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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN COUNTY DURHAM, 1944-1974, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FERRYHILL AND CHILTON

MARTIN HOWARD RICHARDSON

This thesis grew out of a single question: why should a staunch Labour Party stronghold like County Durham open a grammar school in 1964 when the national Party was so firmly committed to comprehensivization? The answer was less easy to find than the question was to pose. The Labour Party was less committed to comprehensivization than is commonly believed. The commitment was to equality of opportunity. For many the ideal was, as Gaitskell said, "a grammar school education for all." In County Durham, the grammar school was the way out of the pit and the pride invested in "the grammar" ran very deep, then so too did a pride in the local modern schools, many of which, as in the case of Ferryhill and Chilton, replaced the all-age schools that grew out of the 1902 Education Act. The way round the moral dilemma of providing selective grammar schools was a unique and relatively cheap compromise, which sought to link grammar and modern schools together under one umbrella: the multilateral unit. The key element of the scheme, which emerged out of the 1944 Education Act, was the ease of transfer of pupils within the multilateral unit, so that every child could have an education suitable to his age, aptitude and ability. By a very close analysis of the local government records, this thesis investigates the ways in which County Durham coped with the requirements of the 1944 Act and in so doing set up the multilateral units. The grammar school at Ferryhill was planned in 1946: the fact that it took nearly twenty years to open is a direct result of the relatively low priority given to education in the County after the Second World War and the distressed state of the North-East economy. Alas, for many in Ferryhill and Chilton, communities about which very little of value has been written, the experiment in multilateral units lasted only ten years, when the national movement for comprehensivization proved too strong to resist. When more records are opened to public scrutiny, a more detailed analysis can be made of the complex relationships between the Labour Party and its members in County Durham and the three-way relationship between the Local Education Authority, the divisional executives and central government.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
IN COUNTY DURHAM, 1944-1974, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO FERRYHILL AND CHILTON**

Martin Howard Richardson

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M.H.Richardson
University of Durham
School of Education

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. FERRYHILL AND CHILTON: THE COMMUNITIES IN CONTEXT

To the casual observer Ferryhill and its neighbouring settlement Chilton appear commonplace. There seems little to distinguish them from innumerable former coal mining towns and villages throughout County Durham. Both settlements suggest the typical straggling ribbon developments associated with pit villages. Indeed, without some knowledge of local building materials one might be in any of England's great coalfields; Northumberland, Yorkshire or Nottinghamshire.

Approaching Ferryhill from Durham six miles to the north along the old Great North Road, which linked London to Edinburgh, the town appears along the top of a lofty ridge which runs roughly from east to west 500 feet above sea level.¹ There are no obvious distinguishing features to catch the eye apart from a large grassy mound below and to the right of the ridge, covered on its northern slope by young conifers.

¹ For Ferryhill and Chilton's location within the County see Appendix Two.

Opposite this hill a small road leads up to the town centre, though the locals still refer to it as "the village". The old North Road then goes through "the cut", an impressive narrow gorge carved in 1923 out of the magnesium limestone on which the town is built, at a cost of £49,000.² From here the road continues, past the football ground and open fields until Chilton is reached one and a half miles to the south. Smaller and less impressive, Chilton is cut unequally in two by the road from which rows of terraced houses, built on a grid pattern, can be seen to the left and right.

Thirty years ago the journey would have been almost identical, except that both settlements would have been dominated by the giant twin wheels of pit winding gear and pit head buildings. The grassy slope with its young trees, for which County Durham won international acclaim,³ was a spoil heap for the coal waste from just one of the three coal mines still in operation.

In a country so diverse as England to find any settlement which contains all the characteristics of its region would be very difficult if not virtually impossible. Yet despite this both communities do, to a limited extent, mirror the changes which have taken place within the County, with one notable exception: the City of Durham itself. A combination of mainly geographical and historical circumstances has set Durham City apart in many ways from the County it administers.

² E. Johnson, et al., S. Luke's Parish Ferryhill 1853-1953, Ch. 5.

³ The most prestigious of the numerous awards the County has received is the Europa Nostra Diploma of Merit. For a concise summary of its achievements see Brian Page, Brushing off the Coal Dust, The Northern Echo, 3 December 1988.

Ironically, Ferryhill almost provides the best position from which to view County Durham; that honour goes to the church tower at Kirk Merrington, a quarter of a mile to the south west of Ferryhill Comprehensive School. The County is flanked on three sides by water. Its eastern limit is set by the North Sea and the former County of Cleveland; to the north the River Tyne used to form the natural boundary, now the limit is set by Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County. The southern and western boundaries remain relatively unaffected by recent legislation; to the south lies the River Tees and beyond it North Yorkshire; whilst to the east the Pennines separate County Durham from Cumbria.

The County has a variety of natural resources. It has a fertile coastal plain and important river valleys, whilst to the west lie large areas of relatively barren moorland. However, County Durham, including both Ferryhill and Chilton, owes much of its recent prosperity to rich mineral deposits. The wealth of the whole northern region was built, at least in part, on Durham's abundant supply of iron, lead and coal. Unfortunately such treasures, once easy to plunder, became increasingly difficult to mine. The disadvantages of relying so heavily on such unpredictable and finite resources have proved a fruitful area of study for many economists, sociologists and historians.⁴ The decline of the coal industry in particular forms an important part of the backcloth to any study of Ferryhill and Chilton.

To the majority of the population in the early 1960s the future of Ferryhill and

⁴ One of the best is a collection of essays looking at the impact of mining on life in the North-East: M. Bulmer, (Ed.), Mining and Social Change.

Chilton, like their past, seemed bound up with the coal industry. The more knowledgeable would have known that both communities were much older than the coal mines to which they owed their livelihood, and that the prospects for their pits were bleak. The threat of closure was nothing new to the northern coalfields and it was only a matter of time before the blow fell. Yet despite the last pit closure in 1968 the communities, though irrevocably altered, survived.

The North-East is a complex region; and as more local studies are undertaken, the complexities become ever greater. Therefore, it is almost impossible to give a truly accurate picture of its general development, except in the broadest terms.⁵ For example, its industries, though often mutually interdependent, developed at their own pace. Whilst the overall aim of this thesis is to document and analyse the provision of secondary education in Ferryhill and Chilton since 1944 in relation to the developments in County Durham in particular and England and Wales in general, a brief description of Ferryhill and Chilton's past is useful in order to place the two communities in their wider regional and national context.

No detailed academic study of the history of either Ferryhill or Chilton has ever been undertaken. What information can be gleaned comes from a variety of sources, of variable quality, all of which tend to concentrate on the region as a whole. Some, like the work of the highly respected Robert Surtees (1779-1834), who ironically lived in Mainsforth Hall less than a mile from both Ferryhill and

⁵ For an excellent, though brief, summary of the County's history, see a collection of essays in J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, Parts 2-5.

Chilton, are pieces of genuine research. Others need to be looked at with greater caution, being little more than a collection of anecdotes, often recounting travels through the region; these should not be dismissed, though some have a higher entertainment than historical value. The rest tend to fall between the invaluable directories made famous in the last century, and the work of the plagiarists who repeat verbatim the accounts of earlier scholars.

The first reference to Ferryhill occurs in an Anglo-Saxon charter of 966, which refers to Feregenne, and C.E. Jackson, in his work on Durham place names, concludes that the original must have been "Faer's road".⁶ In 1125 it was "Ferie", in 1316 "Ferye on the Hill" and on a map of 1646 as "Ferye on ye Mount". From such information A. Mawer believes the origin to lie in the Old English "firgen" or "fergen", meaning wooded hill or mountain.⁷

Chilton's origins seem to present fewer problems: both Jackson and Mawer agree with the date 1091 and the use of the name Ciltona,⁸ though by the fourteenth century and a survey of the Palatinate of Durham the word Chilton is used. As with

⁶ C.E. Jackson, The Place Names of Durham, p. 54.

⁷ A. Mawer, The Place Names of Northumberland and Durham, p. 85.

Many theories have been put forward as to how Ferryhill acquired its name, most are based on myth and conjecture, and as such are of little historical value. The most widely repeated locally is of Sir Roger de Ferry slaying the last wild boar in England, the Braun of Brancepeth. The most readable account of this tale is in R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, pp. 284-285.

⁸ A. Mawer, The Place Names of Northumberland and Durham, p. 45; and C.E. Jackson, The Place Names of Durham, p. 37.

Ferryhill, the origin is Anglo-Saxon: "cild" meaning child, or young man not yet made a knight, and "tun" being the Anglo-Saxon word for a fence or an enclosure.

Whatever their origins, in Saxon times or even earlier, there is no evidence to suggest what life was like for the earliest people of Ferryhill and Chilton. It is perhaps reasonable to believe, certainly in the case of Ferryhill, that a settlement grew up where the coal measures were flanked by the limestone. The area would have provided ample water supplies from the water seeping through the limestone to form numerous underground springs. The land around both settlements was undoubtedly thickly forested and would have provided vital timber and animals to hunt. Ferryhill had a river, the North Skerne, which ran to the east of the village. The area which separated Ferryhill from the villages of Thrislington and Mainsforth was especially marshy. Mainsforth was in fact the "main ford" which linked both Ferryhill and Chilton to Bishop Middleham, which became one of the Bishop of Durham's residences in the twelfth century. Even in the first quarter of the last century, Surtees was able to talk of a road being forced across the marsh, and an abundance of eels in the river.⁹ Today the marsh has virtually disappeared and the river is little more than a stream.¹⁰

⁹ R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, p. 16.

¹⁰ County Durham, virtually as it exists today, originated in 1189 when Bishop Puiset bought land from Richard I to extend his territory, "between Tyne and Tees". It was under the Normans that the famous legal arrangement was established which made the bishop a so-called *Prince Bishop*: and although the title is in many respects misleading, the holder of that office undoubtedly wielded great temporal as well as spiritual power. At this time Ferryhill and Chilton could be said to be *typical* County Durham settlements.

What is certainly true is that there was a thriving settlement in both Ferryhill and Chilton during the Middle Ages. B. Roberts, in his work on Durham's green villages, points out that glimpses of Ferryhill's early mediaeval shape can still be seen.¹¹ After the Norman Conquest most of the land, including the majority of the marsh, was held by the Abbey of Durham. Numerous references are made to both settlements in the Court Rolls still kept in the Treasury at Durham.

The most obvious Norman influence visible today is the church at Kirk Merrington, the present building being a nineteenth century copy of one of the earliest churches built under instructions from Durham.¹² The massive square tower, typical of the time, rises to a height of sixty feet and has a commanding view of the surrounding area. Like many churches in the north it was also used as a look-out tower and the church housed English troops in 1346 at the time of a Scottish invasion. Surtees records that in the fourteenth century there was a church in Ferryhill dedicated to St. Ebbe and St. Nicholas.¹³ Nothing survives today of this early church, which disappeared sometime after the Civil War. Subsequently the village joined Chilton as part of the Parish of Merrington.

¹¹ In, F. Atkinson, Life and Tradition in Northumberland and Durham, pp. 62-64.

Dr. Roberts points out that the old mining settlements north of the Tyne tend to be of a straggling development, whilst those to the south seem clustered round much earlier villages.

¹² N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England: County Durham, p. 345.

¹³ R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, pp. 284-286.

Many documents survive relating to the Church and its tenants. Some contain releases of common land or grants for enlarging the monk's swannery: however, most record the rents for the land held for farming. What emerges from the evidence is a picture which must have been typical of mediaeval life. The hamlet of Ferryhill, which included a wood, a park surrounded by a wall, a watermill and a windmill, was largely a farming community. As well as the church dedicated to St. Ebbe and St. Nicholas, the Abbey of Durham also had a courthouse, swannery and fishpool. Even today there is a farmstead called Swan House on Mainsforth Road which Surtees described as, "...a sort of troglodyte building half practised in the rock."¹⁴

At this time life must have been relatively well-ordered. There was provision made for a common forge which the smith was bound to repair at stated intervals; there were rules against over-using common pasture land and for the maintenance of a common shepherd and harvestman; regulations about ale and the employment of brewers. The strength of the beer was confirmed by official tasters, and brewers were protected on the orders of the Prior: it was an offence to sell beer which had been bought outside the township.

There were many disputes at the Prior's Court where settlements were reached over such questions as grazing rights or repairs to the mill dam. The Court Rolls record frequent instructions to tenants "not to transgress in word or deed, or with staves,

¹⁴ R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, p. 284.

arrows or knives".¹⁵ In the early fourteenth century William Trollopman of Ferryhill was fined forty pence for threatening a fellow villager with a knife. The area was not unique in banning football. In the village of East Merrington the constables were threatened with a fine of forty shillings if they broke this law. For such a heavy fine to be even threatened the offence must have been considered very serious; possibly the game involved heavy gambling or violence, or maybe football interfered with archery practice. In 1363 Edward III commanded that there should be archery practice on Sundays and holidays.¹⁶ Poaching, too, seems to have been a common offence.

Perhaps the most significant record mentioned in the fourteenth century was the development of coal mining. The first time mining is specifically mentioned in the history of Ferryhill is in 1343 at the Institution of the Vicar of Merrington. It is again referred to four years later when Robert Todd and Hugh Smyth, both of Ferryhill, paid six shillings to the Abbey at Durham for the right to mine coal. Also, in 1354, there is a mention of coal mines being leased for thirty years.¹⁷

The Boldon Book¹⁸ shows that although without doubt agriculture was the most

¹⁵ E. Johnson, et al., S. Luke's Parish Ferryhill 1853-1953, Ch. 3.

¹⁶ J. Sykes, Local Records, Vol. 1, p. 251.

¹⁷ R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, p. 285.

¹⁸ In 1180 Bishop Puiset commissioned the Boldon Book: the more famous Domesday Book stopped short at the River Tees, not because the lands to the north were not worth recording, but because of the prestige of the Bishop as a semi-independent ruler.

important industry in the County, to the west the major mineral resources of the County lay. Increasingly the rich mineral deposits, especially coal, became of paramount importance. Indeed, by the end of the fourteenth century the Bishop of Durham claimed that the revenue gained from coal production constituted a major part of the total wealth of his lands.¹⁹ However, it was not until the sixteenth century, when coal began to replace timber as a domestic fuel, that its economic importance was fully realized. It seems that the earliest mines were the so-called "bell" pits. These would be worked at a shallow depth within a limited radius of the central shaft. How important these early mines were to the local economy of mediaeval Ferryhill is difficult to assess, though most probably these were only small-scale ventures.

In Chilton the history of the early mediaeval period is less easy to come by. Surtees points out that there was a distinction between Great Chilton and Little Chilton which was established at a very early date, though the two were less than a mile apart. The Church at Durham does not appear to have been such an extensive landowner here as in Ferryhill and Surtees goes on to say that "Great Chilton was the estate of the ancient Herons".²⁰ Some land was granted to the Church, though it seems that it was not until the seventeenth century that it increased its territory here. However, in Little Chilton there is evidence of extensive Church ownership in the thirteenth century. In keeping with the temper of the times it was a grant of land

¹⁹ C.M. Fraser in J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, p. 208.

²⁰ R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, pp. 287-290.

in return for spiritual services, for in 1271 Prior Hugh of Durham gave a licence to Richard of Chilton to have a private chapel within his manor house. How the religious needs of the villagers were met is not recorded.

An examination of Durham County histories and directories reveals little of the history of Ferryhill before the nineteenth century, while references to Chilton are even more difficult to locate. Ferryhill had grown in extent and importance as an agricultural settlement, whilst Chilton seems to have remained a much smaller and comparatively isolated community. Surtees and the records kept in the Cathedral at Durham, though not the only sources, are the most illuminating, and from these some events do stand out.

In 1346, whilst Edward III was in France and the Scots invaded the north of England, a raiding party under Douglas was set upon as it approached Ferryhill with great loss of life at the Battle of Neville's Cross.²¹ After this, and for the next two centuries, the villagers seemed to live in relative obscurity untouched by anything other than local events.

In 1539, during the Reformation, the monastery at Durham was suppressed and subsequently its property and rights in the area were given over to the new Dean and Chapter. This hardly altered, in any material sense, the lives of the local people. However, nearly three decades later another national event with religious overtones did directly affect the area. In 1561 and 1569 the County rose against the

²¹ R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. I, p. xli.

Elizabethan Church Settlement. Fifteen people from Ferryhill joined in the rebellion in which the Prayer Book and English Bible were destroyed in Durham Cathedral. As a consequence of their involvement, and to set an example to others, four of the Ferryhill men were hanged on the village green.²²

One event outside the purview of both secular and ecclesiastical influence left its mark in 1599. The Plague devastated much of the County, and the Parochial Register at Kirk Merrington records that in Ferryhill twenty-six people died, whilst in Merrington two entire households, totalling ten people, perished.²³ In the small farming community close to Chilton, in an area known locally as "the bunny banks", two families also fell victim to the Plague.

Fifty years later the English Civil War divided the region. There were several local disturbances as both Parliamentary and Royalist forces passed through and made their presence felt. Lawrence Brock suffered at the hands of the Royalists, whose troops, he claimed, "plundered him so near that his children were stripped naked and thrown out of their beds onto the straw." However, when the Parliamentary forces were in the ascendancy, it was the turn of the Royalists to experience the fluctuating fortunes of war. Captain John Shaw, a Royalist landowner in Ferryhill, was arrested in 1644; when Parliament's victory was complete his lands were forfeited.

²² E. Johnson, et al., S. Luke's Parish Ferryhill 1853-1953, Ch. 4.

²³ R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, p. 283.

It seems that until well into the nineteenth century both Ferryhill and Chilton were little affected by national events, though local incidents continued to colour their history. In 1683 a local farmworker, Andrew Mills, brutally murdered the children of his employer, John Brass of Ferryhill. Mills was certified insane and hanged from a gibbet half a mile north of the village.

Chilton, on the other hand, seems to have been more famous for the quality of its cattle. In the first decade of the nineteenth century one particular farmer, Christopher Mason, who lived at the manor house, acquired a national reputation for the improvements he made to the breeding of the "Durham Shorthorn"; and his prize bull Charles was said to be the most expensive in England.²⁴

Professor McCord, in his unrivalled study of the economic and social development of the North-East, believes that by the early part of the eighteenth century the North-East seems to have been in the forefront of technological progress.²⁵ Yet at the same time contemporary visitors, such as Daniel Defoe, were convinced that this was a "backward area", little removed from barbarism.²⁶ The evidence would suggest that the view of Professor McCord should carry the greater weight. During the hundred years between 1750 and 1850, the North-East saw an acceleration in its economic, social and political development that was to outstrip anything that had gone before. However, the changes that took place in the region did not form a

²⁴ W. Fordyce, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, etc., Vol. I, p. 442.

²⁵ N. McCord, North East England: An Economic and Social History, p. 15.

coherent pattern. The development that occurred was essentially piecemeal; there was no overall blueprint. W.M. Hughes makes the important point that it is misleading to believe that "King Coal" was to drag a reluctant North-East into the prosperity of the industrial revolution.²⁷ The potential for expansion was already there before the full exploitation of the coal measures began. By the early years of the eighteenth century the economic base was in place.²⁸ In general terms, whilst there was an increase in the region's economy throughout the eighteenth century, the spectacular rise in the North-East did not fully materialize until the middle of the nineteenth century. For Ferryhill and Chilton, these changes became more evident a little later.

If the population estimates given by William Hutchinson, the region's first modern historian, are to be believed, between 1640 and 1659 Ferryhill contained 468 persons and Chilton 148.²⁹ Thus, what had emerged after several hundred years were two small parochial, still relatively isolated communities, whose main

²⁶ W.M. Hughes in J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, p. 227.

²⁷ W.M. Hughes in J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, p. 228.

In fact in the eighteenth century the lead industry rather than the coal industry was the most important for the region's economy. It was no coincidence that the founders of the first bank in Newcastle had investments in lead rather than coal.

²⁸ As well as coal there was the salt industry on the Tyne, the lead industry in Weardale, glassworks on the Tyne and Wear, the stocking and linen industry on the Tees - all indicate the strength and diversity of the North-East's economy.

²⁹ W. Hutchinson, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, p. 327.

Hutchinson based his figures on the work of a Mr. Woods and claimed that Ferryhill contained 123 families and Chilton 37.

occupations were centred around agriculture. In essence their early history was mirrored in countless small villages throughout the North-East of England. Nevertheless, the commonly held view that such communities were so self-sufficient as to be largely unaffected by outside influences, or that they were mutually independent of the region which they collectively formed, is somewhat wide of the mark. Yet, compared with what was to follow over the next two hundred years, such an argument contains more than a grain of truth. Throughout part of the nineteenth century, and the whole of the twentieth, Ferryhill and Chilton's future was inextricably linked to the economic fortunes of the North-East as a whole. How that fortune was won and subsequently lost, and at what cost, forms the background to this thesis.

