

With the able assistance of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce funds were soon forthcoming, £2,000 being raised immediately as a guarantee fund, and a Technical School was formed. The first President of the Council of the School was Mr. Henry Mitchell, who was later knighted for his services to education in Bradford, and the Council appointed Mr. T. R. Ashenhurst to be the first instructor. On March 6th, 1878 - a red-letter day in the history of technical education in Bradford - he delivered his inaugural address at the Mechanics Institute.

The number of students attending the classes in the opening session reached 350, and the Council of the Technical School quickly had to consider the necessity of erecting a building worthy of the institution it had created. In August, 1878, the Mayor of Bradford, Mr. Briggs Priestley, called a meeting of industrialists of the district, and as an outcome of that meeting the sum of £17,000 was subscribed to a building fund, to which was later added a generous donation of £3,000 by the Clothworkers Company of London.

One of the subscribers, to the extent of £500, was Mr. W. E. Forster, whose passionate belief in education for all had resulted in the Education Act of 1872. His name will ever be associated with his struggle to establish schools for all children and reforms in their working conditions.

The Council acquired about an acre of land at the junction of Great Horton Road and Carlton Street, Bradford. Plans for a design for a Technical School were invited from architects to cost £12,000, and 16 entries were submitted. Mr. T. C. Hope, of Messrs. Hope & Jardine, was adjudged the winner of the competition and was appointed Architect. The difficulties of the sloping and quarried nature of the site were successfully overcome, and in June, 1880, the 'memorial' stone was laid by Lt. Col. John Britten, the Master of the Worshipful

Company of Clothworkers of the City of London.

The Trust Deed of 1883, with its Indenture dated the 3rd May, 1881, purchasing the land, recited that "the School to be erected thereon shall be used for the purpose of imparting to youths, artisans and others, technical, scientific, artistic and general instruction in the various processes involved in the production of Worsted, Woollen, Silk, and Cotton Fabrics, and other Manufactured Articles, and involved in the carrying on or conducting of any Profession, Trade or Industry which now is, or may, for the time being, be, practised or followed in Bradford aforesaid, or its neighbourhood, or in any matters connected with the aforesaid Processes, Professions, Trades or Industries, or any of them".

The Prospectus issued at the time of the laying of the 'memorial' stone in 1880 set out that technical education was best defined as "general instruction in those arts and sciences the principles of which are applicable to the various employments of life".

The 23rd June, 1882, the day on which the Bradford Technical School was opened with great ceremony by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, marked an important epoch. No institution had previously existed able to boast the representative character of this School, bearing so directly not only on the textile and mechanical industries associated with Bradford, but on the general industries of the country. This was one of many instances of Bradford's pioneering achievements, which in the course of its history were not only confined to education.

The Prince and Princess of Wales during their visit to Bradford for this occasion stayed at Milner Field, the home of Mr. Titus Salt, the son of the eminent Bradford industrialist who had founded the model village of Saltaire. Their journeyings to and from Bradford



buildings, acquisition of land for extensions, salaries and wages - e.g., February, 1890, "it was resolved that the wages of the porter in the Dyehouse Department be advanced two shillings per week"; and in January, 1891, "Resolved that Mr. Tom Newsome be appointed Assistant Master at a salary of £100 per year ... the Council however intimated that if Mr. Newsome would apply himself to the study of the subjects he is expected to teach, and make himself thoroughly competent, they will be prepared to revise his salary at the end of twelve months' service".

The minutes also reveal other aspects of life within the College: "A letter was laid on the table from residents living opposite the side door of the College in Carlton Street, and in connection therewith the landlord of the property, Mr. Firth, appeared before the Council and complained strongly of the nuisance caused to his tenants by the cab traffic in connection with balls, and requested that the front door only should be used on these occasions". This matter was referred to a special meeting, when, after "considerable discussion", it was resolved "that the Council engage a policeman to regulate the traffic in Carlton Street during the whole of the time balls are held. The policeman to be instructed to mitigate the noise complained of as far as possible, and to remain on the premises until the place is cleared". The secretary was instructed to inform Mr. Firth of this; but to add that it appeared doubtful whether using the front door would remove the ground of complaint "and prevent drivers of carriages waiting in the side street".

In the same year the Secretary reported that he had been obliged to obtain a stove for his office, at a cost of 30/-. The Council was gracious enough to "confirm his action".

1898 saw the death of Sir Henry Mitchell, who had been so instrumental in the foundation of the College and who

had been its President from its formation.

In 1899 a new scheme of government came into operation, under which the control of the College was vested entirely in the Bradford Corporation. A Technical Instruction Committee was set up to administer the College, and one of its first tasks was to attempt to cope with the problem of accommodation, as the splendid Great Horton Road building, even with its extensions, was bursting at the seams. The Committee decided to close the Day Science School and make the space available to the existing technical Departments of Textile Industry, Chemistry and Dyeing, Engineering, and Art. These four Departments continued in Great Horton Road until 1904, when the Art Department removed to its own building and became an independent body.

