different ways, faced and conquered this problem from the outset.

Where smaller comprehensives are desired, and no sixth form tail to wag the comprehensive dog, junior colleges for combined sixth forms are the answer—just as they solve the problem of efficient and economic teaching for the sixth forms of smaller grammar schools; and I welcome Mr. Sharp's publicity for what I feared was just a personal heresy.

Who are the neglected children of the nation's schools? Grammar school pupils who suffer in competition from the better staffing ratio of the public schools; the "second quarter" in intelligence, who fail to reach a grammar school; the third (or fourth) quarters, deprived often of good teaching even at primary age; the sixth form pupils in schools where a wide range of subjects cannot be

offered by first-class teachers, and in subject classes of competitive number? Mr. Sharp explores the first two categories in some detail.

In matters of the curriculum more provocative thought is offered. Is mathematics taught in too great detail to too many pupils? Does boys' craftwork supply real benefit to the majority? In history, does not our absorption with national detail too often cause appalling international ignorance? And how can we defend the restriction on the learning of modern languages to so small a section of the community, and teach them so inadequately to the chosen few?

This book probes, examines, reasons. It will not please all its readers all the time, but it will challenge and stimulate. Its foreword by the chairman of the L.C.C. Education Committee commends its honesty of vision; its conclusions spotlight ways towards educating our country as one nation.

H. E. HOPPER.

*The Social Purposes of Education*, by K. G. Collier. Routledge & Kegan Paul (1959), 300 pp., 21s.

THE PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE in general proved more plausible writers on education than the sociologists, largely because the gaps they leave in their knowledge can be roughly filled by common sense. We all know what it is like to be human, to have an ego, to receive S, to be O, and to make R. So we can turn our psychology into existential awareness, and become, in a measure, more effective persons in consequence of our psychologizing.

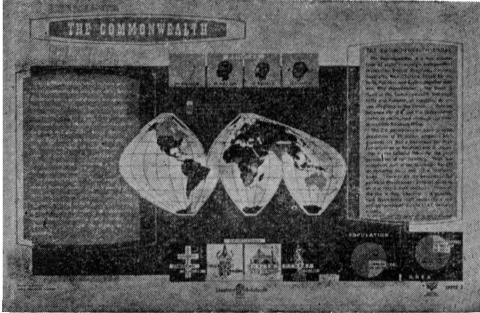
But nobody knows what it is like to be a society: and the description of, and even more prescriptions *for*, a society need more exact conclusions than we demand in describing personality. Education, which is not merely "prescription for society" but "prescription for tomorrow's society," cannot make much use of what sociologists have so far contrived to offer.

It is within this general limitation that we must view Mr. Collier's book, which is an attempt to describe the social change we are involved in, and to define the problems that face us in consequence. As a total statement it is thin and unconvincing; as an attention-arouser it has charm and persuasiveness. We are reminded, for example, of the threat to the British standard of living presented by the rise in world population and the industrialization of the East; and are urged, in consequence, to develop in our children flexibility of mind and an enthusiasm for hard work. Elsewhere we are warned against our national tendency to "keep up with the Joneses." But there is no comprehensive value-system from which we might learn to judge our standard of living and perhaps lower it, or transmute it, so that we can live with, rather than keep up with, the Sens and the Sings.

This is characteristic of the book as a whole. It proceeds by way of a well-ordered series of points, but never approaches a system. Even the "points" tend to rest on isolated illustrations rather than systematic conclusions. The peculiarly British virtues, we are told, are integrity, good nature, self-reliance and self-restraint. The British claim to excel in these directions is illustrated by evidence from *Picture Post* (a slightly ill-natured jest used by a policeman to avoid a riot), *Emma* (avoiding a

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family quarrel that might upset Mr. Woodhouse), and parliamentary language, so much better than that used by the French Deputies, who call each other "pig" 204 times a year. With such sketchy debating points in support of an analysis of the national character, the scientific validity, and even emotional persuasiveness of the book, is less than the highest.