The nineteenth century was a time of great inquisitiveness into the affairs and condition of the nation; there were the beginnings of the national census, directories, county histories and reports of every kind. Thus the factual evidence about the area is in abundance compared to previous centuries. According to the first census of 1801, Ferryhill's population was 507 and Chilton's 176, only a very small increase on Hutchinson's figure one and a half centuries earlier. By 1834 Ferryhill had become a large and well-built village, though its population in 1831 was still less than six hundred. Mackenzie and Ross point out that because of its elevated site the air was "remarkably clean and healthy",³⁰ a factor that no doubt contributed to the longevity of a local widow who died in 1833 aged upwards of 110.

³⁰ E. Mackenzie and M. Ross, View of the County Palatinate of Durham, etc., Vol. II, p. 310.

From the same source there is mention of thirteen farms, several tradesmen, six inns and public houses, plus two or three schools. As well as being curiously unsure of the number, Mackenzie and Ross also fail to mention the type of schools involved.³¹ For such a small community Ferryhill seems to have been quite well provided, and it is tempting to assume that one of the schools at least might have been connected with the new chapel opened in 1829. Although there was no resident vicar; the curate of Merrington preached in the chapel every Sunday evening.

In 1834 Chilton was still made up of scattered houses, as well as eight farms; though more significantly, for the first time, a colliery is mentioned. However, its influence can not yet have been very great for Chilton's population in 1831 was only 168, a decrease of eight on the figure twenty years earlier. There is no mention of any type of school nor of a church where one might have expected education to be centred. Indeed, Hutchinson states that in 1794 an earlier chapel, perhaps the one of 1271, had disappeared.³²

Even a hundred years after the start of the industrial revolution, Ferryhill could still be described in the middle of the nineteenth century as, "a typical small agricultural village, with two ponds ... which were used as watering places for the animals of

³¹ Most likely the schools adopted the monitorial system made popular by Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell.

³² W. Hutchinson, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, Vol. III, p. 328.

the surrounding farms."³³ However, its population was beginning to show a steady rise, from 591 in 1831, to 850 in 1841; an increase over three times greater than had occurred in the previous thirty years. This upward trend continued, and by 1851 the figure had risen to 958.

In comparison Chilton figures show what can only be described as a population explosion. In 1841 the village had 198 inhabitants; by 1851 this figure had mushroomed to 977, an increase of nearly five hundred per cent, thus putting its population ahead of Ferryhill's for the first time. This dramatic rise was surely due to an influx of people into the area rather than to *natural* causes. The reason for such an increase lies, not surprisingly, in the two industries County Durham was most famous for: the railways and coal mining.

In the 1820s and 1830s there was a phenomenal rush to open up the North-East's coalfields, whilst at the same time the region was criss-crossed with a web of railways. Capital poured into the region as investors sought to make quick profits. The growth of the iron and steel and shipbuilding industries in the second half of the nineteenth century encouraged even greater expansion in the coalfields. Coke, carbonized coal, of the very highest quality was also produced in the Durham coalfields. It was used in large quantities on the railways as well as an aid to the smelting of iron ore and the manufacture of gas. It is impossible to say which was the more important - the coal to these infant industries or the industries to

³³ E. Johnson, et al., S. Luke's Parish Ferryhill 1853-1953, Ch. 4.

coalmining. That they were mutually dependent at the outset is obvious, as confirmed by their parallel decline in the twentieth century.

In 1856 Whellan published his *Directory of Durham*; in it he gives a detailed summary of both communities. With regard to Chilton he, like others before him, distinguishes between Great Chilton and Little Chilton. The former he describes as consisting of, "...a cluster of cottages and an ordinary farmhouse." However, Little Chilton had now become, "...a colliery village near the Ferryhill railway station."³⁴ Thus, Chilton shows the classic pattern repeated throughout the region in the middle years of the nineteenth century, industrialization going hand in hand with a dramatic increase in population. The colliery, opened in 1843, employed nearly four hundred men who lived in the immediate area. The coal was transported to the docks at West Hartlepool using the facilities of the new West Hartlepool Harbour and Railway Company.

The contribution of the coal industry to the prosperity of the North-East, and Ferryhill and Chilton in particular, cannot be overestimated. The industrial revolution had a dual benefit for the future of coalmining; new techniques made more coal available, whilst the new industries created a greater demand for the product. Production figures for both Northumberland and Durham soared as the development of the national railway system got under way. Indeed, it was the coal industry which gave a boost to the first use of railways. As the demand for coal increased, new shafts were sunk away from the coast and rivers, the traditional lines

³⁴ T. Whellan & Co., *Directory and Topography of the County of Durham*, pp. 248-251.

of transport: to solve the problem a series of wagonways were developed to move the coal to the coast.³⁵ As railway mania swept the country the coal industry was a major beneficiary, to which the dramatic growth of Chilton bears testimony.

The changes that had taken place in Chilton since the census of 1841 were certainly revolutionary, and centred around the mines and the railways. For the first time there is mention of a school. In a list of prominent persons, one Margaret Chisholm is listed as running a day school at Chilton Colliery. The Ferryhill and Little Chilton Colliery Mechanics' Institute was set up at Chilton in 1850.³⁶ The number of members was seventy, but by 1857 this had fallen to just thirty. The Institute raised money for a library which contained over seven hundred books. Members paid a subscription of one penny each week, and ladies were admitted on payment of one shilling every three months. Lectures on scientific subjects were occasionally delivered in both the library and the National School room.³⁷

As mentioned, Ferryhill's population too had increased, though less dramatically by the time Whellan did his survey. The village was described as large and well-built, and now containing a brewery, a steam mill and a number of workshops. However, and with significance for the future, there was the development of the railway

³⁵ See R.P. Hastings, Railroads, an International History, Ch. 1-2.

³⁶ W. Fordyce, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, etc., Vol. I, p. 443.

³⁷ The National Society, whose supporters followed Andrew Bell, was founded in 1811 as the "National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales." The Society was formed in part as a

station on the boundary between Ferryhill and Chilton, at Rudd's Hill. Here, where previously the only building had been an inn, two "substantial" rows of cottages had been built. The railway was constructed in 1840 and this new settlement was appropriately called Ferryhill Station, a name it still bears despite the fact that the station has long since disappeared. Writing a year later than Whellan, William Fordyce pointed out in 1857 that it was, "a place of considerable traffic",³⁸ with railways going to both Hartlepool and Stockton as well as being on the main line of the York, Newcastle and Berwick Railway. By this time lime, as well as coal, was being transported from here. An extensive limestone quarry was opened near the station, the produce of which went to Middlesbrough to be used for smelting in the great iron foundries there. To service the cottages and visitors there was a post office and three inns and, as one would expect, several tradesmen. Its growing importance can also be seen in the provision being made for a gasometer and an improved water supply.

Another event of significance during this time was the split with Merrington. In 1843, by an Order in Council, the Parochial Chapelry of Ferryhill was created consisting of both Ferryhill and Chilton. Three years later the present vicarage was built to house the new incumbent. In 1853 the chapel of 1829 was pulled down and a new, "elegant structure in the Early English style",³⁹ with a seating capacity for

counter-weight to the Royal Lancastrian Society, founded in 1810 and renamed The British and Foreign School Society in 1814.

³⁸ W. Fordyce, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, etc., Vol. I, p. 442.

³⁹ T. Whellan & Co., Directory and Topography of the County of Durham, p. 249.

upwards of three hundred worshippers, was built by subscription and dedicated to Saint Luke.

It was under the aegis of this church that several local charities, some of long standing, were administered to the benefit of the poor and needy. In addition to its pastoral rôle, Saint Luke's Church committed itself to making a greater contribution to help meet the educational needs of its younger parishioners. In 1850 a Church School was opened; indeed the building, which could accommodate one hundred and thirty six, was still being used as late as 1947.

Whellan mentions four persons concerned with schools or academies. The National School, built in 1847, was housed in a stone building of generous proportions with mullioned windows. The Committee of Council for Education⁴⁰ provided a grant towards the building, while the Dean and Chapter gave the land for not only the school, but also the teacher's house and garden. There was no endowment, and the upkeep of the school plus the salary of the teacher, William Pringle, was met by the payments of the pupils. In 1857, at a time well before elementary schooling became compulsory, the number of pupils varied from sixty to one hundred, at an average of eighty-one.⁴¹ With a population in 1861 of 1,475, it seems that only a small minority were attending this school. Mr. Pringle supplemented his income by acting

⁴⁰ The Committee of Council for Education, the forerunner of the Ministry of Education, was set up in 1839 as a Committee of the Privy Council "for the consideration of all matters affecting the education of the people" and "to superintend the application of any sums voted by Parliament for the purpose of promoting public education."

⁴¹ W. Fordyce, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatinate of Durham, etc., Vol. I, p. 441.

as tutor to several local families, whose children were thus also gaining the benefits of an education. In addition, there must have been a substantial number attending the Church School, although no records remain to say just how many actually took advantage of the opportunities offered there.

By the time of the second Whellan Directory in 1894 the pace of change had accelerated, though along similar lines.⁴² Ferryhill's National School had been enlarged in 1870, with the addition of a second large room and a classroom. These extra rooms increased the accommodation to provide for two hundred and fifty, though the average attendance was two hundred. In addition, at Ferryhill Station, which had continued its remarkable expansion, a Board School had been opened in 1878 at the cost of £4,200.⁴³ This impressive structure had three large rooms, each with a classroom for mixed and infants. There were places for three hundred in the mixed section and one hundred and twenty in the infants. The average attendance in 1894 was two hundred and eighty in the former, and one hundred in the latter.

⁴² W. Whellan & Co., History, Topography, and Directory of the County Palatinate of Durham, 2nd ed. pp. 279-282.

⁴³ The Board Schools were set up as a result of the 1870 Education Act. This Act, in the words of W.E. Forster, the Quaker radical who introduced the Bill, aimed "to complete the present voluntary system, to fill up gaps, sparing the public money where it can be done without, procuring as much as we can the assistance of the parents, and welcoming as much as we rightly can the co-operation and aid of those benevolent men who desire to assist their neighbours." As H.C. Barnard said, the 1870 Act was essentially a compromise. "It did not create a new national system of education, or a completely compulsory system, or a free system."

H.C. Barnard, A History of English Education from 1760, p. 117.

Ferryhill's population showed a dramatic change in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1861 it had risen to 1,423; an increase of over four hundred on the previous figure but still below the total for Chilton. Yet by 1871 Ferryhill inhabitants numbered 2,647; by 1881 3,412; and by 1891 3,966. So, in just forty years Ferryhill's population had increased over four times. The reasons for this comparatively sudden rise are not difficult to understand. There were several coal mines opened within the immediate vicinity of the town which gave ample opportunity for employment. So too did the railway system centred on Ferryhill Station, which continued to expand as several other industries began to have an impact. For example, there was the growth of iron smelting; in 1861 iron from Spain was transported by rail via West Hartlepool to blast furnaces at Ferryhill; similarly an iron works was established by the Weardale Iron Company at Low Spennymoor. All of this industrial activity helped to encourage the growth of service industries within the town, thus attracting more investment and helping to swell the population.

Yet it must be stressed that, to a very large extent, the centre of the town still retained its rural appearance and continued to be dominated by the village green and two ponds. However, also in the centre of the village, and as an example of its growing importance, a town hall, library and reading room were built in 1867 at a cost of £700.⁴⁴ The sum was raised by public subscription.

⁴⁴ W. Whellan & Co., Directory and Topography of the County of Durham, pp. 281-282.

The abiding impression is that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century here was a community at the beginning of a new era in its history, and one which was markedly different from anything it had experienced in the previous millennium. The same was no doubt the case for much of the region, if not the country in general.

In addition to the new library and the schools, there were also many new churches. The religious revival of the nineteenth century and the growth of evangelicalism is well documented by historians. Professor McCord points out that the Primitive Methodist crusade in County Durham was very successful.⁴⁵ There is evidence of this success in both Ferryhill and Chilton, as well as in many of the surrounding districts.

In 1863 a Wesleyan Methodist Church was built. This was followed in 1877 by a Primitive Methodist Chapel: built out of brick, it could house two hundred worshippers. Several other churches followed as the population continued to expand with a large influx of people into the area looking for employment, many of whom were Methodists. At East Howle, where a substantial mining community had sprung up less than a mile to the north of Ferryhill, another Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1885. Such was the enthusiasm of the worshippers here that they helped to build the church themselves, so that the total cost of the building was only £290. Chilton, too, had its Methodist churches: a Wesleyan Chapel was

⁴⁵ N. McCord, North East England: An Economic and Social History, pp. 72-73.

opened in 1832, and enlarged sixteen years later; in 1877 a Primitive Chapel was built, and the building also housed a Sunday School.⁴⁶

The outbreak of church building continued at a frenzied pace, with all denominations taking part. The Church of England found a champion in the energetic and widely respected Canon Lomax. Appointed as vicar in 1895, he remained in the Parish until his retirement in 1940. He was responsible for building no fewer than five new churches; at East Howle, Chilton, Dean Bank, Ferryhill Station and the Broom. At the latter, the Church of St. Martha and St. Mary was built in 1940 at the expense of Canon Lomax himself.

By the time the Roman Catholic Church of All Saints was consecrated in 1927, Ferryhill village alone had some seven churches; East Howle two; the Broom and Ferryhill Station one each; Dean Bank two; and Chilton, which eventually broke away from Ferryhill to form its own parish in 1925, at least five places of worship.

Thus at the start of the twentieth century Ferryhill, though still itself essentially an agricultural settlement, seemed to be booming. It was a town full of civic pride, and with some justification. The manifestations of the growing prosperity were clear to

⁴⁶ The main sources used to untangle the complexities of church building in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries unfortunately fail to agree on several points. However, for more details on this and also the two churches built at Metal Bridge, see:

W. Whellan & Co., Directory and Topography of the County of Durham, pp. 280-281.

E. Johnson, et al., S. Luke's Parish Ferryhill 1853-1953, Ch. 6.

Ferryhill Village Women's Institute, History of Ferryhill Village and Immediate District: From Early Times to Present Day, pp. 15-17.

see: new churches, a cemetery opened in 1886 and costing £1,700,⁴⁷ an impressive town hall and library, numerous inns and taverns, and schools for its children. The most important indicator of its growing prosperity was the rapidly rising population. The figure had grown to 4,306 by 1901, still attracted if not by a mine in the village itself then by the ones just outside, like the coal mine at East Howle, which provided work for over five hundred men and boys. Opened in 1873, it continued to expand until in the 1890s: it was full of the most modern electric appliances, with three shafts and two hundred coke ovens. Alongside the mine a two-thousand-acre farm also added to the employment prospects of the local inhabitants, many of whom lived in the village of East Howle itself or else in the adjacent village of Metal Bridge.⁴⁸ The coal was, of course, transported via Ferryhill Station.

Yet the capricious nature of the mining industry was exemplified by what had taken place in Chilton. Its population had continued to rise since the dramatic figure of 1851. Both 1861 and 1871 showed more, if less spectacular, increases. However, the climax of the century was reached in 1881 with a total of 2,693 inhabitants. The township's future seemed secure. As well as the churches already referred to, there were now two Board Schools: one at Chilton Buildings, built for mixed and infants, had two large rooms with two classrooms and places for 216; in 1894 the average attendance was 115.⁴⁹ However, by the time of the next census the figure had plummeted by more than a thousand to 1,536, only just above the total for 1861.

⁴⁷ W. Whellan & Co., Directory and Topography of the County of Durham, p. 282.

⁴⁸ W. Whellan & Co., Directory and Topography of the County of Durham, pp. 280-281.

⁴⁹ W. Whellan & Co., Directory and Topography of the County of Durham, p. 280.

Little Chilton's colliery was exhausted by 1888,⁵⁰ and most of the houses were empty by the turn of the century as the population continued to drop. Adding to the problems, Windlestone Colliery on the southern edge of the town, which had only started production in 1874, also closed down.

In the first decade of the new century far-reaching changes took place which were to alter the fortunes of the two communities for the next sixty years. Chilton's future was restored with the opening of a new pit, to add to one at Mainsforth, sunk in 1904. This led to an unprecedented expansion which even outstripped the events of the 1840s. Even so, without doubt the changes that occurred in Ferryhill were the most spectacular.

In 1902 the sinking of the shafts at the Dean and Chapter Colliery in Ferryhill began. It was two years before the mine, owned by Bolchow Vaughan and Company, was fully opened; though coal from the main seam was mined in 1903. The colliery expanded rapidly as the quality of its coal became apparent. Conditions in any coal mine are tough, but in the 1920s, when most of the coal was dug out by hand, the later use of mechanical coal-cutters must have seemed a comparative luxury. In 1929 the original owners amalgamated with Dorman Long and Company and in 1931 an underground link of over two miles was made with Leasingthorne Colliery. By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 over 20 million tons of coal had been recovered at an average in 1938 of 15,000 tons per week.⁵¹

⁵⁰ W. Dowding, Durham Mines: Names and Dates of Coal Workings in County Durham.

⁵¹ E. Johnson, et al., S. Luke's Parish Ferryhill 1853-1953, Ch. 5.

The opening of the Dean and Chapter Colliery brought great prosperity to the town as workers were attracted to the area from all parts of Britain. By 1911 the population had topped the ten thousand mark, though such an increase brought with it problems too. There was soon an immense housing shortage, and between 1902 and 1907 about one thousand homes were built in Dean Bank to house the new arrivals. There was, in addition, a council house building programme to help alleviate the problem; by 1935 nearly two hundred houses had been built by the council to the south of the village, plus twenty eight bungalows for retired miners.⁵²

In the first quarter of the twentieth century much of present day Ferryhill was created. The roads were improved, and the growth in the number of houses meant that Ferryhill Station, formerly an almost independent community, was linked to the village via the Broom, which itself had been simply a row of ten cottages. Thus the topography of the modern town took shape. In addition, there were improvements to all kinds of public amenities. In 1924 the village was lit by gas lights, although Dean Bank was fortunate to have electricity provided by the colliery. Water supplies, too, were improved, although at first water was piped only to the newly-built houses; the rest still had to make do with stand pipes.⁵³ The transport links with the rest of the County were improved with the opening of "the cut" in 1923, and motor transport became ever more widespread. Shopping became easier as

⁵² E. Johnson, et al., S. Luke's Parish Ferryhill 1853-1953, Ch. 5.

⁵³ Ferryhill Village Women's Institute, History of Ferryhill Village and Immediate District: From Early Times to Present Day, p. 29.

shops were able to sell a much larger range of goods, and the Co-operative store, which had first set up in business in the latter part of the nineteenth century, expanded its trade. Leisure activities were catered for by a variety of outlets ranging from three cinemas and an ice rink to numerous clubs and societies, and the miners' lodges.

The popular view of the North-East in the early 1930s is of a region in the grip of a deep depression. Whilst in general terms this may be true, there were many variations. In the worst year of the slump, 1932, the majority of County Durham's population was still in employment, though in the ship building town of Jarrow unemployment had reached 77.9 per cent.⁵⁴ Certainly heavy industry did suffer. In particular, between the two world wars, British coal lost many of its lucrative overseas markets as foreign competition became intense. Unless existing pits were able to exploit new seams, the old workings became increasingly unviable and many Durham pits became too uneconomic and were closed. The mines at Bishop Middleham and Windlestone fell victim to this trend, as too did that at Chilton which closed in 1931.⁵⁵ Once again there were difficulties in the coalfields; the arbitrary future of a finite fossil fuel reasserted itself.

In part the decline in the demand for coal was caused by troubles within the region itself, in particular within the iron and steel industry. This industry, a major coal

⁵⁴ P.J. Bowden and A.A. Gibb in J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, p. 272.

⁵⁵ Windlestone colliery closed in 1933, the colliery at Bishop Middleham closed in 1936 and that at Chilton in 1931.

consumer, experienced a disastrous fall in demand.⁵⁶ Government intervention to help the depressed North-East seems not to have been a total success. By 1934 the national unemployment figure was 16.1 per cent, whereas for County Durham and Tyneside it was 27.2 per cent.⁵⁷

The economic depression had also affected the County's education service. In 1965 the Director of Education remarked, "It must be remembered that in the years immediately before the war Durham had been through a severe depression and had not been able to devote to education the amount of money the [Education] Committee would have wished. As a result the percentage of grammar school places was lower than the national average - a position not to be tolerated in Durham."⁵⁸ As far as Ferryhill and Chilton were concerned, not only was there no grammar school, there was no secondary school either. The only schools were all-age schools, which catered for the needs of all pupils up to the age of fourteen, under one roof.

As the world economy began to climb out of the depression, and central government's aid to the region was beginning to have an effect, the North-East slowly began to recover. However, after the war the coal industry remained very vulnerable and there continued the closure of uneconomic pits with a corresponding

⁵⁶ For details see: N. McCord, North East England: An Economic and Social History, pp. 217-218.

⁵⁷ N. McCord, North East England: An Economic and Social History, p. 227.