The Education Act of 1902 was perhaps the most important Act Bradford Corporation ever had to deal with. It added to the Council's function the responsibility for voluntary schools and the provision for education other than elementary. Mechanics Institutes all over the country had organised a great deal of voluntary elementary educational work over the last seventy years, and the movement had clamoured for government acceptance of this responsibility. When it did at last come with the passing of this Education Act, it had the effect of diminishing the role of the Mechanics Institutes, much of their work passing to local authorities.

By a new scheme approved by the Board of Education, the Technical College was managed by the Education Committee of Bradford City Council. This Committee came into office on the 1st January, 1904, and all former powers and obligations of the Technical Instruction Committee were transferred to this new Education Committee.

The work of the College continued to expand, and the



question of accommodation was increasingly under consideration. The Textile Department particularly was a problem, and steps were taken to provide a new textile building and power house. New buildings were erected fronting Carlton Street which included a complete plant for the washing, carding, combing, spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing of textiles, and a power house with boiler house and engine house, and power plant to supply all the light and power required in the various College buildings. These new buildings, the Textile Block, were opened by Lord Rotherham in October, 1911.

It is interesting to cull a few figures from Annual Reports of the College. In 1903/4, day students numbered 254. These were students who entered and would complete a full technical course occupying the whole of their time for three years, with the opportunity of a fourth year. Evening students numbered 845. In 1905/6, the number of day students was 273, evening students 852. By 1912/13 the day students had dropped to 239, but the evening students had risen to 1108. One annual report reflected, "It is pleasant to record the growing appreciation of the work of the work of the College by the prominent employers in the various industries concerned".

The 1914 War took its toll from the staff and students of the College. There is a programme in the College's collection of documents of a "Patriotic Concert" given on the 3rd May, 1915, only 9 months after the outbreak of war. The programme is decorated with Union Jacks and consists of cheerful songs and music, but is almost entirely devoted to a list of College staff and students serving in the Forces, several already killed or wounded. There are at least a couple of hundred names, with their regiments and rank indicated, and this sad little record gives a picture of the gap that must have existed within the College and the heartache and anxiety in the homes of the young men.

However, after the War, in April, 1919, Separate Departments of Dyeing, Electrical Engineering, and Botany were constituted, and in 1922 the Department of Mechanical and Civil Engineering was divided into two separate Departments. In 1925 a Department of Commerce and Banking was established, and in 1927 a Department of Pharmacy. In 1920 land had been acquired for the erection of an Engineering Block, which was completely equipped and opened in 1922.

In 1927, the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Alderman Conway, wrote a series of articles in the Yorkshire Observer, urging University status for Bradford Technical College. He considered that Bradford had a College which could claim to be a University in everything but name and status. The alternatives he suggested were to make it an independent University, or to affiliate it with Leeds University in such a way that students if they chose could take their degrees without leaving Bradford. He submitted that the College could be known as University College if his second alternative were adopted. Leeds had obtained its Charter as an independent University in 1904, after having itself been a constituent college of the old Victoria University, the Federal University with Colleges in Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds. It was to be another thirty years before this dignity was acquired by Bradford, and then it was the higher technological work of the Technical College which was incorporated into the University, with the Technical College and the Art College providing courses up to, but not including, degree level.

The work of the College grew steadily, with accommodation an ever present concern. In 1928 plans for the extension of the main building were approved, and work commenced in 1930. The Lister Terrace site adjoining the College was cleared and a 3-storey building erected. In addition, a 2-storey building was added to the rear of the College. The new extensions were completed in 1932 and formally opened by the Earl of Athlone



in October, 1933, an event which was used also to commemorate the Jubilee of the College.

Further extensions were commenced in April, 1939, to comprise classrooms and workshops for the Mechanical, Electrical, Chemistry, Dyeing and Physics Departments.

War came again to disrupt the organisation, although the handbooks and calendars issued by Bradford Education Committee throughout the war show no diminution of the variety of subjects offered for study. Indeed, the students must have felt somewhat stretched to meet the demands of the curriculum: in May, 1945, they presented a letter and petition to the Principal asking for a mid-morning break, particularly for the benefit of those students who left home early in the morning to travel to Bradford!

The 1944 Education Act made it the duty of Local Education Authorities actively to provide adult education facilities. The Bradford Authority was already responsible for the Technical College, the Regional College of Art, Belle Vue, Carlton and Hanson Senior Technical Institutes, and other domestic and evening institutes. By 1946, a number of day release classes for young employees were provided, and the scheme was supported by local traders and industrialists, but the powers to compel all school leavers to attend classes one day a week until the age of 17 years and 8 months were never invoked, cost alone prohibiting this, although vocational education was offered too, and taken advantage of by, students already working in industry and commerce in Bradford.