These defects in science, however, become virtues as signals to attention. The concrete instance may prove little, but it arouses interest and provokes thought; and this wide-reaching survey of life in the community is packed with instance, from life and letters, on our values and objectives, on the way personality is developed, on learning, discipline and human relations.

Here is the kind of material and problem which the sociologist must bear in mind when he makes his system; and the kind of material the teacher needs to bear in mind as he thinks about his work. To say that the book is of more use to the teacher than to the sociologist is to imply no necessary criticism: it was meant to be; and by the breadth of its humanity it can give the teacher a heightened awareness of the dimensions of his task. But in the end, even the teacher will need something more broadly based on fact and more profoundly interpreted in terms of general principle.

HAROLD LOUKES.

*Changing Schools*, edited by Edward Blishen. Council for Children's Welfare (1959), 117 pp., 2s. 6d. Available from the Secretary, 54 Platt's Lane, London, N.W.3.

THIS BOOK CONSISTS of seven articles, rather unequal in quality, dealing with our ill-advised efforts to select children for grammar schools (and therefore for higher education) at the age of 11+, and with some of the current alternatives designed by certain education authorities to overcome the finality and inflexibility of early selection.

The first six articles were based on talks given at a conference organised in January 1959 by the Council for Children's Welfare and the National Federation of Parent-Teacher associations. The final article by Dr. Pedley, University of Leicester, gives a critical survey of two-tier developments in secondary education, including Leicestershire, which he compares with Ontario's junior/senior high school pattern.

Professor M. M. Lewis's penetrating argument is based on the inescapable social effects of early selection, first on the children themselves while at school and then on society in general, as they become adult citizens. He produces evidence of the deterioration in ability of many children who fail to be selected for grammar schools and find themselves in secondary modern schools, and also of the production of backwardness at the primary stage, the result of too early streaming for the purpose of getting the better pupils to grammar schools. He reminds readers that Binet himself protested against the brutal pessimism of regarding a child's intelligence as a fixed quantity incapable of being augmented, and insists that the educational decisions which we take have inevitable social consequences of which we must be aware.

Blishen writing with modesty and wit describes the growing suspicion with which the great machine of selection is now regarded. He gives details of improvements in procedure and recent innovations in organisation being tried by a number of education authorities. His argument reinforces that of Professor Lewis and he sees as specially disastrous the loss of horizons and healthy aspiration which for most is entailed by failure in the 11+.

Further reinforcement comes from the head of a primary school, L. P. F. Miller, whose experience of streaming in primary schools confirms Professor Lewis's argument. In his own school, at first streamed and later unstreamed, he found that one effect of early streaming was the apparent justification of it as shown by the ever-widening gap between "A" and "C" streams. Later in an unstreamed school he found that, provided that the number of children going to grammar schools did not fall below expectation level, parents were satisfied, teachers more contented and children much happier. If we insist upon selection at 11+ we are making inevitable selection at even earlier ages, at 7+ and even 6+.

From an administrator's point of view Lady Simon points out, in a slighter essay, that recent schemes which enable parents to send their children to secondary schools with a five to seven year course are in some respects a return to the pre-1944 days when those who could pay fees sent their children to grammar schools which were expected to teach not only the brilliant child but the

average and less able as well. The Leicestershire scheme will produce two types of secondary school, each fully comprehensive, yet overlapping, an arrangement not without difficulty.

Raymond King, speaking from his long experience as headmaster and with six years of a fully comprehensive school behind him, urges that the nation's resources in secondary education shall be so organised that they are available to the maximum number of children. All secondary schools are at present expanding beyond the type and those most successful as schools are those which become more and more comprehensive in organisation.

Harry Rée's breezy generalisations must surely have been subjected to a tape recorder, for the reader is spared none of the colloquialisms, the "don't lets," "dash it," "rather a Ted," and "our dump" (referring to his own school). Perhaps he hoped by the "tripe," "guts" and "my goodnesses" to persuade the audience to accept the speaker as an honest cheerful fellow with no nonsense about him. The most fervent admirers (in public) of secondary modern and primary schools are those members of the Joint Four who stand to lose most by the swing towards comprehensive schools. Mr. Rée is no exception and his chatty talk illustrates well the technique now being employed to bolster up the disintegrating tripartite system.