⁵⁸ G.H. Metcalfe, County Durham, in S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 40.

drop in the amount of coal produced - by 1947, the year of nationalization, 127 collieries produced just over 24 million tons; by 1969 production was 15.25 million tons, though supplied by only 38 mines.⁵⁹ Mainsforth colliery had closed in 1968, surviving the mines in both Ferryhill and Chilton by just two years. Thus, all the pits in the immediate region of Ferryhill were now no longer in production. Unlike the problems at the end of the nineteenth century, where the solution was to increase the number of men employed in the coalfields, there was now a drastic reduction in the workforce from 108,291 men employed in 1947 to 37,940 in 1969.⁶⁰

Thus, just as both Ferryhill and Chilton present, in general terms, the demographic development and the move to urbanization in the North-East, so too are they a reflection of the development of the coal mining industry in County Durham: a period of rapid acceleration in the nineteenth century as cheap coal was relatively easy to find; an ensuing decline in labour productivity in the 1880s and the response of the owners in increasing the numbers employed in the mines; a second period of pit closures between the two wars and continuing after nationalization in 1947.

Few miners would disagree that the move to nationalization in 1947 brought benefits, though perhaps one of the least appreciated is the contribution the National Coal Board made, at least in the early years, to the closure of some of the mines. The result of the closure of a pit, often the main employer in a small tightly knit community, could be devastating. Until nationalization such closures were made by

⁵⁹ W. Reid in J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, p. 296.

⁶⁰ W. Reid in J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, p. 297.

the individual mine owners. With luck, in an expanding economy, employment might easily be found elsewhere. However, since the Second World War, the North-East has, until recently, generally been an area in decline. The huge labour-intensive heavy industries of the nineteenth century - shipbuilding, railways, iron and steel, which might in the past have helped to alleviate the distress - had themselves undergone a period of diminution. As far as the coal industry is concerned, the National Coal Board, and later British Coal, tried to phase in the programme of pit closures in order to minimize the impact on individual families and the community at large. Where possible, closures were arranged to coincide with the expansion of other collieries. Voluntary redundancy and early retirement schemes were introduced to try and reduce the surplus "naturally"; where this was unacceptable inter-coalfield transfers were arranged and many miners moved to the larger collieries, often at the coast. Again, Ferryhill and Chilton are, in this respect, typical; many miners who once worked in their local pit ended up being bussed to mines on the coast.

Yet it would be wrong to underestimate the impact of the closure of the village pits; one result is undoubtedly a dilution in the feeling of folk community. Just as the bussing of pupils from Chilton to Ferryhill has affected those involved, so too did the bussing of the miner away from his local environment. Maybe such a practice has its benefits, such as the breakdown of parochialism, but on the other hand the feeling for one's own small community must be to an extent weakened.

Ferryhill and Chilton benefited mainly from the coal, railway and iron industries.

Because of this they developed a distinctive culture, though this culture was part of

a wider North-East phenomenon.⁶¹ To what extent such a culture was unique has been the object of much speculation. What does seem fairly certain is that there is a culture exclusive to the North-East of England as a whole: what is of far greater importance is that the people who make up the region believe it to be true.

Similarly, the people of Ferryhill and Chilton believed, and with some justification continue to do so, that they are different from the shipbuilders of the North-East or the chemical workers of Teesside - indeed they consider themselves to be different to the people of neighbouring Spennymoor. How their sense of place and local identity has coloured their development is difficult to ascertain, though without doubt it has had a profound impact on their lives.

In a postal survey conducted in 1974 by the University of Durham North-East Area Study⁶² group concerning the levels of satisfaction residents of Ferryhill had for their town and its amenities, the overall picture to emerge was that, with the notable exception of recreation and leisure facilities, the people of Ferryhill were satisfied with their town. Interestingly, with regard to education and schools, 95 per cent of the forty households in the survey expressed satisfaction with the provision

⁶¹ M. Bulmer, (Ed.), Mining and Social Change - Durham County in the Twentieth Century.

⁶² R. Hudson and M. Johnson, Attitudes towards and Images of Some Towns in County Durham, Working Paper 10.

also:

A.R. Townsend and C.C. Taylor, Sense of Place and Local Identity in North-East England, Working Paper 4.

Both these study papers look at how certain inhabitants of County Durham viewed their environment. Indeed, in Working Paper 10, Ferryhill formed a major part of the survey.

offered.⁶³ 1974 was the first year of comprehensivization, and although it is doubtful if this could really have been taken into account in terms of expressing satisfaction with the new school, maybe it was a indicator of support for the move against selection at eleven. How the change took place from the all-age schools after the war to the opening of the two secondary modern schools and the Grammar School, and finally the Comprehensive School, forms the main body of this thesis.

⁶³ R. Hudson and M. Johnson, Attitudes towards and Images of Some Towns in County Durham, Working Paper 10, p. 15.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

1. FROM BALFOUR TO FISHER

The history of all communities, no matter how long or short their survival, is influenced by a myriad of factors. Such forces as play their part are woven into an intricate web; it is the historian's task to try and unravel the web and make sense out of the pattern. Ferryhill and Chilton are no less slaves to such forces than the country itself.

Economically, Ferryhill and Chilton have, until recently, been influenced almost totally by just three factors - farming, coal mining and the railways, the decline of which the communities are only now just coming to terms with. Religiously, the influence has been the existence of Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism and Methodism - and their decline. Politically, there has been the growth of radicalism and the dominance of the Labour Party. Socially, the two communities have been affected by all of these factors and also by the growth of the education system. For the

latter, the *raison d'être* of this thesis, it is no less difficult to pick out the major influences: the early voluntary efforts, the growth of state intervention and, in the twentieth century, the venture into multilateralism which led to comprehensivization.

In order to comment meaningfully on County Durham's attempt to implement a multilateral system of secondary education, it is necessary to trace the origins of multilateralism and its failure to win national support, then to analyse just why it was that in 1946 County Durham decided to adopt such a policy, the effects this had on the educational history of the region, and on Ferryhill and Chilton in particular.

Essentially, the origins of multilateralism are rooted in the first quarter of the twentieth century, for the great multilateral debate forms a part of the national movement towards secondary education for all. Consequently, it is unnecessary to describe in great detail the emergence of a national secondary education system, for its origins hail back to the nineteenth century, whereas the multilateral controversy is part of the later debate as to what form such secondary education should take.

However, it is important to point out some of the salient features of the development of the secondary education system of the country so as to put the proposed multilateral solution into perspective, particularly since the idea of "transfer" implicit in multilateralism can be shown to be similar, if not identical, to the concept of the educational "ladder" so important to the growth of secondary education in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The term "secondary education" is, as far as England and Wales are concerned, less than one hundred and fifty years old. The expression was imported by Matthew Arnold from France in 1859. His call for the country to "organize your secondary education" first introduced the term, which did not come into popular use, however, until the 1880s and 1890s.¹

The later concept of secondary education is pre-dated by the grammar schools, a number of which trace their origins back to Tudor times or even earlier. Alongside these were the public schools, also, in some cases, of great antiquity. Such was the influence of these early foundations that the phrase "secondary education" came to be associated by many with an elitist education outside and distinct from that which was provided in the elementary schools. This position was challenged by the growth of a movement for a post-elementary education to be available for all social groups. As a result, there emerged the so-called higher-grade schools.

For almost all the inhabitants of Ferryhill and Chilton such talk of secondary education had no meaning. Until the creation of the Board Schools they were catered for by their village schools. In Ferryhill the National and Church schools served the community. In Chilton it seems likely that before the Board Schools there was a small local school, perhaps run by the Church.

The latter half of the nineteenth century heralded several famous investigations into the provision of secondary education. In 1861 the Clarendon Commission began its

¹ O. Banks, Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education, p. 1.

inquiry into the revenues, management and curriculum of nine great public schools. Although only concerned with the education of a small elite, the Commission, which reported three years later, focused attention on secondary education as a whole. Consequently, in the same year as the report of 1864 the Schools Inquiry Commission was set up, commonly referred to as the Taunton Commission. The commissioners were charged with the task of probing into the education given in those schools not covered by the Clarendon Commission, nor by the Inquiry into Popular Education conducted by the renowned Newcastle Commission, 1858-61. Taunton was essentially an investigation into the endowed grammar schools and thus is sometimes called "the commission on middle-class education."²

The Commission selected eight districts which covered a third of the area and three-fifths of the population of England and Wales. The final report was submitted after a four-year period of investigation, during which exhaustive efforts were made to ensure that all types of secondary education were studied: girls' schools, boys' schools, private and proprietary establishments, as well as endowed schools. The commissioners identified three types or grades of school, which they carefully described in terms of parental occupations coinciding with the different strata of the middle-class. What essentially emerged was a clear picture of the inadequate provision of secondary education, especially in large urban areas. The outcome of the Commission was the Endowed Schools Act of 1869, which reformed the charities on which the schools were based. However, the Commission's recommendations for a national system of secondary schools were not accepted.

² J. Lawson and H. Silver, A Social History of Education in England, p. 297.

The latter suggestion was for three grades of secondary school. The grading was to reflect the age to which parents were willing to let their children remain at school: fourteen, sixteen and eighteen or nineteen. In addition, the commissioners thought that schools of the second grade should be established in every town with a population of over five thousand. Harold Silver comments, "The commission did not consider one grade of education preparatory to another, but did look forward to the possibility "that real ability shall find its proper opening." In the reorganisation of endowments after 1869 lies one source of the concept of the "ladder" to secondary education that was beginning to take shape from the 1870s."³

It is tempting to see a link between the recommendations of the Taunton commissioners and the eventual emergence of multilateralism. However, the multilateral comparison should not be taken too far, for the commissioners thought it undesirable to try and combine the work of all three grades in one school: they believed the pupils should do different work in three separate schools. However, in the multilateral units there was to be a common element in the curriculum.

It was the development of the higher-grade schools in the last quarter of the nineteenth century which gave a massive boost to those who wished to provide the opportunity for children of working-class families to improve their economic and social position. The idea of providing opportunities for those able to take advantage of them is fundamental to the later principle of multilateralism. It is the notion

³ J. Lawson and H. Silver, A Social History of Education in England, p. 305.

which led Thomas Huxley to talk of an "educational ladder", whereby those who were willing and able could improve their lot. Huxley believed that whilst the State should provide the ladder, it was up to the individual through his labours to take advantage of it.⁴ The idea gained ground, in the words of Olive Banks, "that education might provide certain of the more talented children of the working classes with the opportunity ... to reach from the gutter to the university and so to those more highly esteemed occupations normally reserved for the children of the middle classes."⁵ The Education Act which made that possible was passed only seven years after Huxley's death in 1895.

The concept of a ladder to higher education was associated at this time with the growing concern for social justice, and with the belief that there was a vast reservoir of untapped talent which was merely going to waste through lack of educational opportunity. Silver singles out three main developments from which Huxley's ladder evolved: the setting up of entrance scholarships as part of the reforms suggested by the Taunton Commission; an awareness of the increasing number of able working-class children, revealed after the setting up of the Board Schools with the passing of the Education Act in 1870; and the developments in technical education, particularly at the end of the 1880s.⁶

⁴ H.C. Barnard, A History of English Education from 1760, p. 143.

⁵ O. Banks, Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education, p. 3.

⁶ J. Lawson and H. Silver, A Social History of Education in England, p. 339.

The 1870 Education Act itself focused attention on the access to an education which was higher than that one would expect to obtain by following a strict "elementary" curriculum. Excluding evening classes and adult education, such access became available in two ways: the growth of grammar school scholarships and the development of a higher stage within the elementary system itself - it was by this latter method that the higher-grade schools emerged.

The elementary system often encouraged experimentation in post-elementary education. The 1926 Hadow Report summarized the development of post-elementary education and pointed out that such education was in fact taking place well before the 1870 Act. The Hadow Report singled out for particular praise the efforts of Jeremy Bentham and Francis Place, who aimed to provide a course of study, which Bentham called "Chrestomatic", for the higher elementary education of children aged from seven to fourteen. However, there was little support for their proposals at the time, and the Revised Code of 1862, with its emphasis on "Payment by Results", led to a reduction in such experimental practices.⁷

However, the gradual relaxation of the rules after 1867 encouraged the school boards, particularly in the North, to extend their educational provision, as was the case in both Ferryhill and Chilton. The children thus provided for were able to

⁷ Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent, (Hadow Report), p. 5.

There were in all three so-called Hadow Reports - the 1926 Report, which looked at the Education of the Adolescent; the 1931 Report, examining the Primary School; and the 1933 Report, which investigated Infant and Nursery Schools. Throughout this thesis, unless specifically stated, all references to the Hadow Committee or Hadow Report refer to the 1926 Report on the Education of the Adolescent.

study in extra-grade classes or "higher-tops". In some areas, especially the wealthiest and most populated, central schools were built where the children in the upper grades could be taught: a policy advocated, according to Hadow, by several enlightened inspectors in the 1840s, but which had met with little support at that time.⁸

The government actively encouraged children to stay on longer at school, thus giving a boost to post-elementary education: for example, the Education Act of 1876 gave free education for three years to pupils who attended regularly and who passed the Standard IV examination at the age of ten, the higher-grade section of the elementary school beginning at the end of Standard III. The development of the higher-tops was further accelerated by the addition of a seventh standard in 1882.⁹ Certain children remained at school after passing Standard VII and in some areas these children were put into higher-grade schools.

The relationship between the higher-grade schools and the grammar schools is somewhat ambivalent. They were seen increasingly as rivals, and in some cases pupils prepared for the same examinations and followed a similar curriculum. This form of over-lapping was not without significance in County Durham's multilateral experiment nearly a century later. After the passing of the Technical Instruction Act in 1889, which led to the expansion of their curricula, the higher-grade schools

⁸ Hadow Report, pp. 7-8.

⁹ E.J.R. Eaglesham, The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Education, p. 13.

Professor Eaglesham points out that the higher-grade section of the elementary schools began at the end of Standard III.

offered a superior education to some of the less successful and traditionalist grammar schools. For some grammar schools, with entrance scholarships for boys from elementary schools, the competition was too fierce; they found fewer pupils willing to apply if there was a good higher-grade school locally. However, in other cases the higher-grade schools were less of a rival and more of a stepping stone to the grammar school.

The idea of progression from one educational stage to another had been alluded to in the Taunton Report, but it was one of the central features of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education which was appointed in 1894: it published its Report in the following year. The Commission was under the chairmanship of James Bryce, who had acted as an assistant commissioner for the Schools Inquiry Commission.

The Bryce Commission was asked to look into the whole area of secondary education and, "to consider what are the best methods of establishing a well-organised system of Secondary Education in England." The commissioners believed their task to be all-embracing and to be, "nothing less than to complete the educational system of England, now confessedly defective in that part which lies between the elementary schools on the one hand and the Universities on the other, and to frame an organisation which shall be at once firm and flexible."¹⁰

¹⁰ H.C. Barnard, A History of English Education from 1760, p. 204.

One of the major problems Bryce had to examine was associated with the financial arrangements of secondary schools, particularly the higher-grade schools. Many organized their more advanced work so as to be eligible for a grant from the Department of Science and Art, although they were in fact elementary schools and as such in receipt of rate-payers' money. The opinion of some churchmen, though the opposition was not exclusively ecclesiastical, was against the use of public funds to support such higher education. This was part of the infamous "administrative muddle" which the government was determined to resolve.

The Commission and its recommendations were certainly influenced by the Aberdare Committee, which reported in 1881 on the "condition of Intermediate and Higher Education in Wales." As a result of its findings, the Intermediate Education Act of 1889 established a system of secondary education administered by the Welsh counties. The Bryce Commission conducted a thorough investigation and even examined the secondary school systems of other countries. The Commission, which found that scholarships to secondary schools were inadequate, was in favour of a state system of secondary education, including arrangements for the transfer to secondary schools of able pupils who wished to continue their education from the elementary schools.

Writing in 1961, the late Professor H.C. Barnard said of the Bryce Commission Report, "it contains the germs of much of the educational progress that has been made in this country since the beginning of the twentieth century."¹¹ Its

¹¹ H.C. Barnard, A History of English Education from 1760, p. 207.

recommendations formed the basis of the Education Act of 1902, a milestone in the history of secondary education. However, in reality many of its recommendations were not fully put into operation until the 1944 Education Act.

The initial response to the recommendations of the Bryce Commission was an attempt by the Conservative government to introduce a bill in 1896 to tackle the problem of local authorities. With the obvious success of the Welsh Intermediate Act, Bryce recommended the creation of similar local authorities for secondary education in England. However, the 1896 Bill envisaged the abolition of the school boards, which the majority of the commissioners opposed. For this and other reasons the Bill met with ferocious opposition and was withdrawn.

One important step forward before the turn of the century was the passing of the Board of Education Act in 1899, establishing a central authority for education. The Act also provided for the setting up of a Consultative Committee, a body which was to influence greatly the future development of education in England and Wales.

The details of the complex events between the failed Bill of 1896 and the successful passage of the 1902 Bill need not be enlarged upon. When it finally emerged, the Education Act of 1902 had much to commend it. For the first time elementary and higher education were dealt with together. The Act empowered the newly created Local Education Authorities to provide for both types of education, and they were forced to consider the relations between the elementary and secondary schools in their area.

The setting up of the Local Education Authorities was fundamental to the development of education in the twentieth century. The gradual emergence of local government, a term invented in 1858 by a Conservative, C.B. Adderley, a vice-president of the Education Committee of the Privy Council, focused attention on the vexed question of the relationship between the local community and central government.¹² As Professor McCord points out, there was often a great deal of resentment of any interference from local government in the lives of ordinary people, who commonly viewed such as both expensive and intrusive. It was frequently believed that local officials were either incompetent or else corrupt.¹³ However, the passing of the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, the first of which led to the creation of county councils, paved the way for future developments in local administration and set up the infrastructure to deal with the implications which the 1902 Education Act held for the local administration of schools. As a result of the Act, education became one of the important local services for which the councils were responsible: it was no longer dependent upon a body external to the main system of local government.

Robert Morant was largely responsible for drafting and implementing the Act, though it is more often associated with the Conservative Prime Minister A.J. Balfour, who sponsored the initial Bill and steered it through parliament. The Act of 1902, in the words of Frank Smith, "brought administrative order where there

¹² R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, p.124.

¹³ N. McCord, North East England: An Economic and Social History, pp. 166-170.

had been chaos."¹⁴ This administrative reorganization led to much greater efficiency: 2,559 school boards and 788 school attendance committees were replaced by 330 new local authorities. Part Two of the Act instructed the L.E.A.s "to supply or aid the supply of education other than elementary: and to promote the general co-ordination of all forms of education": these became known as Part II authorities. There were also Part III authorities, charged with overseeing elementary education in their areas. In addition, the L.E.A. was empowered to set up local education committees. Membership of these committees was to comprise of council members and experienced educationalists, including teachers of both sexes. The L.E.A. could delegate all the powers bestowed upon it by the Act except those which concerned borrowing money or levying a local rate - this ensured that local finances remained under public control.

Before 1902 secondary education was essentially reserved for the children whose parents were able to pay school fees, but now the belief that secondary schools ought to be open to elementary school pupils who showed they could benefit from secondary education was gaining momentum. This was a move towards the view that secondary education should be available to all. The 1902 Act did not establish a national system of education: what it did was to provide the framework around which such a system could be built. With hindsight, it is easy to criticize the Act which, although a piece of pioneering legislation and a vast improvement on what had preceded it, was in some respects quite limited in scope. In the opinions of David Rubinstein and Brian Simon, what emerged were two parallel systems;

¹⁴ F. Smith, A History of English Elementary Education 1760-1902, p. 347.

despite the provisions of the Act, secondary education continued in the main to be for a minority of pupils, and was linked more with the universities than with elementary schools.¹⁵

The higher-grade schools did not disappear, though most were converted into council secondary schools. One might have expected these new schools to have been greatly influenced by the trends which the higher-grade schools had been establishing over a number of years. However, although in some of the new secondary schools there was greater emphasis placed on the teaching of scientific and modern studies, the Board of Education, influenced by its permanent secretary Robert Morant, looked more towards the older grammar and public schools. Thus, the curriculum still tended to favour the traditionalists and to suit the needs of the minority who aimed to enter university or the professions.

In order to attend a secondary school a pupil had to be willing to stay at school until at least sixteen years of age: for many this was either inconvenient or impossible.¹⁶

There was yet another problem, one which has bedevilled the education system throughout its history: the cost of building the new schools was prohibitive for many

¹⁵ D. Rubinstein and B. Simon, The Evolution of the Comprehensive School: 1926-1966, p.1.

¹⁶ The Hadow Report points out that the Local Education Authorities might, with the consent of the Board of Education, extend this limit in cases where no suitable higher education was available within a reasonable distance.

Hadow Report, p. 27.

The school leaving age for the elementary schools was raised to fourteen in 1921, and remained so until raised to fifteen in 1947.

local authorities, especially in those areas where the central schools could not be conveniently redesignated. The solution was to continue with the higher-grade schools, calling them higher-elementary schools: this was the case in both Ferryhill and Chilton, where for well over half a century pupils attended these "all-age schools". The post-elementary curriculum in such schools was to be geared to the supposed future occupations of its pupils. They were not expected to prepare for external examinations, which would put these establishments in competition with the secondary schools.