In 1956 the Government published a White Paper outlining an expansion of technical education, alongside plans for expansion in technology sections of certain university departments. The White Paper proposed a new category, Colleges of Advanced Technology.

In 1957 one of the first C.A.T.s in the country was created at Bradford Technical College, for the education and training of technologists who would be able to take responsible industrial positions in design, production, research and administration. This College was still administered by the local authority, until in 1962 it came under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and received its funds through the University Grants Committee. In 1966 its Charter was signed, and the institution was designated a university, the Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, becoming its first Chancellor.

The Technical College remained a separate entity, continuing its programme of technical education and continuing to expand alongside its newly formed neighbour. More money was being spent all over the country on higher education, more teachers were being trained, more colleges being established. In 1959 the Technical College absorbed the three Senior Technical Institutes, Belle Vue, Hanson and Carlton; now located back in Great Horton Road, accommodation again was a concern, and application was made to the Ministry of Education for approval to a plan to build new premises on another site in Great Horton Road. Approval was given, and the Westbrook extensions were opened in 1965 by Alderman Revis Barber, thus completing the first phase of the new Technical College buildings. A second phase commenced in 1967 and became operational in 1969, and in 1971 the Duchess of Kent opened the new Kent Wing, which offered accommodation for specialist teaching, and workshops and laboratories for civil engineering and mechanical engineering departments.

It was at this stage that "inflation" and "depression" became household words. Less money was available from the Ministry for building and training, and higher education particularly was checked by the national need for economy.



In the middle 1850's the need had been felt for improvement in the system of art education for trade purposes. Not only new materials and modern machinery were necessary if Bradford manufacturers were to keep abreast of their competitors, and a number of local textile industrialists organised the setting up of a School of Design at the Mechanics Institute in 1865. This was eventually merged into the Technical School, becoming the Department of Art. In 1904, when the problem of accommodation became acute, the Art Department broke away from the Technical College and became a separate College of Art. It moved into what was originally the Mannville New Connection Chapel on the other side of Great Horton Road. Space there too is very limited, and although premises were used in other buildings, and a foundation stone was laid for a new Art College in Great Horton Road, the Department is still dispersed in its old building and various annexes around the campus.

In September, 1973, the Bradford Technical College and the Regional College of Art united to form a new college, the Bradford College of Art and Technology. A new Principal was appointed, with jurisdiction over both Colleges. A plaque in the Westbrook building was unveiled by Alderman Doris Birdsall on that date to commemorate the new status of the College. The name was not to be used for long, however, for in April, 1975, following a merger between the College of Art and Technology and the Margaret McMillan College of Education, which had been established in Bradford by the local authority in 1952, Lord Crowther-Hunt, Minister of State for Further and Higher Education, unveiled yet another plaque announcing the opening of the newly named Bradford College, the first in the country to combine colleges of art, technology and teacher training, with a student enrolment of over 20,000 and a staff of over 400.

The College is organised into five Schools of study:

School of Adult and Community Education

School of Business and Social Studies

School of Combined Studies

School of Technology and Design

Margaret McMillan School of Education

It is impossible in a brief memorandum of this nature to set out the classes available to the student. Turning over the pages of the Prospectus one finds courses on nursery nursing, economics, hairdressing, engineering, metallurgy, textiles - even a class on horology. And many, many more. The most fervent educationalist must feel stimulated and satisfied with the multiplicity of learning available here.

Any school of technology established as Bradford College is in the midst of an important industrial district must exist primarily for the benefit and advantage of all who are concerned in its industries. Bradford College is an integral part of the community in which it exists. Its students are multi racial, young men and young women working together and learning together.

The College building, with its extensions and annexes, forms a great campus which, together with the neighbouring University, makes a very significant architectural impact on present day Bradford. But not only is it significant architecturally, its education potential and influence is boundless, and at this time of centenary celebration Bradford may well stop to consider what it has achieved. It may even echo an article written for the Record of Technical and Secondary Education in 1894:



" . . . This then is a brief description of the work carried on in this extensive educational establishment which, from a mere weaving school, has grown to be a technical college of the first rank. Bradford has just reason to be proud of its Technical College . . . The Institution was conceived, erected by public subscription, and has been maintained under the conviction that the way to commercial supremacy lies through the avenue of technical education. It will pay a thousandfold if it should, by its intellectual influence, contribute to the commercial prosperity of this great centre of industry. To other towns and industries, the example of Bradford and what it has accomplished may be a source of help and inspiration".