The final article by Dr. Pedley traces changes in public opinion with regard to selection between 1947 and 1959, showing how with cumulative experimental evidence the tide of criticism has risen and now flows strongly against early selection.

The scheme which has begun to operate in Leicestershire within the last two years is described in detail though with some cogent criticism. If, as a report from the director of education suggests, there may be no need for any fundamental reorganisation of grammar schools because of the composition of pupils transferring from high schools, is Leicestershire in reality putting the clock back to the position in the twenties and thirties described by Lady Simon?

Pedley gives a useful summary of recent changes in secondary organisation and selection procedures in three county boroughs and in certain county authorities. Of these one of the most interesting is Cleckheaton in the West Riding where it is decided by parents' choice whether a child goes to a secondary school with a short term course (11—15), a medium term course (11—16), or a long term course (11—18). Parents, and not testers, have the final word.

The future pattern, Pedley suggests, is likely to be that of a common education for two to four years beyond the primary school and in the later secondary years a rich variety of courses available to all.

This booklet provides, therefore, not only interesting firsthand accounts of work in a primary and in a comprehensive school together with stop press news of recent adaptations of secondary education but a forward look at the shape secondary education is likely to take within the next twenty years.

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*Choosing a Career*, by Eleanor Brockett. Staples Press (1959), 178 pp., 16s.

IN HER FORMER BOOK *How to Retire and Start Living*, Mrs. Brockett studied the empty misery of an old age that follows a working life devoted only to competitive success or to quick rewards. Finding that the turning-point between true and false values frequently lies in later adolescence, she now writes about the motives underlying the initial choice of life-work. For only when the choice is based on the *contribution* that each individual can best make to society will he find the deepest personal fulfilment.

Although containing useful descriptions of various occupations, this is not a book about careers but about *choosing*. Hence it fills a vital gap and should be in every school and college library. Short, personal and readable, it will challenge young people to think fundamentally and realistically, thus gaining knowledge both of themselves and of the working world. A useful basis for discussion groups of teachers and pupils, it will also be particularly helpful to parents since it includes advice on those essential basic skills, necessary in all careers, which can be acquired during vacations and in the interim period between school and training. Other valuable sections include surveys of existing vocational guidance services, the role of graduates, the special problems of married women, the art of finding fulfilment for a many-sided personality, and the dangers of early specialisation. The book is written from the women's point of view, and my only critical comment is to wish that a similar volume were available for boys.

"Does this work enable me to make the best contribution of which I am capable?" In a sound society "where everyone fills his appropriate place and is respected for it" this profound yet straightforward and practical little book will guide at the crucial time when such a question must be answered.

MARY SWAINSON.

*Local History in England*, by W. G. Hoskins. Longmans (1959), 196 pp., 21s.

THIS IS INTENDED to be a book of guidance to those studying local history. Dr. Hoskins tells us exactly how to proceed to unearth the past in parish and town by using census reports, local directories, borough accounts, parish chest records, tax assessments, manorial surveys, old maps, etc. A great believer in fieldwork, he thinks the local historian should "get his feet wet" in studying churches, houses, parish boundaries and landscape at first hand, and not just through documents.

Many people have been deterred from the study of local history by the technical difficulties involved. And many more have been repelled by the end-products, those dull and forbidding parish histories whose multitudinous facts have little interest for anyone save the authors. Dr. Hoskins, besides clearing up many difficulties, attacks this tradition, with its concentration on the pedigrees of landed families, on the details of land tenure, and on "the minutiae of manorial history."

Further he wishes to differentiate sharply between antiquarianism, the amassing of a multitude of historical details, and true local history. This should have as its central theme "the origin and growth of (the) particular local community or society; the peculiar and individual nature of this society and the way it worked through the centuries—that is the way it solved certain basic political and economic problems, above all the problem of how to get a living for an increasing number of people from the fixed supply of land and other natural resources."