In some cases, especially in the major cities, the central schools were aimed at preparing pupils for future employment. The London County Council Education Committee's handbook explains that the central schools were designed to provide a course not found in either the elementary or the secondary schools. The curricula of the central schools were to have an industrial or commercial bias, or both. Thus, they stood between the secondary schools on the one hand and the junior technical or trade schools on the other.¹⁷ At first the Board of Education's attitude to these experiments was cautious, and it was not until the passing of the Education Act of 1918 that the central schools received full official encouragement and approval.

The children of Ferryhill and Chilton were obviously affected by the succession of acts, regulations and recommendations which emanated from central government in the period following the Act of 1902. The Regulations for Secondary Schools of 1904 defined a secondary school as one "which offers to each of its scholars up to

¹⁷ Hadow Report, pp. 31-32.

and beyond the age of sixteen a general education, physical, mental and moral, given through a complete graded course of instruction, of wider scope and more advanced degree than that given in elementary schools." The Supplementary Regulations of 1907, following the new Education Act of the same year, set up the so-called free place system and introduced the 11-plus examination, in recognition of the fact that secondary schools had received only small numbers of children from elementary schools. As an all-age school was available in both Ferryhill and Chilton, it is likely that very few children took the opportunity to attend the secondary schools in Bishop Auckland, Stockton, Durham or even Darlington. The aim of the free place system was that at least a quarter of all secondary school pupils should come from elementary schools. Those secondary schools which did not provide the required number of places received a grant at a lower rate. The Act of 1907 also empowered L.E.A.s to acquire land for the building of new secondary schools. Such land and buildings were expensive and County Durham seems to have been reluctant to undertake a new building programme, relying instead on extending existing provision through the higher-grade schools.

The relationship between central and local government during this period was an uneasy one, and the proposed abolition of the Part III authorities created by the 1902 Act was seen in part as an attempt to increase the rôle of central government. Nonetheless, one of the major features of the Education Act of 1918, usually named after H.A.L. Fisher, the President of the Board of Education, was that it placed the onus of reconstruction more on the local authorities, whose powers were widened. However, the fact that many clauses were not mandatory was a weakness of the Act, and it was left largely to local initiatives to implement the proposed reforms in

return for an extra grant. Even so, some reforms were mandatory, such as fixing the minimum school leaving age at fourteen without exemption. L.E.A.s were empowered to raise it to fifteen, though few, including County Durham, did so.¹⁸

The Act of 1918 also reformed funding for education. The cost of building new schools and the cost of teachers' salaries, especially at a time of post-war reconstruction, was placing a greater burden on the local rates to such an extent that, as in the case of County Durham, expenditure on education was inadequate. The new Act replaced the old block grant with a percentage grant, so that not less than half the cost of education was funded centrally by the paying of a "deficiency grant". The aim was to encourage more spending on education and the local authorities were allowed to provide a greater range of ancillary services, such as those concerned with the physical well-being of pupils, from medical inspections to the provision of facilities for games and physical training. L.E.A.s were also encouraged to provide nursery schooling. As Professor G.R. Batho points out, "this was the heyday of local authority influence on education."¹⁹ Alas, education was one of a number of social services to suffer from the onset of an economic depression.

The deliberations of the infamous Committee on National Expenditure, under the chairmanship of Sir Eric Geddes, is regarded as a mournful episode in educational history, notorious for the so called "Geddes Axe" - the recommendation that grants

¹⁸ In fact the mandatory raising of the school leaving age to 14 did not come into effect until 1921.

to education should be cut by about one-third. Though education was not the only social service to suffer from the outcome of the Committee's recommendations, it was dealt a devastating blow. The economies promoted by the Committee were soon undone, but the arguments it raised raged on. Finance was the great educational issue in the inter-war period and was centred around the twin questions of how much a community should spend on education and to what extent secondary education should become a free social service available to all those who wished to benefit from it.

The emergence of a Labour government for a brief period from January to November 1924 heralded some progress. As it was the Labour Party which was responsible for the provision of education in County Durham throughout the period of this study, the attitude of the Party and its policies are of fundamental importance. Yet it is significant that local Labour Party members were not always completely in accord with the views of the Party nationally, and indeed at times there were even sharp divisions between local members themselves.

The Labour Party believed education to be an essential prerequisite to its hopes for social reform. Michael Parkinson gives a succinct summary of the ways in which the process of education was linked directly to the Party's main goal of social equality. The Labour Party had always seen education as a "moral goal in itself, crucial to the development of the individual personality, and as such ought to be made equally available to all children by right, regardless of such extraneous factors

¹⁹ G.R. Batho, Political Issues in Education, p. 16.

as social class, and, with certain reservations, regardless of intellectual ability."²⁰

The Party also advocated the equality of educational opportunity for the social and economic benefits it brings both to the nation and the individual. Another important reason for promoting educational reform concerned the desire, through education, to reform the capitalist society from within. This ideology promoted education as an agent of peaceful social change, which could "facilitate a more equitable distribution of social rewards as well as a revision of social values."²¹ Crucial to such hopes was the socialist view of personality, with its emphasis on acquired rather than inherited characteristics and the belief in the possibility of human development in the correct social environment.

Despite these fundamental principles, the Labour Party did not always act with one voice, and it is wrong to assume that its policy on educational reform was as clear cut as its attitude to the overall importance of education. Similarly, there is often a discrepancy between the idealistic pronouncements of a party able to enjoy the benefits of opposition to those of a party charged with the practical responsibilities of office. The Party was intent on carrying out some educational reform, though it seemed to lack a long-term plan of action. It often tended to react in a rather ad hoc fashion, dealing with matters when they arose rather than addressing problems in a systematic manner. For example, though the Party adopted a resolution at the annual conference of 1907 which demanded that secondary and technical education

²⁰ M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education, 1918-65, p. 4.

²¹ M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education, 1918-65, p 5.

should be available to all children, initially its actions showed little true commitment to a universal system of education. During the passage of the 1918 Education Act, it was Liberal Members of Parliament who criticized the Bill for failing to go far enough in extending education: Labour M.P.s rather welcomed the new proposals, though it was later claimed in the Parliamentary Report of the National Executive Council to the Conference in 1918 that their muted response to the Act's shortcomings was tempered in order to ease the passage of the legislation, which they deemed to be essentially on the right path.

The formation in 1918 of the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on Education led to a more unified and coherent structure for determining Party policy. It aimed to advise M.P.s on current Party policy and to develop more long-term proposals and strategies: it was an educational think-tank, with the power to co-opt members and with facilities for research. Though a major preoccupation, education was just one of the many areas of post-war reconstruction in which the Labour Party hoped to be involved. The overall plan was outlined in a far-reaching policy document published in 1918. *Labour and the New Social Order* was a blue-print for the future and called for a "genuine rationalization of education" as "the first step to social reconstruction in the ridding of class distinctions and privileges."²² This document listed Labour's dissatisfaction with the existing provision for education and demanded a wholesale reorganization of the structure of education "from the nursery to the university." As yet the Party did not call for universal secondary education, which even the most ardent supporters of reform saw as impractical at

²² Quoted in M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education, 1918-65, p.10.

that particular point in time. Instead it accepted the fact that there would continue to be two qualitatively different levels of state education. Whilst it attacked what it saw as the social class basis of the division between elementary and secondary education, the Party was more concerned with improving the numbers of elementary school pupils going on to secondary schools.

February 1921 constituted a watershed in the Labour Party's policy on education. The Advisory Committee on Education ended the confusion over its ultimate aims and provided a systematic approach to education for the next twenty years. In 1921 the historian R.H. Tawney was asked by the Committee to submit a document on secondary education: the report he produced was called *Secondary Education for All*. The title became a battle-cry for the Party faithful and was published in 1922 as the policy statement of the Party: the policy was both radical and practical and it was the essential principle on which the Education Act of 1944 was founded. The document examined the fundamental relationship between elementary and secondary education, two separate yet parallel strands which, if properly organized, would transform primary and secondary education into "a single and continuous process". Tawney saw the existing system as divisive, inefficient and a waste of talent. He viewed continuation schools, encouraged by the Conservative Party in the Education Act of 1918, and intended for those pupils who wished to further their education but who could not afford to attend secondary schools, as "makeshift schools" that should not be seen as a poor man's alternative to a secondary school. For similar reasons, Tawney also dismissed central schools and junior technical schools, which the Conservatives were keen to develop.

Tawney said the Labour Party's objective was, "both the improvement of primary education and the development of public secondary education to such a point that all normal children, irrespective of the income, class or occupation of their parents, may be transferred at the age of "eleven plus" from the primary or preparatory school to one type or another of secondary school, and remain in the latter until sixteen... It recognises that the more secondary education is developed, the more essential will it be that there should be the widest possible variety or type among secondary schools."²³

Two fundamental points must be noted with reference to *Secondary Education for All*. It was recognized that this policy would take several years to come to fruition, as such radical change could only be implemented gradually. Most importantly, at least with regard to the multilateral debate, was that in its most influential policy document, the Labour Party accepted that there would be a variety of secondary schools: the aim was not for universal comprehensive education.

In this climate it is understandable that, whilst the minority Labour government was in a position to introduce its new policies in 1924, it recognized the obvious difficulties it would face in ordering sweeping reforms; and indeed it did not even attempt to try. Nonetheless, the Advisory Committee of February 1924 advocated the modest implementation of a progressive educational programme. It was realized that reaction to the restrictive policies of Geddes was such, even amongst Conservatives, that support might be won for Labour's education policies from

²³ S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boulwood, An Introductory History of English Education Since 1800, p. 184.

people who might be opposed to its doctrines in other areas of government. The measures when they came were small, and though not wholly cosmetic they were largely financial adjustments designed to relax the Draconian Geddes system. However, even under the economic restrictions of 1924 this was a sign of real commitment to educational reform.

On leaving office the Labour President of the Board of Education, C.P. Trevelyan, who had managed in nine months to steer a course between the more radical demands of Labour backbenchers and the practical demands of office, appealed to all parties to keep education out of politics. Such idealism, based on the belief that there was a need for a ten-year period to allow for expansion in all forms of education, is to be commended: alas, his plea went unheeded and there was no lasting political truce. Not surprisingly the Labour Party criticized the Conservatives as being elitist, claiming that their concept of an educational "ladder" was both limited in scope and divisive. On the other hand, the Conservatives saw the socialist idea of a "broad highway" as impractical and a sure way of lowering educational standards. With the departure of Trevelyan the Conservatives resumed office, and though they reverted to stringent economic policies they could not dodge the education question. Shortly after it had taken office the Labour government had set up a Consultative Committee to consider the Education of the Adolescent, charged with examining the relationship between the elementary and secondary sectors of education: in 1926 the Conservatives had to deal with an issue that had been of major importance to their Labour opponents.

As Dark says, "The period from 1926 to 1944 sees not only the consolidation of the tripartite organisation of post-primary education but also the evolution of a theoretical justification for the full-blown tripartite system of secondary education as it emerged after 1944. Three official reports, Hadow, Spens and Norwood contributed enormously to the construction of this body of received doctrine which was adopted by the Ministry of Education after 1944."²⁴

2. HADOW, SPENS AND NORWOOD

The Committee, constituted in May 1924 under the chairmanship of Sir W.H. Hadow, had a very wide brief, "to consider and report upon the organization, objective and curriculum of courses of study suitable for children who will remain in full-time attendance at school, other than Secondary Schools, up to the age of 15, regard being had on the one hand to the requirements of a good general education and the desirability of providing a reasonable variety of curriculum, so far as is practicable, for children of varying tastes and abilities, and on the other to the probable occupations of the pupils in commerce, industry and agriculture." The Committee was also charged with advising "as to the arrangements which should be made (a) for testing the attainments of the pupils at the end of their course; (b) for

²⁴ A. Dark, An Historical Study of Secondary Reorganisation in England and Wales up to 1965 with Special Reference to Bradford, p. 63.

facilitating in suitable cases the transfer of individual pupils to Secondary Schools at an age above the normal age of submission."²⁵

The Report was an outstanding piece of research and a valuable statement on contemporary thinking on the provision of secondary education. It made comment on earlier developments, had a thorough appraisal of the existing provision and gave a brief summary of provision county by county.

For County Durham, the Report noted that the authority provided "advanced instruction" for children over eleven years of age in 54 higher-tops, 4 upper standard or central schools and 38 public elementary schools, in which the curriculum had been extended to cater for pupils over the age of eleven. The details in the Report are really quite exact: in 1923-24 there were 61,242 pupils over the age of eleven attending schools in the area, of whom 51,736 were in ordinary public elementary schools, 5,722 in secondary schools, 3,202 in higher-tops and 582 in commercial schools and colleges, private schools and upper standard schools.²⁶

The Report, using information supplied to it by the L.E.A., went on to point out that the higher-top system was first introduced into thirty elementary schools in 1918, and by 1924 it had been extended to fifty-four. It claimed, "The system aims at widening and enriching the curriculum of the ordinary elementary schools, and provides parallel classes for those children who develop mainly on literary lines, and

²⁵ Hadow Report, p. xvii.

²⁶ Hadow Report, pp. 61-62.

for those whose interests are chiefly practical." By 1924 there were 11 higher-tops which organized a two-year course, 38 providing a three-year course and 5 able to offer a course of instruction lasting four years.

Admission to the higher-tops was through teacher recommendation after the prospective pupil had sat a simple written test or else had undergone an oral examination. The applicant's school record was also taken into account and the consent of the parent had to be given before a pupil could gain entry. The teachers had wide powers and were given full authority over the curriculum and in the choice of books and other items of equipment.²⁷

In addition to this résumé of current provision, the Report pointed the way forward and made far-reaching recommendations for the future. Curtis and Boulwood, in their brief summary of the history of English education, point out that the Hadow Report is one of the milestones in the development of English education in the twentieth century, and that two distinct lines of thought influenced its recommendations. "On the one hand it was progressive, but on the other it looked back to the past, and was, perhaps, unconsciously affected by the prestige of the secondary grammar school."²⁸

The Committee, of which R.H. Tawney was a member, discussed all aspects of future provision including the curriculum, staffing and equipment, the school leaving

²⁷ Hadow Report, p. 62.

age, admissions and examinations. However, the most oft quoted part of the Report starts the second paragraph of the introduction: "There is a tide which begins to rise in the veins of youth at the age of eleven or twelve. It is called by the name of adolescence. If that tide can be taken at the flood, and a new voyage begun in the strength and along the flow of its current, we think that it will move on to fortune."²⁹

What Hadow and his committee believed was that a child's education should be regarded as a continuous process, but that this process should be split between a primary and secondary school and that the changeover from one to the other should occur at the age of eleven or twelve. The Committee stated, "We desire to abolish the word "elementary," and to alter and extend the sense of the word "secondary." The word elementary has now become misleading;... We propose to substitute the term "primary," but to restrict the use of that term to the period of education which ends at the age of eleven or twelve. To the period of education which follows upon it we would give the name secondary; and we would make this name embrace all forms of post-primary education, whether it be given in the schools now called "secondary," or in central schools, or in senior departments of the schools now termed elementary." Furthermore, the Report said, "...the schools which now have the monopoly of the name "secondary" .. we suggest that they should be called by the name of grammar schools... the term "central school" (which is neither clear nor

²⁸ S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boulwood, An Introductory History of English Education Since 1800, p. 184.

²⁹ Hadow Report, p. xix.

particularly apt) should simultaneously disappear, and the term "modern school" should take its place in the future."³⁰

In the Report the suggested break at eleven was justified by reference to the work of educational psychologists (whose research was later called into question).

However, it was also based on administrative expediency. Even though Hadow recommended raising the school leaving age to fifteen, so long as it remained at fourteen, the transfer had to be before twelve so as to allow a course of a least three years in the modern school.

The Hadow Report was realistic in recognizing that the changes it proposed would take some time and that "Senior Classes, Central Departments, "Higher Tops," and analogous arrangements, for providing advanced instruction for pupils over the age of 11+, for whom, owing to local conditions, it is impossible to make provision in one or other of the types of school mentioned above"³¹ would remain for some time. However, the Report emphasized that secondary education at 11-plus should involve transferring pupils not just to a different type of teaching within the same

³⁰ The term grammar school was an extension of the term, previously used in connection with long-established schools, to cover the large number of municipal and county secondary schools founded after 1902. The Report was keen to link these newer developments to "an ancient and dignified tradition of culture," whereas, for the modern school, the Committee wanted to chose a name which indicated that the school's curriculum was more "realistic" and associated with practical interests and whose "bearing on practical life is obvious and immediate".

Hadow Report, pp. xxi, 99, 100.

³¹ Hadow Report, p. 80.

The other types of schools *mentioned above* were the grammar and secondary modern schools.

school, but to “another institution, with a distinctive staff, and organized definitely for post-primary education.”³² Percy Nunn, the source of this ideal, would have been disappointed to learn that it would take until 1963 for the Senior Classes at Chilton to transfer to such an institution.

The authors of the Hadow Report believed that the two types of secondary school should have two different curricula. For the grammar school they suggested a “predominantly academic curriculum, in which languages and literature along with mathematics and natural science play a considerable part,”³³ whilst the modern schools should have a “realistic” or “practical” bias, but not that “such schools should aim at giving a technical or vocational education, such as is offered by Junior Technical Schools, but that they should use “realistic” studies as an instrument of general education, as they are already used by a considerable number of central schools to-day, and as academic studies are used for the same object by existing “secondary” schools. A good general education can be given through a curriculum which provides large opportunities for practical work, and such an education it should be the object of these schools to give.”³⁴ The Report went on to emphasize that it was most important that these secondary modern schools or senior classes in

³² Part of a memorandum sent to the Committee by Professor T. Percy Nunn.

Hadow Report, p. 80.

³³ Hadow Report, p. 99.

³⁴ Hadow Report, p. 85.

un-reorganized primary schools should not be seen as inferior secondary schools, merely offering “a vague continuation of primary education.”³⁵

Whilst acknowledging that the junior technical schools were doing “admirable work” and hoping that they “would continue to develop,” the Report emphasized that their main function was “to give a preparation for industries requiring somewhat specialized technical qualifications; and the areas in which they can develop in any number are, therefore, those in which such industries exist on a considerable scale.”³⁶ Thus, it was not recommended that junior technical schools should be regarded as secondary schools and the normal entry to them was to remain at thirteen.

However, the Committee did state that: “We regard the general recognition that the aim of educational policy must be, not merely to select a minority of children for the second stage, but to secure that the second stage is sufficiently elastic, and contains schools of sufficient variety and type, to meet the needs of all children, as one of the most notable advances made since the establishment of a system of public Education... Thus all go forward, though along different paths. Selection by differentiation takes the place of selection by elimination.”³⁷ Earlier in the Report the Committee said, “By the time that the age of 11 or 12 has been reached children have given some indication of differences in interests and abilities sufficient to make

³⁵ Hadow Report, p. 108.

³⁶ Hadow Report, p. 85.

³⁷ Hadow Report, p. 78.

it possible and desirable to cater for them by means of schools of varying types, but which have, nevertheless, a broad common foundation.”³⁸

To determine which type of school was “most suitable to a child’s abilities and interests”, the Hadow Committee recommended “a written examination should be held, and also, wherever possible, an oral examination.”³⁹ The local education authority should be allowed to make its own arrangements for the test and, if it so desired, the local authority could hold a preliminary examination to ascertain who was most likely to benefit from sitting the final examination: a suggestion which County Durham, like most other authorities, adopted.

Importantly, in terms of this thesis, as well as promoting the idea of different types of school, Hadow also investigated the issue of a bias in the curriculum of modern schools and senior classes. Right from their beginnings in 1911, central schools in London had a definite bias, usually industrial or commercial. Other local education authorities followed the London pattern, sometimes with variations in the bias to suit local circumstances. For example, in the Central School at Scarborough there was a course for boys who intended to earn a living at sea. In this respect, there were similarities with the courses offered in some junior technical schools. Though successful in some cases, the Committee noted that there were clear difficulties in organizing a double bias in a single school.

³⁸ Hadow Report, p. 74.

³⁹ Hadow Report, p. 178.

Hardly surprisingly the Committee found a good deal of evidence to suggest that the majority of pupils were attracted more to practical work than to literary subjects.⁴⁰ Finally, after collecting the views of a number of teachers in central schools, the Committee reported that the majority of teachers thought a bias could be successfully introduced, but only in the third or fourth year of the course. Such a bias, especially in subjects which would be of practical use to them when they left school, was a good force for motivation and encouraged pupils to stay on longer at school. The Committee found that the three groups of subjects which appealed to most pupils were:

- “(i) the industrial group for boys, in which special attention was paid to science and mathematics, woodwork and metalwork;
- (ii) the commercial group for boys and girls, which included shorthand, bookkeeping and typewriting;
- (iii) the domestic group for girls, which included cookery, laundrywork, needlework, sick nursing, elementary chemistry and hygiene.”⁴¹

However useful such biases were, the Committee was at pains to point out that they should not dominate the curriculum. Thus, “they should be of a general character, unlike the specific vocational teaching given in many Junior Technical Schools and

⁴⁰ Of course, a good many children with *literary tastes* were already in grammar schools under the free place system.

⁴¹ Hadow Report, pp. 117-118.

Junior Art Departments.”⁴² Rather a pupil should “receive such a training as will make it easy for him to adapt himself on leaving school to any occupation.”⁴³ Furthermore, if a bias was introduced, it should be linked to the character of local industry and employment.⁴⁴ As a further warning the Report recommended that a bias should only be introduced gradually over several years.

As R.J.W. Selleck observed, Hadow “did not design a new educational structure; he approved what others had planned.”⁴⁵ It was left to the next great report on education, under the chairmanship of Sir William Spens, to further the investigation into the different types of secondary schools. In particular the Spens Report, which was published in 1938, considered the idea of a multi-based, or multilateral school.⁴⁶ The terms of reference for the Report centred on the grammar schools and technical high schools, but Spens broadened this to cover the whole of secondary education. Thus, he looked at the secondary moderns also, insisting that

⁴² Hadow Report, pp. 119-120.

⁴³ Hadow Report, p. 121.

⁴⁴ The Hadow Committee would have been delighted with the rural science courses organized in 1964 at Hurworth and Sedgefield Modern Schools, both members of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit. See Chapter Three p. 217 for details.

⁴⁵ Quoted in J. Firmager, The Consultative Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Henry Hadow: The Education of the Adolescent, History of Education, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 1981, p. 281.

⁴⁶ As R.W. Trubridge said, various names were given to this type of school - omnibus, common, comprehensive, multibias as well as multilateral.

R.W. Trubridge, The Multilateral School, p. 8.

the education provided in these schools, though different, should not be considered inferior to that provided in the traditional secondary school.

Like Hadow, Spens evoked the work of psychologists when compiling his report. In the section on mental development the Committee was told by experts that “Certain qualitative changes in the child’s personality, particularly the apparent emergence of specific aptitudes and interests, become noticeable after the age of 11...Intellectual development during childhood appears to progress as if it was governed by a single general factor, usually known as “general intelligence”, which may be broadly described as innate all-round intellectual ability. It appears to enter into everything the child attempts to think, or say, or do, and seems on the whole to be the most important factor in determining his work in the classroom.”⁴⁷ The expert witnesses also claimed that general intelligence could be measured “approximately” by means of intelligence tests. Furthermore, the experts stated, “...with few exceptions, it is possible at a very early age to predict with some degree of accuracy the ultimate level of a child’s intellectual powers...”⁴⁸

The Hadow Report had failed to recognize the junior technical schools as part of the secondary sector. Spens now rectified this. The junior technical schools were, thus, added to the grammar and modern schools to form the tripartite system which was

⁴⁷ Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools, (Spens Report), 1938, p. 123.

⁴⁸ Spens Report, p. 124.

See also M. Hyndman, Multilateralism and the Spens Report: Evidence from the Archives, The British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, October 1976, p. 251.

the greatest legacy of the Spens Report. Some, but not all, of the existing junior technical schools could be absorbed into the new class of the technical high schools.⁴⁹

Although confirming the split between primary and secondary school at the age of eleven, the Report did not consider the 11-plus examination but pointed out that it “should not be a decisive factor in determining a child’s career.”⁵⁰ The Committee also said that there was a need for some means of “correcting initial errors in the classification of the children...[and a]...means also of providing for those pupils whose later development makes it clear that an alternative form of secondary education would be better for them...we consider it essential that there should be a regular review of the distribution of pupils as between different schools preferably about the age of 13.”⁵¹ The Committee did not recommend a 13-plus examination, rather that any transfer should be based on the headteacher’s report. The idea of transfer between schools was one of the central tenets of County Durham’s system of multilateral units.

Significantly, the Committee considered it, “of great importance that everything possible should be done to secure parity of status for Grammar Schools, Technical High Schools, and Modern Schools. This means in effect that the *multilateral idea*,

⁴⁹ The group of junior technical schools, mainly concentrated in the area around London and which had been previously designated as trade schools, were not included in the recommendations of the Committee.

⁵⁰ Spens Report, p. xxxiii.

⁵¹ Spens Report, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

although it may not be expressed by multilateral schools,⁵² must be inherent in any truly national system of secondary education.”⁵³ Furthermore, “The multilateral idea, though it may not be expressed by means of the multilateral school, should permeate the system of secondary education as we conceive it.”⁵⁴

The special characteristics of the multilateral school were described as “the provision of a good general education for two or three years for all pupils over 11+ in a given area, and the organisation of four or five “streams”, so that the pupils at the age of 13 and 14 years may follow courses that are suited to their individual needs and capacity. There would be a common core in these several courses, but they would differ in the time and emphasis given to certain groups of subjects.”⁵⁵

The Report cited several different types of course, for example, a literary and linguistic course, a mathematical and scientific course, a technological course, and a commercial studies course. Whilst this would mean that the traditional academic grammar school courses could continue, there would be no need for separate grammar schools, nor, on the same grounds, for separate modern and junior

⁵² Spens used the term “multilateral” to describe a school which, “by means of separate “streams”, would provide for all types of secondary education, with the exception of that provided by Junior Technical Schools in so far as these depend on their association with a Technical College and the equipment there available.”

Spens Report, p. xix.

⁵³ Spens Report, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

⁵⁴ Spens Report, p. 292.

⁵⁵ Spens Report, p. xix.

technical schools. Such a policy, the Committee admitted, was “very attractive: it would secure in the first place the close association, to their mutual advantage, of pupils of more varied ability, and with more varied interests and objectives, than are normally found in a school of any one type. Further, pupils could be transferred from an academic to a less academic curriculum without change of school.”⁵⁶

However the Committee decided that it would not recommend the substitution of multilateral schools for the tripartite system it favoured, stating that, “With some reluctance we have come to the conclusion that we could not advocate the adoption of multilateralism as a general policy.”⁵⁷ There were several reasons put forward for rejecting multilateral schools, and because these arguments were repeated for the next thirty years, and in some cases beyond, it is necessary to consider them in detail. Central amongst the Committee’s reasons were the following:

“In order to secure a satisfactory number of pupils in each “stream”...the size of the school would have to be very considerable, say 800 or possibly larger, and we believe that the majority of pupils gain more from being in smaller schools.”

“..Much of what is most valuable in the grammar school tradition depends on the existence of a Sixth Form. But a Sixth Form can only play its traditional part in the life of a school if it contains a reasonably high proportion of the pupils in the school.

⁵⁶ Spens Report, p. xx.

⁵⁷ Spens Report, p. 291.

This could scarcely be the case if only half the pupils, or probably less, were on the grammar school "side".."

"We attach great importance to the steady evolution of the curriculum and methods of teaching in Modern Schools, and equal importance to carrying further certain reforms in the curriculum of Grammar Schools...[so]...it would be very difficult, if multilateral schools became common,...to find Heads who would be as competent to control and inspire *both* developments...we cannot accept the view that the influence of Heads of "sides" can be a complete substitute for the influence of a Head Master or Head Mistress. There is, moreover, the risk that if a 'Grammar' and 'Modern' curriculum existed in the same school the former might, as a result of its long established prestige, exert an excessive influence on the latter...it is in general best for Grammar Schools and Modern Schools to exist and develop independently."

"The special value of Junior Technical Schools depends...on their contact with the staff and the equipment of a Technical College. In consequence special "courses" in multilateral schools would not be a satisfactory substitute for Junior Technical Schools."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Spens Report, pp. xx-xxi.

The argument that the modern school side might be dominated by the grammar school was supported by several members of the Committee. The argument was further developed by citing Dr. I.L. Kandel from Columbia University, who said that in the United States the single or comprehensive high school "may cater to the average but does justice neither to the bright or to the dull pupils."

Spens Report, p. 291.

The Committee concluded its rejection of multilateral schools as a general policy by saying it would be too expensive: "the general adoption of the multilateral idea would be too subversive a change to be made in a long established system, especially in view of the extent to which this system has been expanded in recent years by the building of new Grammar Schools and Technical Schools."⁵⁹

In 1976 M. Hyndman pointed out, "Assuming (falsely, as it turned out) that parity of status was a distinct possibility for the future and that acceptably accurate methods of differentiating between 11+ children were available, the Committee presumably saw little justification in jeopardising the undoubted achievements of the grammar schools by recommending their wholesale conversion to multilateralism."⁶⁰

However the Report did not entirely close the door on the multilateral school. The Committee believed that, "some measure of experiment with multilateral schools may be desirable, especially in new areas". Indeed, the Committee envisaged that multilateral schools "ought almost certainly to be provided...in districts where the Grammar School is too small either to give an adequate school life or to combine reasonable economy with the provision of an adequate staff."⁶¹ Furthermore, the

⁵⁹ Spens Report, p. 291.

⁶⁰ M. Hyndman, Multilateralism and the Spens Report: Evidence from the Archives, The British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, October 1976, p. 252.

⁶¹ Spens Report, p. xxii.

Committee opined that the multilateral school might be justified if it was clear that there would a substantial advantage in building this type of school.

Before considering the political response, particularly of the Labour Party, to the Hadow and Spens Reports, it is necessary to consider the third report that had a direct impact on the provision of secondary education: the Norwood Report of 1943. This was an investigation by the Committee of the Secondary Schools Examination Council into the curriculum and examination system in secondary schools. Like Spens, it accepted the Hadow view that secondary education should follow primary education with the split occurring in most cases at eleven years of age. In addition, it took the tripartite idea outlined in Spens a stage further by providing a psychological justification for tripartism by categorizing three types of mind suitable for the three types of school.

Norwood reported, "The evolution of education has in fact thrown up certain groups, each of which can and must be treated in a way appropriate to itself... For example, English education has in practice recognised the pupil who is interested in learning for its own sake, who can grasp an argument or follow a piece of connected reasoning, who is interested in causes...who cares to know how things came to be as well as how they are, who is sensitive to language as expression of thought, to a proof as a precise demonstration, to a series of experiments justifying a principle...He may be good with his hands or he may not...Such pupils educated by the curriculum ...associate with the Grammar School ... may for educational purposes constitute a particular kind of mind.

Again, the history of technical education has demonstrated the importance of recognising the needs of the pupil whose interests and abilities lie markedly in the field of applied science or applied art. The boy in this group...often has an uncanny insight into the intricacies of mechanism whereas the subtleties of language construction are too delicate for him. To justify itself to his mind, knowledge must be capable of immediate application...he may have unusual or moderate intelligence... The various types of technical school were...to prepare boys and girls for taking up certain crafts - engineering, agriculture and the like.

Again, there has of late been a recognition ...of still another grouping of pupils, and...occupations. The pupil in this group deals more easily with concrete things than with ideas. He may have much ability, but it will be in the realm of facts. He is interested in things as they are...He may see clearly along one line of study...but he often fails to relate his knowledge or skill to other branches of activity. Because he is interested in the moment he may be incapable of a long series of connected steps...he must have immediate returns for his efforts, and for the same reason his career is often on his mind...Within this group fall pupils whose mental make-up does not show at an early stage pronounced leanings in a way comparable with the other groups we have indicated.”⁶² Clearly this latter was the modern school boy.

As Keith Evans, amongst others, points out, “The Norwood analysis, though naively ill-founded in its basis, was welcomed in official circles for it equated most

⁶² Board of Education, Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools: Report of the Secondary School Examination Council Appointed by the President of the Board of Education in 1941, (Norwood Report), pp. 2-3.

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⁶² Board of Education, Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools: Report of the Secondary School Examinations Council, (Norwood Report), pp. 2-3.

conveniently with the three types of secondary school thrown up by the Hadow reorganisation”⁶³

Following naturally from the description of the three types of mind were the three types of school; and here Norwood was very clear. “Accordingly we would advocate that there should be three types of education, which we think of as the secondary Grammar, the secondary Technical, the secondary Modern, that each type should have such parity as amenities and conditions can bestow; parity of esteem in our view cannot be conferred by administrative decree nor by equality of cost per pupil; it can be only be won by the school itself.”⁶⁴ The phrase “parity of esteem” became a battle-cry for so many who wished to see the development of multilateralism and later comprehensivization.

Before looking in detail at the secondary school curriculum and examination system, the Norwood Committee considered the age of entry for secondary education and the multilateral school. With regard to the former, Norwood realized that whilst a child’s special interests and abilities often reveal themselves by the age of eleven, for others this comes two or three years later. Thus any examination system used to select pupils for secondary school should be flexible enough to rectify errors of judgement. Furthermore, the Committee suggested that “differentiation for types of

⁶³ K. Evans, The Development and Structure of the English Education System, p. 86.

⁶⁴ Norwood Report, pp. 2-3.

secondary education should depend upon the judgement of the teachers in the primary school, supplemented, if desired, by intelligence and other tests.⁶⁵

Norwood also considered the position of the multilateral school. However, the Committee decided to avoid the phrase, complaining that it was too vague and confusing. Overall, the position of Norwood was similar to that of Spens. It was acceptable to experiment, but such institutions were likely to be too large and so ruin valued "human contact" to such an extent that the headteacher would no longer "have sufficient knowledge of each boy."⁶⁶ The Committee rejected the idea of a "three-type" school involving grammar, modern and technical sides on the ground that it might jeopardize the close relationship the junior technical schools had developed with local industry. The only alternative form of experiment would have to be of the "two-type". Like Spens, the Norwood Report had not closed the door, but it had nevertheless made its feelings clear.

The three great reports, Hadow, Spens and Norwood, have been considered in some detail. They formed the basis on which secondary reorganisation took place in the inter-war period. However, it is important to look at the reaction of the Labour Party to the three reports, particularly in light of the political composition of County Durham.

⁶⁵ For further details see: Norwood Report, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁶ Norwood Report, p. 19.

It is important to begin by making one crucial point. Not everyone in the Labour Party, locally or nationally, wanted the same kind of education for every child. In fact virtually all the proposals set out in the Labour Party's policy document of 1922, *Secondary Education for All*, were accepted by the Hadow Committee, including that there should be a variety of secondary schools.⁶⁷ What the Labour Party wanted, to use Norwood's phrase, was "parity of esteem". Norwood's classification of minds, which now can seem absurdly elitist in its sweeping generalizations (though it must not be forgotten that all three reports advocated ease of transfer between schools), did have its adherents. During the inter-war period, as Rubinstein and Simon say, "there was a growing interest in diagnosing qualities of mind which, so far as the education system was concerned, derived primarily from the need to select children at eleven for secondary schools."⁶⁸ From the work of psychometrists like Galton, Spearman, Burt and others, there developed the idea that ability was innate and measurable by an intelligence test. Such a test might be a more equitable way of selecting pupils; this appealed particularly to those who were concerned that children from poor home backgrounds would be disadvantaged in a competitive examination.

Whilst the three great reports were being compiled, the Labour Party was refining its views on the nature of secondary education, and in particular its stance in relation to multilateralism. As early as 1925 a memorandum to the Labour Party's think-tank, the Advisory Committee on Education, "had urged the Party to consider the

⁶⁷ It did not deal with the question of fees and maintenance allowances.

introduction of a multiple-bias school which would contain all sorts of education and prevent “the classification of secondary schools as superior to others in type, which would perpetuate class differences and which would prevent any real unity of outlook in secondary education.” In 1925 such views had little or no support in the Party.”⁶⁹

However, by the outbreak of war the idea of the multilateral school was beginning to gain momentum. Yet, despite the Party’s formal adoption of multilateral schools in 1938, it was seen only as one possible solution to the problem of secondary reorganization. The multilateral school argument was repeated a year later, when the Advisory Committee on Education suggested to the London Labour Party that it should reorganize its secondary schools on multilateral lines because it was likely to attract the support of the electorate. They suggested that people would be drawn to the Party by “the open and unashamed adoption of the policy of equality of opportunity for every child of every parent-voter.”⁷⁰

It must be emphasized, however, that not all members of the Labour Party’s Advisory Committee on Education were in favour of the multilateral school solution. As David Rubinstein says, “The Labour attitude was a web composed of

⁶⁸ D. Rubinstein and B. Simon, The Evolution of the Comprehensive School 1926-1966, p. 11.

⁶⁹ M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 31.

⁷⁰ M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 31.

several strands.”⁷¹ The Party was clearly divided. Michael Parkinson points out that their dilemma is best summed up by a memo from an individual member of the Advisory Committee sent in 1942, which argued that if the reorganization of secondary education failed to challenge the power and status of the grammar school, “then we may have to try the multilateral school, but I should still feel we were sacrificing educational to social considerations. I think it may be necessary to do so, but I think we should recognize what we are doing.”⁷²

To the disappointment of the Labour Party, although the Conservative Government claimed to accept the principles of the Hadow Report, it never seemed prepared to spend money to implement its recommendations. The Labour Party was similarly disappointed with the Conservatives over the 1936 Education Act, which failed to raise the school leaving age to fifteen, allowed exemptions from the intended extra year of education and refused to pay maintenance allowances to the families of pupils who wanted to stay at school for an extra year.⁷³ However, the outbreak of war prevented the 1936 Act from being put into practice. This left the way open for the more radical proposals of the new President of the Board of Education, Mr. R.A. Butler. Members of the Board, as Gordon Batho says, “had come to realize that the Board of Education tended to respond to stimuli rather than to create discussion. Burdened as they were with everyday administration, the Board’s senior

⁷¹ D. Rubinstein, Comprehensive Education: Equal Educational Opportunity, p. 18.

⁷² M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 33.

⁷³ It was eventually raised to 15 in 1947.

staff had failed to engage in effective policy making.”⁷⁴ However in 1941 they produced a confidential discussion document, *Education After the War*, which as W.O. Lester Smith said, was “distributed in such a blaze of secrecy that it achieved an unusual degree of publicity.”⁷⁵ *Education After the War*, or the Green Book as it was always known, informed the White Paper on Educational Reconstruction, issued in 1943, which in turn led to the 1944 Act and the realization of much that had been proposed in Hadow, Spens and Norwood. The apogee of the tripartite system was at hand.

⁷⁴ G.R. Batho, Political Issues in Education, p.21.

For details of Butler’s rôle in the making of the 1944 Act see R.G. Wallace, the Origins and Authorship of the 1944 Education Act, History of Education, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 1981, pp. 283-290.

⁷⁵ Quoted in G.R. Batho, Political Issues in Education, p.21.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RISE OF THE MULTILATERAL UNIT IN COUNTY DURHAM

1. THE RESPONSE TO THE BUTLER ACT

The Education Act of 1944 is deservedly recognized as one of the great milestones of the modern education system in England and Wales and many of its proposals continue to govern educational provision even today. The Act marks a watershed in many ways, not least because it insisted that every local education authority in England and Wales should conduct a thorough audit of its current educational provision before drawing up detailed plans for the implementation of its recommendations: as a result, there is a clear difference between the way education was dispensed before 1944 and the way it was provided after the Act.

Not for over a century, since the days of the great debate concerning state intervention, had there been so much interest in the provision of education. The end of the war was a time of high emotion in every respect; there was a desire to take stock, to preserve the best, jettison the unwanted, and the aim to create a new world order extended to every aspect of human experience. However, tempering

enthusiasm was the economic reality of the day. As Roy Lowe says, "The period after the Second World War was one of traumatic social and economic change in England."¹ In such pragmatism lies the reason why it took Durham County Council twenty years to implement the proposals that emerged from the Education Act of 1944.

In January 1944 Durham County Council's Director of Education, Mr. Thomas B. Tilley², reported to the Elementary Education Sub-Committee on the new Education Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum he had received from the President of the Board of Education, R.A. Butler. His report was short, giving only a brief outline of the new far-reaching proposals from Whitehall. The Elementary Sub-Committee recommended to the County Council that the Director should be asked to prepare a detailed written report on the Bill, including recommendations to meet the requirements of the expected legislation.³ Tilley's subsequent first Interim Report was completed less than a fortnight later and submitted to the Elementary Education Sub-Committee on 2 February 1944.

Essentially the Interim Report, which was the first of two, was concerned with administration and finance. There is no doubt that Tilley felt under pressure. His

¹ R. Lowe, Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History, introd.

² Mr. Tilley retired in 1946 having held the post of Director for nearly forty years.

³ It is very easy when looking at the Education Act of 1944 to lose sight of the fact that it was born during wartime. Only a few months before the Director's Report, the Education Committee was listing schools damaged by enemy action and discussing book recovery and salvage funds.

memoranda and reports are punctuated with references to how little time the Authority had to respond to the wishes of the government. Indeed, he urged the Education Committee to respond immediately to the Bill without waiting for the approval of the County Council, whose servants they were. Tilley bemoaned the fact that the Bill contained important changes from the draft set out in the White Paper and presented to Parliament in July 1943. These changes did not appear to be to the advantage of the Authority.