Instead of beginning with a quotation from Domesday Book, a parish history could very well begin with a description of the community today, and, working backwards, dwell on the profound changes which the 19th century brought. One small criticism of this book is that in making such a justified plea Dr. Hoskins says so little of the plentiful sources of 18th and 19th century industrial history which are available, and without which the recent history of many towns can hardly be written.

This book will be invaluable to many thousands of amateur historians, and perhaps especially to history teachers. It would be quite feasible to discuss it with a class and then set about a local history study with the children. More important, it will help those who have wished to bring their teaching to life in terms of local detail but wished to avoid sacrificing thereby the framework of significant national history which is necessary for the development of historical understanding.

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*Three Vertebrates*, by T. A. G. Wells. Heinemann (1959), 142 pp., 12s. 6d.

THIS IS "A Practical Guide" to the study, at Advanced G.C.E. level, of the dogfish, frog and rabbit (with notes on the rat). The book is attractive in appearance, has ring binding and gives the impression that dissection is a business-like activity, aesthetically pleasing. As perhaps one would expect the practical work is seen in terms of dissection (plus investigations of skeletal structures)—but not entirely so. Some observations on living frogs and their parasites are included.

Helpful written instructions are provided for each dissection: diagrams indicate what should be found and are so large and clear that it should be difficult for students to resist the suggestion that theirs should be large too (although a frog vertebra "40 times life size" is surely an error!) Incidentally, no scales appear by the diagrams in the text. There are some sensible general rules for practical work and students are told to "Cultivate the outlook of an explorer," but the book like others, does little to develop this attitude. Scientific activity certainly includes a large element of corroboration but do we in our teaching and the organisation of our books provide sufficient opportunities for exploration and the building up of some aspects of theory from practical investigations?

M. COLLINS.

*The Rhyming River*, by James Reeves. Heinemann (1959), Book 1, 5s.; Book 2, 5s. 3d.; Book 3, 5s. 6d.; Book 4, 5s. 9d.

*Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Ed. James Reeves. Heinemann (1959), 8s. 6d.

*Selected Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Ed. James Reeves. Heinemann (1959), 8s. 6d.

*Contemporary English Poetry*, by Anthony Thwaite. Heinemann (1959), 10s. 6d.

IF WE ARE TO prove to the modern adolescent that poetry can still speak to and for him, Mr. Reeves, in the four books of his anthology for secondary schools, *The Rhyming River*, has given us all the evidence we need. From the first, the eye is stimulated to read by the crisp look of the page, the cunningly varied illustrations, and the amusing use of engaging old prints. The reader's attention is first captured by the book, then rewarded by the poems, chosen with a lively, fastidious, contemporary taste from a remarkably wide range of sources. This is a healthy, youthful anthology, well adapted to varied work in the classroom, and carrying no excess weight.

The *Selected Poems*, the only collection of Emily Dickinson's fierce, dangerous poems readily available in this country, is a brazier of white-hot coals. The book is edited and introduced—with admirable scholarly austerity—by Mr. James Reeves, to whom every serious sixth-form English teacher is grateful for the whole Poetry Bookshelf series, of which this and the *Selected Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* are the latest gifts.

Anthony Thwaite's *Contemporary English Poetry* is not written for the sixth form, and is, for that reason,

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more likely to be of value to it. The weakest, the opening, chapter fails to do what, year by year, appears to be less possible, or necessary—generalise profitably about 20th century poetry; but Mr. Thwaite's open, unpretentious reporting of what key poems, from a very extensive and up-to-date acquaintance, have said to him, will be valuable to a young stranger to the idiom.

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Correction: *Measure for Measure*, edited by James Winny (150 pp., 6s. 9d.), is published by Hutchinson Educational and not by William Heinemann, as was stated in error in the last issue of FORUM under "Books Received," page 114.

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