As a result of the Interim Report, a series of resolutions setting out the views of the Education Committee were forwarded to Durham City's Labour Member of Parliament, Joshua Ritson.⁴ These resolutions clearly set out the Council's main concerns. Ritson was asked to urge Butler to give an undertaking to publish his detailed plans for reform and to take all possible steps for the recruitment and training of additional teachers, upon whom the implementation of the Bill would depend. In addition, he urged that the "delicate balance" secured in the Bill regarding the expected financial claims, which would arise as a result of the "dual system" of provided and non-provided schools, should not be upset in any way. Given the tradition of the dispute, it is hardly surprising that the greatest volume of criticism during the whole of the parliamentary debate had centred round this issue. Butler proposed what *The Times Educational Supplement* called an "ingenious and intricate compromise": a choice of status for such schools, which retained the dual

⁴ Ritson became the City's first Labour M.P. in 1922. With the exception of a defeat in 1931, during the period of the National Government, Durham City has remained in the hands of the Labour Party ever since.

For further details see A.J. Heesom, Durham City and its M.P.s 1678 - 1992.

system with some important modifications. These schools could become either *controlled* or *aided*. The former could continue with their form of religious instruction but the local education authorities would be responsible for all the costs and appointment of the teachers, except for those in religious education departments. Aided schools would have their teachers' salaries and their running expenses met by the local authority and a grant towards building costs from central government, but the schools' managers would be in charge of the buildings, staff appointments and religious education in their schools.⁵

Another emotive topic was the charging of fees by direct grant aided schools. These were secondary schools which received a grant direct from the Board of Education. Some received aid from the local authority and were incorporated into the local authority's overall scheme for secondary education in their area.⁶ In the White Paper on Educational Reconstruction issued in July 1943, there were indications that fees would be abolished in direct grant schools.⁷ This expectation was reinforced when the Fleming Committee, set up to inquire into the public schools, recommended by a majority of 11 to 7 that fees should be abolished.⁸ As

⁵ See G.R. Batho, Political Issues in Education. pp. 24-25.

⁶ There were three such schools in the area controlled by Durham County Council: Barnard Castle County, Stockton Grammar and Stockton Queen Victoria High.

⁷ See paragraphs 20 and 32 of the White Paper. The former concludes: "A system under which fees are charged in one type of post primary school and prohibited in the other offends against the canon that the nature of a child's education should be determined by his capacity and promise and not by the financial circumstances of his parent."

Board of Education, Educational Reconstruction, (White Paper).

⁸ Board of Education, The Public Schools and the General Educational System.

Tilley reported, "The avowed aim of the Bill is to get Secondary Education with parity of esteem in every type of Secondary School. This will be very difficult to obtain, in my opinion, where there exists three types of Secondary School with a leaving age of 16 in one and 16 or 18 in the other two and where education is free in two but fees are charged in the remaining type."⁹ Thus the Education Committee was clear in recommending that no fees should be charged in any school in receipt of aid from public funds: a key tenet of Labour Party policy.

Additional recommendations were made concerning the financial proposals outlined in the Bill. There had been a lot of criticism levied at the White Paper, claiming that the proposed reforms had been under-funded. Although the Education Bill had increased the projected cost from £67,400,000 suggested in the White Paper to £79,800,000, the Education Committee, whilst acknowledging that it was difficult to make a definitive comment on the figures, still believed the funding to be inadequate.

Prior to compiling his first Interim Report, Tilley had received a memorandum from the Urban District Councils Association which focused on the delegation of functions of local education authorities to divisional executives.¹⁰ The Bill proposed the abolition of the old Part III authorities, created as a result of the 1902 Education Act and which were responsible for the provision of elementary

⁹ County of Durham Education Committee, Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1943, p. 4.

¹⁰ Outlined in Section 4 of Part III of the First Schedule of the Education Bill, which had just passed its second reading in the House and was almost at the committee stage.

education in their areas. The Bill also paved the way for the introduction of divisional executive committees. In Tilley's words, "In no particular has the Bill departed further from the spirit of the proposals of the White Paper so far as County Administration is concerned than it has in this instance."¹¹ The proposals included merging, and thus reducing the number, of local authorities.¹² The main bone of contention was on the proposal to set up excepted districts.¹³ The government was keen to preserve and stimulate local interest in educational affairs and the White Paper had proposed to set up separate district committees in county districts with a minimum total population of 60,000 or a minimum elementary school population of 7,000 children. These district committees would be entrusted with the general duty of maintaining the educational needs of the area under review and making recommendations to the County Education Committee. Their mandate could be expanded to include other functions delegated to them by the County Education Committee. Alas, the Bill contained proposals to partition the area controlled by a local authority into divisions, each to be run by a divisional *executive*, not a committee as mentioned in the White Paper. Such executives would have increased powers: they would function partly at an advisory level but also exercise delegated

¹¹ County of Durham Education Committee, Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1943, p. 8.

¹² When the Bill became law the number was reduced from 315 to 146, which meant that the authorities were, on the whole, larger and more powerful than they had been.

¹³ For an outline of the discussions surrounding the abolition of the Part III authorities and the subsequent reorganization of local administration, see P.H.J.H. Gosden, Education in the Second World War: A Study in Policy and Administration, pp. 297-298.

functions.¹⁴ Worse was the proposal that large county districts could apply for excepted status. Tilley and the Education Committee were worried that in effect this would mean that they could function outside the control of the local authority and develop their own educational policies. Whilst they agreed that the new proposals could be viewed as a compromise to appease the larger Part III authorities, which were faced with extinction, there appeared a possibility during the committee stage of the Bill that the qualifications for excepted status would be lowered, or that smaller urban districts might be allowed to combine and so meet the criteria. It was against this background that Durham County Education Committee recommended that the proposal to create excepted divisional executive committees in areas which were not existing Part III areas should be opposed. Furthermore, any attempt to permit the amalgamation of two or more districts to create an excepted divisional executive committee was undesirable, whilst any plan to reduce the size of unit on which an excepted divisional executive committee might be based was educationally unsound.¹⁵ Tilley and the Education Committee were concerned that if the proposals came to fruition, Stockton-on-Tees and Stanley Urban District would apply to become excepted districts.¹⁶

¹⁴ Added to the Second Interim Report of the Director of Education was a confidential appendix which outlined a Memorandum on the Establishment, Constitution and Functions of Divisional Executives prepared by a Special Sub-Committee of the Educational Committee of the County Councils' Association. The memorandum said that the Bill was not a device to revive the old Part III authorities. As well as outlining the powers and duties of the new executives, it was envisaged that the new scheme would provide scope for local interest and initiative. Furthermore, it was suggested that "Special provision should be made for the inclusion of women as members of Divisional Executives."

¹⁵ Elementary Education Sub-Committee, 2 February 1944; Minute No. 464.

¹⁶ Stockton-on-Tees having a population of 67,722 and Stanley U.D. a school roll of 7,605 on 31 March 1939 and thus meeting the criteria for excepted status. However, the latter chose not to exercise its right and did not apply for exception.

Such fears were not without justification. By the end of 1944 the Authority had received a number of letters from the Ministry asking for its opinion on requests they had received from the Borough of Jarrow, Felling Urban District Council, Hartlepool Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to be excepted from any scheme of divisional administration made by the Authority. Not surprisingly, the Authority's reply to each letter stated that in its opinion the application should not be granted.¹⁷

The Education Committee was also concerned at the increased powers of the Minister. Following close and on-going consultation with the County Councils' Association, the Association of Education Committees and the Association of Municipal Corporations, the view was that, "these provisions place the local education authority too much in the hands of the Minister and that there should at all events be an appeal to Parliament, and it is accordingly suggested that, if the authority are dissatisfied with the Minister's Order, they should be entitled to ask that the Order be laid before Parliament with power for either House to annul it."¹⁸

Another major worry was that there would not be enough time to meet the requirements of the new legislation. Thus there was a plea from the Authority for

County of Durham Education Committee, Interim Report of the Director of Education, Education Bill, 1943, p. 9.

¹⁷ Eventually only Stockton-on-Tees and Easington gained excepted district status.

¹⁸ Elementary Education Sub-Committee, 11 February 1944; Minute No. 476.

the government to distribute the new regulations as soon as possible so that the Education Committee, and especially its architects, could have sufficient time to examine its schools before the date by which they were required to submit their development plans to the government.

Less than six months after his first Interim Report, Director of Education Tilley, who had had his contract with the County extended so that he could oversee the far-reaching changes implicit in the 1944 Act, laid a second document before the Education Committee. In his opening remarks he stated that as there was little chance of any material alteration to the structure of the Bill before it finally reached the statute book (by this stage it had passed its third reading), "little purpose would be served by my offering opinions and comments on what will become a statute in a very short time."¹⁹ However what followed was no mere catalogue of the alterations and additions. In a list of changes to the Bill, Tilley managed to convey his opinion very clearly and in particular his concern about the increased powers of central government. Two alterations and four additions to the Bill illustrate the point that, like the present day, the 1940s too were a time of political conflict. Education, unfortunately, has often been the battleground on which the struggle between central and local government has taken place.

When reporting on alterations to the proposed change of title of the President of Board of Education to Minister of Education, Tilley talked of the new Minister's powers. He quoted selectively the phrase "under his control and direction", and

¹⁹ County of Durham Education Committee, Second Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1944.

commented, quite correctly, that by these words the equal partnership between the Board of Education and the local education authorities had been terminated and the beginnings made for direct central control. Tilley went on to say, "Previously the Local Education Authority might determine its own policy in opposition to the Board of Education by the simple expedient of forgoing Government grant-aid. This option will no longer be possible as all their actions will be controlled and directed by the Minister."²⁰

Another alteration occurred in Clause 82, which dealt with the appointment of the local authorities' chief education officers. The draft Bill suggested that an appointment should be made after consultation with the Minister and after sending him particulars of the person chosen to be appointed. However, this was altered to read that the authority should submit to the Minister the short-list from which the successful applicant would be chosen. Under this new clause the Minister would have the power to remove the name of any person whom he thought unsuitable. "This puts into the hands of the Board of Education a considerable power which, up to the present, had been solely in the hands of the Education Authority."²¹

The various sub-sections of paragraph 2 of Clause 8 of the Bill were concerned with the responsibilities of local authorities in providing primary and secondary schools. The Second Interim Report pointed out that paragraph (b) was added so that the

²⁰ County of Durham Education Committee, Second Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1944.

²¹ County of Durham Education Committee, Second Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1944.

local authorities should have regard "to the expediency of securing that, so far as is compatible with the need for providing efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable expense to the authority, provision is made for enabling pupils to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents." Tilley wrote, "It would not be unreasonable to state that the inclusion of this paragraph is indicative of the spirit of the Government's approach to the Bill and to its method of presentation to the House. It breathes a spirit of unbounded optimism theoretically democratic but practically almost incapable of solution administratively if the paragraph is to be taken at its apparent face value especially if the provisos so carefully delimited by its phraseology are fully evaluated and the wishes of the parents shew generally a preference for the existing type of Secondary School. The width of meaning for the word expediency alone offers a fairly wide field for the raising of disputes."²²

Another addition was paragraph (2) to Clause 93, the whole of which dealt with the widening of the Minister's powers in cases of default by local authorities, managers or governors. Tilley pointed out that when Butler introduced the clause he stated, "I think it would be wise to have this power so that the Minister may in fact overrule an authority or body of managers if his opinion is contrary to theirs." Mr. Edward Harvey, representing the combined English Universities, asked for an instance of the kind of case in which these powers would be needed. The President of the Board of Education cited the case of the possible dismissal of teachers by managers on grounds that might cause dissatisfaction. Consequently, it was necessary to have

²² County of Durham Education Committee, Second Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1944.

someone else's opinion in case of injustice. Tilley concluded, "The Committee will doubtless note that the power under the clause is very wide."²³

Finally, the First Schedule, Part III, Paragraph 8 (f) of the Bill was concerned with the delegation of the functions of local education authorities to the new divisional executives. Sub-section (f) of Paragraph 8 laid down that every scheme of divisional administration should "provide for the determination of the Minister of any disputes between the local education authority and any divisional executives."

Tilley pointed out that by inference it would seem clear that the Bill envisaged a position where, if the local education authority had no overriding authority to exercise over its own executive, a divisional executive might be virtually autonomous and an excepted divisional executive would be actually autonomous.²⁴

Furthermore, the divisional executive was not defined as a committee or sub-committee but as a body of persons. As the County's elementary provision had been administered for the past forty years by district committees, it was here that the Bill needed the most careful consideration. How far the existing structure needed to be modified would be the main administrative task of the Authority when it came to implementing the Act.

Times of rapid change in education are not confined to the 1980s and 1990s. Tilley and his team, working under the immense pressure of wartime, drew up a County

²³ County of Durham Education Committee, Second Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1944.

²⁴ County of Durham Education Committee, Second Interim Report of the Director of Education. Education Bill, 1944.

timetable to mirror the one envisaged by the Minister. The first step was to prepare arrangements for the approval by the Minister to establish "such education committees as the authority think it expedient to establish for the efficient discharge of their functions with respect to education" and to determine the functions to be exercised by the committee(s). These committees had to be in place by 1 April 1945. Next was the need to prepare schemes of divisional administration, including setting up divisional executives, to provide for the partitioning of the County into divisions "as may be conducive to efficient and convenient administration."²⁵ Following this would be the preparation of a development plan, showing the measures to ensure that there would be sufficient primary and secondary schools available in the County. There would then be a scheme for further education, and finally, as soon after the commencement of Part II of the Act as the Minister considered it practicable, the Authority would have to estimate the immediate and prospective needs for young people's colleges.

The county colleges were intended for the part-time education of those pupils above the age of sixteen who did not remain at secondary school or attend an institution for higher education, such as the University (Preparatory) College suggested by the Central Division's Executive Committee in June 1946.²⁶ According to the government, it was the duty of each Local Education Authority to provide, "adequate facilities for leisure-time occupations, and such organised cultural training

²⁵ The Minister wrote to the Authority on 25 September 1944 requesting that they proceed at once to review the area under their jurisdiction and "to make such schemes of Divisional Administration as they consider expedient."

²⁶ See below, p. 122.

and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements, for any persons over compulsory school age who are able and willing to profit from them.”²⁷ The curriculum was to cater for the individual needs and capacities of its students and was intended for those who neither required nor could profit from a purely technical education.

Tilley envisaged that the setting up of an Education Committee would present little difficulty, for the Bill made no change to existing powers and the present scheme in the County needed only changes in nomenclature to meet the new requirements.

However, the setting up of divisional executives would depend on three main factors. First, it would be necessary to know which councils proposed to apply to become excepted divisions. Secondly, the Education Committee needed to decide on the number and area of the divisional executives. Essentially, it was envisaged that they would conform to the existing boundaries of the district committees, with modifications to meet the inclusion of the former Part III areas. The functions of the new executives were similar to those of the existing district committees, though the question of the appointment and dismissal of teachers needed very careful consideration. The third factor affecting the rate of completion was that the draft development plan had to be discussed with every County district. This proved very time-consuming and involved a huge effort on the part of all those involved.

Despite the potential for momentous change brought about by the 1944 Act, it should not be thought that there was no continuity with the past, nor that the

²⁷ The Education Act, 1944, Part II, Sections 43-46.

reforms of the education system came as a complete surprise. For example, preliminary work had already begun on the draft Development Plan for primary, secondary and further education. For the work on the primary and secondary education plan to proceed, however, it was necessary to discuss the matter with the denominational bodies. Furthermore, the Minister needed to be consulted over the issue of building regulations. It was necessary to link the plan for further education with that for young people's colleges, which appeared largely dependent upon it.

Not least of the changes wrought by the new legislation was the impact on staffing arrangements. Elementary education was decapitated but extended downwards to include the children from 2 to 5 years of age, whilst secondary education included all children over the age of eleven, and not merely those in grammar schools. It was envisaged that further education would incorporate existing continuation work with an extension of the Service of Youth scheme²⁸ and the addition of young people's colleges.

In terms of preparation for the new era, nothing was more significant than a report presented to the Education Committee on 18 October 1944: the annual report for 1943-44 of the Consultative Committee. This Committee was made up of ten local teachers' organizations which, in the light of the significance of their contribution, deserve listing: Durham County Association of the National Union of Teachers;

²⁸ Set up in response to the damaging effects of the war on young people. There was certainly a rise in juvenile delinquency during the war and as a consequence the Board of Education issued Circular 1516 in 1940 entitled, The Challenge of Youth. Durham County Council's Service of Youth Scheme was organized by a Youth Sub-Committee, which reported to the Education Committee via the Higher Education Sub-Committee.



Durham County Federation of Head Teachers' Associations; Durham County Union of Class Teachers; Durham County Uncertificated Assistant Teachers' Association; Durham County Domestic Subjects Teachers' Association; Durham County Handicraft Teachers' Association; Head Masters and Head Mistresses of Durham County Division 1 Secondary Schools²⁹; Assistant Masters in Durham County Division 1 Secondary Schools; and Assistant Mistresses in Durham County Division 1 Secondary Schools. The Committee, chaired by Mr. T.D. Fuge of Usworth Intermediate Council School and a representative of Durham County Association of the National Union of Teachers, had held four meetings during the year. The full report stated:

"The distribution of pupils of the 11 plus age group in the new scheme of Secondary Education, as suggested in the new Education Act, brought forward two major points of view. The Elementary representatives urged the provision of a non-selective multilateral Secondary School for each area (to be attended by all scholars of senior age in the area), due provision being made for their varying abilities and aptitudes. Against this, the Secondary members of the Committee favoured a scheme under which the ablest children (about 25% of the age group) would attend one Secondary School which would provide both "grammar" and "technical" courses, whilst the less able children (the remaining 75%) would attend a separate Secondary School, due provision being made for their varying abilities and

²⁹ Division 1 schools were the grammar schools.

aptitudes. Both the educational and social implications of these two proposals were discussed, but, up to the present, no agreement has been reached.”³⁰

For the first time the concept of multilateralism was considered, albeit in terms of a single school to cater for all ability ranges and not as a combination of schools in a multilateral unit, as was to be outlined in the Development Plan. It is interesting to note that the Consultative Committee was split, with the elementary schools’ representatives voting for local multilateral schools and the secondary members, who of course represented the existing grammar schools, favouring reorganization along bipartite lines. In the light of what followed, Director Tilley clearly favoured the latter.

Tilley’s Final Report on the new reforms was completed by the end of September 1944 and placed before a special meeting of the full Education Committee a month later.³¹ The Report on the 1944 Education Act began with what amounts to a re-affirmation of the principles and contents of the Second Interim Report. There was a more detailed timetable for the implementation of the five parts of the Act, before specific recommendations on the administrative changes necessary to comply with the new legislation. In line with the more positive comments from the County Councils’ Association on the new divisional executive, outlined in the Second Interim Report, Tilley, in a spirit of optimism, was able to say, “It seems desirable that a draft scheme should be prepared as soon as possible in the hope of promoting

³⁰ Education Committee, 18 October 1944; Minute No. 70.

³¹ See Special Meeting of the Education Committee, 25 October 1944; Minute No. 310.

goodwill for without goodwill between the Divisional Executives and the Authority the Act will assuredly founder.”³² As the Report indicated, there was a long tradition of divisional administration dating back to the last great reforms of 1902. It was hoped that the new divisional executives would build on that tradition.

The County was divided into areas whose boundaries were more or less in line with the areas covered by the old district committees. Under the old administrative arrangements the County was split into fifteen districts and six Part III authorities; it was now proposed to reorganize into fourteen divisions.³³ Prior to the 1944 Act, Ferryhill and Chilton were placed in the Spennymoor District; after the Act they were both in the West Central Division.

There is no doubt that the Act led to huge administrative changes in the way education was organized and managed, both at national and local level. In one of his last reports as Director, Tilley reflected on these changes.³⁴ He, not surprisingly, believed the new legislation would add considerably to the workload of the local authority in general. The scheme of divisional administration under the Act would necessitate a measure of decentralisation and mean additional responsibilities

³² County of Durham Education Committee, Education Act, 1944. Report of the Director of Education, 1944.

³³ Durham was one of only seven counties to have divisional executives covering the whole county. The others were Lancashire, Derbyshire, Essex, Glamorganshire, Kent and Surrey.

See Appendices One and Two for the full details of the pre-1944 and post-1944 administrative arrangements.

³⁴ County Council of Durham Education Department, Education Act, 1944. Report of the Director on the Establishment of the Administrative Staff.

for the existing district committees. However, the work at headquarters would be considerably increased by the centralizing sections of the Act.

To summarize, the Education Act of 1944, which, with the exception of Part III dealing with Independent Schools, came into force on 1 April 1945, brought considerable changes in the administrative powers and duties of the local education authority. The most important of these changes were the setting up of a scheme of divisional administration; the duty to provide nursery schools or nursery classes; the establishment of secondary education for all children over the age of 11 years and of primary education for all scholars under that age; the raising of the school leaving age to 15 years, at a date to be determined by the Minister of Education, and later to 16 years; the provision of a scheme for further education including the establishment of county colleges at a date to be determined on the raising of the school leaving age to 15 years; the control and supervision of agricultural education up to farm institute standard; the establishment of a complete scheme for the provision of meals and the taking over of the powers and duties of the Part III educational areas in the geographical county of the Education Committees of Jarrow, Felling, Hebburn, Hartlepool, Durham City and Stockton.

Although the Act did not officially come into effect until April 1945, prior to that date one resolution was passed which showed that the County was keen to start implementing reforms as soon as possible. On 31 January 1945 the Higher Education Sub-Committee authorized the Director to inform the head teachers of County secondary schools that, in accordance with the terms of the new Act,

payment of fees in secondary schools must cease at the end of the present term.³⁵

At a later meeting it was further resolved that schools which were recognized as secondary schools on 31 March 1945 should be designated grammar schools and that the remaining secondary schools should be known as modern schools.³⁶

Whilst there was a great deal of activity both at Shire Hall and in the divisions as the County came to grips with the implementation of the new legislation, there were also more immediate matters to deal with, which one suspects were of more interest to the local population. Thus, the newly constituted Primary Education Sub-Committee³⁷ received a recommendation from the Spennymoor District Sub-Committee, following one of its last meetings,³⁸ that "all departments of the Broom Cottages, Dean Bank and Ferryhill Station County Schools and the East Howle County School be closed on the occasion of the third "VE-DAY" holiday to be organised by the Ferryhill Peace Celebrations Committee, in conjunction with representatives of the workmen of the Mainsforth and Dean and Chapter Collieries, on either 18th June, or 16th July, 1945, subject to the minimum number of required school openings being made by each school during the year." The County

³⁵ Higher Education Sub-Committee, 31 January 1945; Minute No. 399.

³⁶ Higher Education Sub-Committee, 9 May 1945; Minute No. 81.

³⁷ This committee took over from the Elementary Education Sub-Committee on 9 May 1945, the latter having held its last meeting in Shire Hall on Wednesday 11 April 1945.

³⁸ The Spennymoor District Sub-Committee held its last meeting on 4 September 1945 before being replaced by the West Central Divisional Executive.

magnanimously agreed, subject to 400 attendances being made by the schools concerned during the year ending 31 July 1945.³⁹

Of more long-term importance to the future of the County's children was the Education Committee's Quarterly Report, presented to the County Council on 7 November 1945. The Committee considered a report of the Director entitled the *Basic Principles underlying the Development Plan*, and authorized him to prepare the Plan based on the principles laid down in the final paragraph of his report. What resulted was to have a crucial bearing on the development of education in County Durham for almost the next thirty years:

"A. No definite fixed principle or principles should be adopted to apply to the whole of the area.

B. Subject to A above -

(1) Nursery Education should be provided in nursery classes where possible not excluding the provision of nursery schools where the circumstances of the locality seem to make them desirable or necessary.

(2) Multilateral schools are not suitable to the County though there may be densely populated areas where they might be provided. If so the minimum size should normally be an eight-form entry school but other factors must be considered.

(3) Small multilateral schools should never be provided."⁴⁰

³⁹ Primary Education Sub-Committee, 4 July 1945; Minute No. 157.

As recorded in the Dean Bank Council School Boys Log Book, p.157, the Peace Celebration Committee held the celebrations on 17 July at the Dean Bank Recreation Ground. The Colliery and school remained closed for the day. "In the marching, races and competitions the children were controlled by their teachers."

The response from the divisional executives was swift. The Central Divisional Executive, which included Durham City, met on 20 November 1945. As a result of its meeting the Education Committee was asked to reconsider the Director's Report on the *Basic Principles underlying the Development Plan*, as the Central Divisional Executive believed that the best interests of the community as a whole, and of the children in particular, could be more adequately served through the institution of multilateral schools. The Primary Education Sub-Committee received the minutes of the Division without comment.⁴¹

It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of the Preliminary Draft Development Plan. As the Director himself stated, "A decision made to-day will determine the shape of things to come in this County probably for the next century."⁴²

The Draft Plan began with a detailed outline of the requirements of the 1944 Act including the all-important Section 7, which set out the stages and purpose of the statutory system of education thus:

"The statutory system of public education shall be organised in three progressive stages to be known as primary education, secondary education, and further

⁴⁰ Special Meeting of the Education Committee, 17 October 1945; Minute No. 80.

⁴¹ Primary Education Sub-Committee, 5 December 1945; Minute No. 320.

⁴² County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 11.

education; and it shall be the duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area."⁴³

In addition, Section 8 insisted that every local education authority had a duty to make sure that there were primary and secondary schools in its area "sufficient in number, character, and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities, and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their respective needs." Furthermore, "in fulfilling their duties under this section, a local education authority shall, in particular, have regard - (a) to the need for securing that primary and secondary education are provided in separate schools; ..."⁴⁴ This latter stipulation was, of course, of specific interest to the scholars of Ferryhill and Chilton who were attending all-age schools.

There followed an outline of the requirements of a local authority's development plan, which had to include details of County schools, voluntary schools, nursery provision, boarding schools, further education and provision for pupil transport. In

⁴³ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 1.

⁴⁴ The Education Act, 1944; Part II, Section 8.

addition, the plan required an estimate of costs based on a survey of the premises covered by the L.E.A.

By any standards the task of re-organization was colossal. However, the government was keen to have the job done as quickly as possible. Circular 28 of the Ministry of Education asked for the Plan, submitted in instalments, to be completed before 1 April 1946. However, the Ministry quickly realized that such a time-scale was unrealistic and so issued a subsequent Circular, which stated that L.E.A.s could request an extension.⁴⁵ In addition, the Minister understood that exact costings were very difficult to obtain, and that L.E.A.s would find it difficult to commit themselves as far into the future as their plans required. Again, the Ministry adopted a realistic approach and said that only provisional proposals need be submitted.⁴⁶

The Durham Preliminary Draft Plan was issued towards the end of April 1946 and consisted of 137 pages, of which all but 11 were a series of tables outlining the details of the proposed educational re-organization district by district.⁴⁷ Each district also had an alternative scheme to take into account calls for the establishing

⁴⁵ This was Circular No. 90, Development Plans: Date of Submission and Form of Plans, in response to which Tilley requested a postponement until 31 March 1947. One of the many benefits would be to give time for local consultation and for the County Architect to arrange for the preparation of surveys of existing buildings (so great was this task that the County had to commission outside help.)

⁴⁶ See Circular 28, Preparation of Development Plans, paragraph 3.

⁴⁷ The excepted district of Stockton-on-Tees was, of course, omitted from the Plan. Under the scheme of divisional administration approved by the Minister of Education, the plan for Stockton-on-Tees had to be prepared by its own Committee for Education and submitted, after consultation with the Durham County Council, through the Authority to the Minister.

of multilateral schools. Throughout the Draft Plan the proposals were based on the actual and projected school population by year group.⁴⁸ These figures assumed that the school population would remain fairly static for the next ten years and that any increase would be due to the raising of the school leaving age.

In a report at the beginning of the Preliminary Draft Plan, Tilley gave three main reasons why it had taken so long to publish the proposals. Firstly, there was the general difficulty of producing such a detailed plan in such a short space of time. Secondly, there was the problem of deciding on a policy of pupil transport especially with regard to direct grant and independent schools.⁴⁹ Finally, and fundamentally important to the core of this study, he stated, "there has arisen on the part of certain Divisional Executives and some outside bodies a marked preference for the principle of multilateralism to be applied throughout the area."⁵⁰ As a consequence, an "Alternative Scheme" for the provision of secondary schools was drawn up and included in the Provisional Draft Plan.

The plans had, of course, to be discussed by all the interested parties, and in a classic piece of under-statement the Director commented that, "In view of the known divergence of views it may be well be that consultations may prove

⁴⁸ See Appendix Three.

⁴⁹ A plan was worked out for this. See Minutes of Primary Education Sub-Committee, 30 January 1946 and 12 February 1946 for further details.

⁵⁰ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 4.

protracted before agreement is finally reached.”⁵¹ Tilley, of course, knew that there was a strong body of opinion in favour of adopting multilateral schools and he lodged his objection from the start: “If the principle of multilateralism is adopted there will need to be some revision of the estimates of capital expenditure which have been based on the principle of bilateralism or selection.... I much doubt whether any marked difference will be found in the next two or three years but this will depend on the rate of progress made in building. This is important in considering multilateral organisation as progress cannot be made gradually; it is necessary that the multilateral schools shall be built and available for occupation before the existing grammar and modern schools can be emptied of their pupils.”⁵² The implication was clear: the old schools could not be used. New schools would have to be built, and not in a phased building programme. On a given day all the pupils of secondary age in the County would move into their purpose-built multilateral schools. That obviously was not a realistic aim. Ignoring the ideological arguments, any plan to adopt a multilateral schools programme would founder on the rock of economic expediency.

In 1970 the Northern Economic Planning Council published a report on education and noted: “Local education authorities in the North have struggled valiantly to put their houses in order; but many of them (especially in the North East) are still suffering from the aftermath of the 1920s and 1930s, when Public Assistance

⁵¹ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 7.

⁵² County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 8.

expenditure imposed such heavy demands on the very limited resources available, that new school building was ruled out almost entirely. The end of the last war found these authorities starting the task of reconstruction from a base-line well behind many other parts of the country. This disparity has been perpetuated by methods of financing, as between Government and local authorities, which have been so finely tailored to current needs as to allow little scope for making up lost ground.”⁵³

In 1946 Tilley's Alternative Scheme provided for thirty-four new schools to be built in the County area. No local authority in the land could afford to build so many new schools, especially with the legacy of under-funding bequeathed to County Durham by the inter-war years. Thus, the result was the emergence of a compromise plan, leading to the founding of multilateral units.

Tilley referred back to his report on the *Basic Principles underlying the Development Plan*, copies of which were distributed to the relevant education committees at Shire Hall and the newly formed divisional executives. In the Preliminary Draft Plan he reiterated that no fixed principle of reorganization should be adopted. Realism and pragmatism, not dogma and ideology, would be the guiding influences. Though multilateral schools were declared *unsuitable*, if they were of an appropriate size they would not be ruled out entirely. Selection was one basic tenet reaffirmed by Tilley, though subject to the following conditions:

⁵³ Quoted in K.J. Harrop, An Educational Profile of the Northern Region in Comparison with Other Regions, Part I: Schools, p. 8.

“(i) The percentage of scholars suitable for advanced secondary education is 25.

(ii) The general provision of separate grammar and technical schools is not desirable.

(iii) Sufficient grammar schools to accommodate the whole of the 25% should be provided. These grammar schools should include technical education in their curriculum and should provide equally for boys and girls either in mixed or separate sex schools.

(iv) Some existing grammar schools should be enlarged where possible consistent with the principle of grouping modern and grammar schools in an area under one body of governors.

(v) There should where possible be at least two grammar schools to each division.

Where two grammar schools are not possible the principle of modern-cum-technical provision should be considered and where this meets with difficulty the principle of multilateralism should be considered as a special case having regard to all the circumstances of the division.”⁵⁴

Clearly, in the light of what was to follow, point (iv) is crucial in presaging the organization of secondary education into multilateral units.

The final section of the report in the Preliminary Draft Plan was largely devoted to a justification of the rejection of multilateral schools in favour of multilateral units.

One practical objection to multilateral schools was the problem of purchasing suitable locations to site the new huge buildings. Under the new building

⁵⁴ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 9.

regulations, the Ministry suggested that a school of 1,200 pupils would need a site of 44 acres, whilst one with 1,800 pupils would require 66 acres. Experience had taught that finding and purchasing suitable sites was a major obstacle to building new facilities. Indeed, Tilley pointed out that delays of several years were not infrequent. "Probably no single item in school provision has caused more delay than the acquisition of sites. It may be said that the larger the proposed site was the longer was the delay and the greater the difficulty experienced".⁵⁵ Nearly eighty per cent of multilateral schools outlined in the Alternative Scheme would require sites of at least 44 acres, and given that these schools had to be built *before* this type of reorganization could take place, there was no hope of such a scheme being adopted by the County.

Tilley outlined the details of the rapprochement between the two opposing ideologies: multilateral schools and bipartism. In this he claimed he had the full support of all the educational officers of the headquarter's staff, including the school inspectors: "I have been indeed fortunate in finding complete theoretical agreement."⁵⁶ From two differing standpoints one masterfully worked compromise was fashioned, by "advising that the grammar-cum-technical school together with the modern schools of the same contributory area be regarded as a multilateral unit with the head teachers of the schools in the unit working as a joint committee of

⁵⁵ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 10.

⁵⁶ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 11.

head teachers.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, though the Director was himself in favour of a diagnostic examination, places at the different schools in the unit could be allocated by a committee of head teachers, just as any setting or streaming within a multilateral school was at the discretion of the head teacher. The rationale behind such a policy was quite convincing. However, one suspects that even more important than the ideological compromise was the fact that by organizing schools into multilateral units, there would be no need to erect so many huge new buildings. Furthermore, the present school buildings could be retained. An additional financial advantage, though obviously not on the same scale as the saving to be gained from a reduced school building programme, was that of reducing the cost of pupils’ travelling expenses. Tilley envisaged that if his recommendations were accepted there would be an annual cost to the County for pupils’ transport of £40,000, whereas if the Alternative Plan was adopted the cost would rise dramatically to £160,000.

In presenting a further argument against the adoption of multilateral schools Tilley cited the Ministry of Education’s own views, as set out in Circular No. 73, *The Organisation of Secondary Education*: “Each individual secondary school should be suitable in size to permit of a satisfactory social and corporate life, and there is not sufficient experience at present to justify a general reversal of present practice, which for this reason does not favour very large schools. The Minister is therefore of the opinion that the premises of large schools for 1,200 pupils or more should at this stage be regarded and planned as experimental and capable of modification if

⁵⁷ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 10.

experience of their working shows that organisation in separate units is desirable."⁵⁸ From this Tilley concluded that even if multilateral schools were to be adopted they would be in the form of a *violent* educational experiment and, whilst claiming to have a great deal of sympathy with the multilateral approach on an ideological level, the risk was too great in practice.

"The practical difficulties of finance and transport, the time factor together with the fact that in my view the educational advantages are problematic and are more apparent than real, lead me to hesitate to recommend such a violent experimental change especially having regard to the safeguards which the Minister evidently intends to hedge round such an experiment."⁵⁹

With a sense of equanimity, Tilley also sought to reject the tripartism of the Norwood Report. Whilst he conceded that there was a considerable weight of academic opinion behind the idea of three separate types of schools - grammar, technical and modern - his position was strengthened by the support he received from the members of the Education Committee and his inspectors. However, he did admit that by suggesting the setting up of multilateral units the County ran the risk of falling foul of the Ministry, which threatened that "Any proposals to deal with technical education alongside 'grammar' or 'modern' education in the same school will be carefully scrutinized to ensure that there is adequate scope for development

⁵⁸ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 10.

⁵⁹ Tilley in the County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 10.

and experiment. Proposals involving a 'technical' stream within a grammar school, for instance, by the mere addition of one or more practical rooms are not likely to be approved."⁶⁰

Despite these misgivings Tilley, in what was to be his last and certainly greatest contribution to the education of children in County Durham, was determined to press on with his proposed secondary reorganization into multilateral units. The opposition was swift to organize. To the disapproval of the Central Divisional Executive to the *Basic Principles underlying the Development Plan* given in November 1945, was added the opprobrium of the majority of the other divisional executives.

Thus, at a meeting of the North Central Divisional Executive, held on 22 July 1946, at which the Preliminary Draft Development Plan and its alternative was submitted, there were a number of resolutions passed regarding secondary re-organization which made the views of the Executive very clear. Multilateral schools, not units, were the preferred option. The Executive believed that secondary education "of varying types should be provided for all the senior children of any one district in a single multilateral secondary school." The Executive was thus unable to approve the proposals in the Preliminary Plan, which planned for two types of secondary school catering respectively for 25% and 75% of the senior children in the district to

⁶⁰ Ministry of Education, Circular No. 90, Development Plans: Date of Submission and Form of Plans.

be covered, namely Chester-le-Street, Birtley and Pelton.⁶¹ It was argued that the provision of secondary modern and grammar schools would involve making a decision on the *potentialities and aptitudes* of pupils at the age of eleven. This was deemed far too early, and whilst not stated directly, but inferred, such a decision should not be made at all. The Executive was clear that a secondary school consisting wholly of pupils who had failed to secure a place at another *selective* secondary school would be regarded by pupils and parents alike as of "inferior quality and status."⁶² The members of the Executive were equally clear about the notion of transfer between schools - the very essence of the multilateral system. In this respect they stated that the "later transfer of "misfits" from one type of school (held to be superior) to another type (held to be inferior) would be more difficult and unpleasant than an internal transfer from one type of education to another inside a single multilateral school." Furthermore, "It is socially most undesirable that pupils of varying backgrounds, capacities and interests should be entirely segregated from each other during their secondary school years. A new brand of class distinction will not necessarily be any better than the old."⁶³ The solution was obvious: "The single multilateral school undoubtedly presents the simplest and most

⁶¹ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

The proposals they were rejecting are on pages 34 ad 38 of the Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946.

⁶² Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

⁶³ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

effective method of ensuring that all secondary pupils will enjoy equality of school conditions and amenities.”⁶⁴

Despite being clearly in favour of multilateral schools, the North Central Divisional Executive was unable to support the proposals set out in the Alternative Plan either. This was not in the ideological terms so forcefully expressed about the main Plan, but because of the proposed size of the schools. The recommendation for Chester-le-Street was for a fifteen-form entry multilateral school to be built, catering for approximately 2,400 pupils; whilst the needs of pupils in the Executive’s second district, Birtley and Pelton, were to be met by a twelve-form entry school accommodating 1,900 children. Both schools were described as being “unduly large” and involving “much unnecessary travelling and other inconvenience to the pupils without any compensating advantage.” Furthermore, “such schools would present unduly great difficulties in proper supervision and organisation.”⁶⁵ There would also be problems finding suitable sites for the new schools, which required 88 and 73 acres respectively.

In the Executive’s view the solution was clear: “a multilateral secondary school of 750 pupils (i.e. having a five form entry) may be regarded as of a quite satisfactory minimum size, sufficient to provide effectively the necessary variety of courses to fit the several abilities and aptitudes of all the pupils; and that in this Division no school

⁶⁴ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

⁶⁵ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

needs to exceed 1100 pupils.”⁶⁶ In order to cater for the needs of over four thousand children in small mixed multilateral secondary schools, the members of the Executive proposed dividing the North Central Division into five districts instead of the two given in the Preliminary Draft Development Plan.

Just as the North Central Division voted for the multilateral school option, so too did the East Central Division at its meetings in July and September 1946; the Northern, Eastern and Tyneside Divisions followed suit in September and the North Western in November.⁶⁷ Indeed, the Eastern Division suggested that the number of multilateral schools should be doubled.⁶⁸ In the same vein, in September the Stanley Division voted for multilateral schools “of smaller capacity than those proposed in the Director’s Report,”⁶⁹ whilst the Central Divisional Executive reaffirmed its support for multilateral schools at a meeting on 17 June 1946. The Executive pointed out that it favoured small, five-form entry multilateral schools catering for 750 pupils in each school. Furthermore, it insisted that from the very outset it had “repeatedly declared in favour of establishing the Common (multilateral) Secondary School for all children beyond the Primary stage.” As a result of voting for the small multilateral school principle, the Central Divisional Executive rejected the scheme outlined in the Alternative Plan, namely to establish

⁶⁶ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

⁶⁷ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 26 November 1946; Minute Nos. 370, 373, 381, 384.

⁶⁸ See article in The Northern Echo on 19 September 1946, where it was reported that the support for multilateral schools was unanimous.

⁶⁹ Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September 1946; Minute No. 210.

two large multilateral schools to serve the whole of its administrative district. It was recommended that instead of two schools for 1,400 pupils in the western area and 2,260 pupils in the city and eastern area, the division should be divided into four contributory districts and that in each of the four districts a mixed multilateral secondary school be provided. Here too, huge secondary schools were considered excessively large for proper supervision. Thus, a seven-form entry school for 1,050 pupils was regarded as the maximum size for reasonable control and organization. These two factors were cited again and again by those who, whilst favouring the multilateral schools, were worried about their size.

Interestingly, at the same meeting, the Central Division put forward a scheme for establishing what it called a University (Preparatory) College to provide “adequate facilities for increasing the numbers of highly trained, fully qualified personnel required for the Professional and Technical services generally and for the Teaching Profession in particular.”⁷⁰ To maintain high academic standards the Central Division recommended the setting up of *special colleges*, including one in or near Durham City, for all 16-18 year olds who intended to proceed to higher education and enter the universities. These colleges, which it envisaged as partly residential, were, in the Executive’s view, necessary to provide “specialised progressive education intermediate to the Secondary School stage (16 years) and the University entrance at 18 years.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

⁷¹ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September 1946; Minute No. 210.

In common with the executives outlined above, the North Eastern Division considered its region as “a suitable area for experiment in the establishment of multilateral schools for secondary education”.⁷² *The Northern Echo* reported in some detail on the meeting held in Sunderland on 17 September.⁷³ Under the headline *Disappointment at Lack of Multilateral Schools in County Durham*, the article reported that teacher members were unhappy that the County’s Education Committee did not plan to *experiment* with multilateral schools. “Mr. H.F. Lee, headmaster of Seaham Modern School, said that he was bitterly disappointed that a progressive County like Durham had made no provision for such schools. Small multilateral schools had been successfully run and they now had the opportunity to allay that ever present suspicion that some children were getting opportunities as opposed to others. There should be no difficulty in getting sites for such schools.”⁷⁴

It is, of course, not unusual to find such views expressed by teachers in secondary modern schools throughout the country during the on-going debate about selective and non-selective education. However, it is important to note that when over a quarter of a century later the proposals were put forward to close down their school

⁷² Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 26 November, 1946; Minute No. 368.

⁷³ The North Eastern Executive had already agreed to adopt this position at a meeting on 9 September, 1946.

⁷⁴ The Northern Echo, 18 September 1946.

in favour of the comprehensive school, teachers in Broom Secondary Modern were generally against the scheme.⁷⁵

It must not be thought that all the divisional executives were opposed to the idea of selective education. Two were divided: the Western and South Western.⁷⁶ The former was in favour of the Plan for Weardale and the Alternative Plan for Crook, whilst the South Western Divisional Executive reported that, after a prolonged discussion at two meetings held in July 1946, they were still divided on the question of multilateralism. There was, however, a general belief that both forms of education, selective and non-selective, could be provided in the area on the basis of the distribution of its population: the essentially rural Barnard Castle and urban areas of Bishop Auckland and Shildon.

The South Western Executive's compromise was that a new grammar school for girls should be built at Barnard Castle, with accommodation for boarders from the more remote parts of Teesdale. It pointed out that there was already a boys' grammar school, and having boys and girls board together was undesirable.⁷⁷ On the other hand, in the more densely populated areas of Bishop Auckland and Shildon, *small* multilateral schools should be provided. In addition to these recommendations, the Executive held the view that, "technical instruction of the

⁷⁵ See Chapter Five.

⁷⁶ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee 26 November 1946; Minute Nos. 376 and 378.

⁷⁷ There was also a suggestion that the County might consider co-operating with North Riding Local Education Authority over the provision of secondary education in the area.

required kind might well be allied to Modern rather than Grammar School education." This latter point, whilst justified in the recommendations as aiming to widen the scope of the modern schools, hinted at the belief that a technical education was inferior to the type of education promulgated in the grammar schools - hence the use of the phrase technical *instruction*.

Thus, excluding Stockton, which became an excepted district, nine executives were clearly opposed to selective education, and two others were split on the issue.

However, there were two districts in favour of the grammar technical school option: the West Central Division, which included Ferryhill and Chilton⁷⁸, and the South Eastern Division.

The West Central Executive, after postponing a vote at its meeting in July, met on 3 September 1946 to consider the Preliminary Draft Development Plan. The meeting resolved that the selective basis of secondary school provision be recommended and that the modern and grammar schools proposals be approved. In effect, this would mean the building of three new secondary modern schools: a four-form entry school near Ferryhill, a three-form entry school near Chilton Buildings and a three-form entry school in the Trimdon area. These would cater for seventy-five per cent of pupils and take children from twelve primary feeder schools. To complement these

⁷⁸ The West Central Division was split up into three geographical areas: Ferryhill, Spennymoor and Coxhoe. Later, in the 1949 Plan, they were divided into two Reorganisation Areas: No. 1 made up of Spennymoor, Coxhoe and Cornforth; No. 2 made up of Ferryhill, Trimdon and Fishburn. See Appendix Four.

modern schools there was to be a new four-form entry grammar technical school near Ferryhill catering for the top twenty-five per cent of the ability range.⁷⁹

The selection of just the top twenty-five per cent for grammar technical schools, a figure which occurs throughout the Draft Development Plan, was challenged by the South Eastern Division.⁸⁰ This executive, whilst approving of the Plan in principle, did not accept that only twenty-five per cent of the school population was capable of benefiting from what it calls “a more advanced type of education.” It believed that a figure of above thirty per cent was more appropriate, claiming at a later meeting in September that, “the proposal to provide two-form entry Grammar-Technical schools to be educationally unsound”⁸¹.

The West Central Division suggested one minor modification to the County’s proposals: pupils from East Howle should be allowed to attend the proposed new modern school in the Ferryhill area and not the one near Chilton Buildings, which was considered too far away. Time was of the essence. The Executive urged the Education Committee to give the West Central Division top priority in any new building programme, reminding the Director that there were no secondary modern schools in the area. Ferryhill and Chilton were by no means unique in this respect and, following a report by the County Architect, Mr. Willey, a deputation went to

⁷⁹ See Appendix Six.

⁸⁰ For details of this South Eastern Divisional Executive’s meeting on 1 August 1945 see Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

⁸¹ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 26 November 1946; Minute No. 383.

meet the Minister of Education to plea for more time and money to implement the requirements of the 1944 Act.⁸²

In addition to the pleas for new secondary schools, the Division also approved the proposals set out for further education, that is to say for the establishment of county colleges in Ferryhill and Spennymoor.⁸³ When discussing the introduction of county colleges, which were a revision of the continuation school of the Fisher Act of 1918, the East Central Division recommended that they should be provided for the teaching of arts and crafts, music and drama.⁸⁴

In response to the 1944 Act, the County Education Committee had conducted a preliminary survey and drawn up an outline scheme for further education in the County which included provision for county colleges. It was estimated that 516 students would benefit from this form of education in the West Central Division, 180 of whom would be catered for at Ferryhill. The suggested curriculum was for engineering, mining and general courses for boys and for commercial and general courses for girls. In addition, twenty students from the county colleges at both

⁸² This was in response to Minute No. 267 (9) (8) of the School Buildings Sub-Committee, dated 25 September, 1946.

The deputation, made up of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, plus the Director of Education, the County Architect and Alderman J. Alderson was supported by the Northern group of Labour M.Ps.

⁸³ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, pp. 72-73 and pp. 76-77. The Alternative Plan for the area around Ferryhill was for a 14-form entry multilateral school for 2,075 pupils.

⁸⁴ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, 25 September, 1946; Minute No. 210.

Ferryhill and Spennymoor would have the opportunity to enrol for an agricultural course at either Houghall College in Durham or at Barnard Castle.⁸⁵

Despite the fact that in March 1944 the Board of Education had approved the establishment of junior technical schools for the building industry at Bishop Auckland and Stockton,⁸⁶ and following a report by the Director in June 1944 on training in the coal mines, Dean Bank Council School had become a centre for mining education.⁸⁷ Thus, the broader proposals for county colleges were doomed. Three main reasons bedevilled the expansion of secondary education, not only in County Durham but throughout the country in the post-war years: economic problems, a shortage of teachers and a dearth of suitable buildings.⁸⁸

With regard to the teacher shortfall, all local authorities had been asked to respond to the Board of Education Circular 1654, which asked them to submit plans to deal

⁸⁵ For further details see County Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Survey and Outline Scheme of Further Education; Appendix I: Scheme for the Establishment of County Colleges; Appendix II: County Colleges - Suggested Courses.

⁸⁶ See Higher Education Sub-Committee, 5 April 1944; Minute No. 13.

⁸⁷ There were three centres in the area: Bishop Auckland Grammar School, Spennymoor Alderman Wraith School and Dean Bank. Each course cost 2/6 per student and consisted of fourteen meetings of three hours each on a Saturday morning. The students studied mining, mining science, hygiene and first aid. See Higher Education Sub-Committee, 14 June 1944; Minute No. 117.

⁸⁸ For a succinct treatment of the county colleges and their proposed curricula, outlined in the Ministry of Education's Pamphlet No. 3, Youth's Opportunity, 1945; see S.J. Curtis, History of Education in Great Britain, p. 388 and pp. 621-623.

with an expected crisis.⁸⁹ Tilley believed that whilst teachers were most likely to come from the existing secondary schools in the County, that is to say the grammar schools, nevertheless, what he called post-primary or senior schools could also have a part to play. Thus, he suggested that special classes should be set up from which *suitable* pupils might be transferred to secondary school at sixteen. He realized that such classes could only be established if there was a demand for them and if schools could find suitable accommodation for the increased numbers. However, he stressed that “while the aim is to secure potential teachers, no child will be under any obligation to enter the teaching profession, though advantage has been taken of a Special course.”⁹⁰

To assess the viability of such a plan, Tilley conducted an audit to see how many pupils were likely to take advantage of the scheme and whether or not they could be accommodated. The survey revealed that there was a genuine demand for the new proposals. To meet the needs of the pupils and the teaching profession, over six hundred places were to be made available in twenty-one secondary schools.⁹¹ The pupils, aged 13+ and 14+, were to be allowed to take a modified form of the Occasional Admission Examination to County Grammar Schools. Whilst it is perhaps unwise to place too much emphasis on the broader significance of this plan, which was aimed at coping with teacher shortages, it is nevertheless worth pointing

⁸⁹ Circular 1654, Extension of School Life in Suitable Cases and the Supply of Teachers, was first submitted to the Higher Education Sub-Committee on 14 June 1944.

⁹⁰ Higher Education Sub-Committee, 5 July 1944; Minute No. 160.

⁹¹ Higher Education Sub-Committee, 13 September 1944; Minute No. 207.

out that the idea of transfer implicit in the scheme underpinned the whole notion of a multilateral unit.

In 1946 members of the Education Committee attended a meeting of the Durham County Association of the National Union of Teachers to discuss the question of comprehensive education, to which the teachers were committed. Of this meeting, G.H. Metcalfe, the Director of Education who eventually presided over comprehensivization, said, "The Committee listened to what they had to say and then gently reminded them that the formulation of educational policy was the prerogative of the Education Committee."⁹² As George Metcalfe went on to point out, it was not that the Committee was vehemently opposed to comprehensive schools⁹³, it was the size that they were wary of.

With the major exception of a consideration of academic achievement, the resolutions of the North Central Divisional Executive outlined above encapsulate the main elements of the debate that emerged as a result of the 1944 Education Act. The battle lines were drawn and the issues were clear. On the one hand was a system which involved sending children to either grammar schools for the elite or secondary moderns for the also-rans. This was socially divisive and based on diagnosis at eleven years of age, which was at best taken too early in a child's life. Transfer between the two types of school would be *difficult and unpleasant*. On the other hand there was the multilateral school: socially acceptable, but too large

⁹² G.H. Metcalfe, County Durham, in S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 41.

and impossible to organize and supervise. There was a third choice: the small multilateral school. The problem here was centred on cost: who could afford to build so many new schools? Certainly not County Durham. There was, however, yet another solution - the fourth alternative: the multilateral unit.

2. THE FOURTH ALTERNATIVE: THE MULTILATERAL UNIT TRIUMPHANT

It is virtually impossible to believe that Tilley, despite all the consultations and phrases to the contrary, such as those found in the *Basic Principles Underlying the Development Plan* insisting that “no definite fixed principles should be adopted,” had not made up his mind about the way secondary education in the County should be organized. At the latest his mind was made up by the time he placed his *Principles* before the Education Committee in October 1945: and one suspects the outline of the Development Plan was in place well before that date.⁹⁴ Certainly, Tilley argued strongly in the Draft Development Plan for the adoption of the multilateral unit. Furthermore, when one looks at the Alternative Plan, the suggestion was for huge multilateral schools with populations well above the thousand or so favoured by the Ministry, as outlined in Circular No. 73. Was he suggesting an alternative scheme to placate those who favoured non-selective

⁹³ In this case, the terms multilateral school and comprehensive school are inter-changeable.

⁹⁴ In the minutes of a Buildings Sub-Committee meeting held on 21 April 1948 there a reference to the purchase of land in 1939 for “a senior school in Ferryhill.”

multilateral schools, whilst believing that the Minister was almost certain to reject it? Obviously, the claims for small multilateral schools could be rejected on economic grounds alone. It can also be argued that Tilley was not, in the true sense of the word, presenting two plans with the option of choosing either one or the other. He spoke of comparing the *effect* of the Alternative Plan as opposed to the *original suggestions*. It is clear from reading the passage that Tilley was presenting one plan, not two.⁹⁵

Just as Thomas Tilley had his reasons for not adopting the multilateral school principle, so too did his successor as Director of Education, Anthony Denholm. Denholm, who took office in September 1946, had been Tilley's Deputy, and he followed his predecessor's basic philosophy and added another economic argument of his own. Not only could the County not afford to build so many small multilateral schools, but there was clearly a need to improve technical education in the region. If, the new Director argued, the North-East was to regain its position as a first-class industrial force, it was necessary to provide an adequate number of schools and colleges with a technical bias. Hence his support not only for the junior technical schools, but also for the grammar technical schools which were at the heart of the multilateral units. Furthermore, as the local press reported, "other schools could be grouped round these grammar-technical schools and there could be committees of headmasters to deal with transfers from one type to the other."⁹⁶

⁹⁵ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 4.

At a special meeting of the Primary Sub-Committee, held on 26 November 1946, there was what must have been a lively discussion. All were aware that only two of the thirteen divisions were not in favour of multilateral schools, the West Central and South Eastern. Just to make sure that there was no doubting the feelings of the majority of the divisions, at the meeting the Committee received resolutions passed by nine divisional executives. Eight were in favour of multilateral schools: even the ninth division, the South Western, was divided. Yet, with this as the background, the Primary Sub-Committee made three crucial recommendations: firstly, that in general secondary education should be provided in grammar technical and modern schools; secondly, that in highly industrialised areas secondary education should be provided in three types of schools, grammar, technical and modern; and finally, that the schools be grouped into multilateral units.⁹⁷ These recommendations were adopted and placed before County Council for ratification on 19 February 1947.⁹⁸ Thus, the *Basic Principles* behind Tilley's original Draft Development Plan of 1946 were to be followed to the letter.

For the pupils of Ferryhill and Chilton the terms of the Preliminary Draft Development Plan would mean great changes, whichever scheme was adopted. The West Central Division was split into three areas, Spennymoor, Ferryhill and

⁹⁶ The Northern Echo, 18 September 1946.

⁹⁷ Special Meeting of the Primary Sub Committee, 26 November 1946; Minute No. 368.

⁹⁸ See Special Meeting of the Education Committee, 10 February 1947; Minute No. 123 for a draft copy of the Director's quarterly report.

Coxhoe.⁹⁹ For the Ferryhill area it was estimated that the number of children proceeding to secondary education from the feeder primary schools would be 2,075, of whom 1,555 would attend three secondary modern schools and 520 the grammar technical school. There were twelve feeder primary schools, reduced from fourteen by the amalgamation of boys' and girls' departments at Dean Bank and Chilton Buildings, split into three groups:

1. Merrington, Broom Cottages and Dean Bank: 600 of whose pupils (75%) would attend the proposed new four-form entry modern school near Ferryhill.

2. Ferryhill Station, Chilton Buildings, Rushyford, East Howle and Bradbury and Morden: 472 of whose pupils (75%) would attend the proposed new three-form entry modern school near Chilton Buildings.

3. East Hetton, Fishburn, Trimdon Grange and Trimdon Parochial: 483 of whose pupils (75%) would attend the proposed new three-form entry modern school in the Trimdon area.

The remaining 520 pupils would attend the proposed new four-form entry grammar technical school near Ferryhill.

The Alternative Scheme was for all 2,075 of the children from the feeder primary schools to attend a fourteen-form entry multilateral school to be built in the Ferryhill

⁹⁹ See Appendices Five, Six and Seven.

area.¹⁰⁰ This latter was one of the larger multilateral schools considered in the Alternative Scheme and is clearly within the minimum eight-form entry guidelines outlined in Tilley's *Basic Principles*; and outside the Ministry's Circular No. 73.

Out of Tilley's First and Second Interim Reports, through the *Basic Principles* and the Draft and Alternative Development Plans, there eventually emerged in July 1949 the County Council of Durham Education Committee Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education. In a nine-page introduction, Director Denholm gave a summary of the 1944 Act as it affected the Development Plan, selecting three main sections, 7, 8 and 11, as being the most pertinent.

These sections insisted that primary, secondary and further education should be regarded as separate though progressive stages. In consequence, secondary education was to be different in character than primary, suitable to the relevant needs of the pupils, and taught in appropriately organized separate schools. For these reforms to be carried out efficiently, all local authorities were instructed to draw up development plans, which were to include an investigation of the current provision in their area, and to lay down detailed proposals in order to meet the requirements of the Act.¹⁰¹ In addition to these general principles, Section 11 of the 1944 Act insisted that local authorities gave details of the alterations that needed to be made to school buildings in order to meet the detailed specifications included

¹⁰⁰ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946, pp. 76-77. See also Appendix Six.

¹⁰¹ The Education Act, 1944, Part II, Sections 7, 8 and 11.

in Section 10. Thus, local authorities had to estimate the cost both of changes to existing premises and of building new schools. Other requirements included arrangements for nursery education, provision for pupils with special educational needs and matters regarding school transport.¹⁰²

As Tilley foresaw, the Act was to have far-reaching national consequences and it greatly extended the rôle of central government and the newly appointed Minister of Education, though it was no mere dictate from central government. As well as insisting on a development plan from each local authority, Section 11 sub-section 3 of the Act also insisted that each L.E.A. consult directly with all managers and governors of affected schools, allowing them to suggest suitable modifications to the plan of the local authority. Although the Act does not specify what arbitration arrangements there might be in the case of a dispute between individual governors and the L.E.A., at least there was some form of local democracy and devolved decision-making. In fact, if the Minister believed that there had been insufficient local consultation, he would take action to inform those parties he believed might be affected by the implementation of the plan.

Although the Act made clear the expectation that secondary education should be made available in one of three types of school, namely grammar, technical or modern, the Minister did not lay down any rigid rules for reorganization. Each local authority was left to submit its own plan for acceptance or rejection by central

¹⁰² The Ministry of Education Circular No. 28, Preparation of Development Plans, advised the local authorities to submit the first section of the Development Plan in instalments. County Durham submitted fourteen in all, covering the thirteen divisional executives and the excepted borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

government. However, implicit in the Act was the phasing out of the all-age school, the only type of school provided in Ferryhill and Chilton. In 1949, as in previous years, those pupils who had managed to cope with the rigours of the 11-plus system and whose parents could either afford, or were willing, to let their child attend, could transfer to one of several grammar schools in the area. In reality, this essentially meant going to the Alderman Wraith School in Spennymoor or else in Bishop Auckland the King James 1 Grammar School for boys or the Girls' County School; though on occasions other arrangements were made according to circumstance. For example, if there was no room for all the Ferryhill and Chilton pupils at Spennymoor or Bishop Auckland, they might go to the grammar school in Durham or even Stockton.

When it finally emerged, the Development Plan was a grandiose scheme which aimed to carry the hopes of the Council towards the last quarter of the century. There is no doubt that this grand design did indeed show the way. It was five years in the making and the decisions reached by the Committee were to have far-reaching consequences for the education of the County's children. Prophetically, on the last day of January 1945 Thomas Tilley had submitted a report to the Elementary Education Sub-Committee on the increased rôle of the County inspectorate. In this report he said, "Having regard to the experience of the Committee under the 1902, 1921 and 1936 Education Acts it is my considered opinion that the Education Committee will be indeed fortunate if the changes envisaged in the 1944 Education Act are fully and properly implemented within the next twenty years."¹⁰³ It is

¹⁰³ Elementary Education Sub-Committee, 31 January 1945; Minute No. 474.

somewhat ironic that when finally the Plan came to full fruition in 1964, it was, at least as far as the provision for secondary education was concerned, to last for a mere ten years.

Denholm was keen to point out that the organization of primary and secondary education in the County would be affected by fluctuations in the birth rate, and what he called "the increased employment of women in the light industries, which will play an increasing part in the planned economy of the county."¹⁰⁴ Certainly, the Director envisaged considerable movements in population, particularly from the western parts of the old coalfield. Not only were there new housing schemes throughout the County but, in addition, thousands were expected to settle in the planned new towns of Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe. The growth of the latter would have an impact on the grammar school in Ferryhill: until reorganization in 1974 Ferryhill Grammar Technical School attracted a number of its most talented pupils from Newton Aycliffe.

The Education Development Plan of 1949 laid down in the greatest possible detail the projections for the provision of education for the foreseeable future. Enshrined in the Plan were the three recommendations agreed by the Primary Sub-Committee in November 1946: that, in general, secondary education should be provided in grammar technical and modern schools; that in highly industrialized areas secondary

¹⁰⁴ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education, 1949, p. 6.

education should be provided in three types of school - grammar, technical and modern; and that the schools should be grouped in multilateral units.¹⁰⁵

Writing of this period in 1970, the First Deputy Director of Education, Mr. D.H. Curry,¹⁰⁶ said that despite opposition from many divisional executives, "the Director of Education still stood by his original proposal, outlining to the Committee the various difficulties with regard to multilateral schools - the problem of obtaining large sites suitably located, the additional time and money spent in travelling, the possibility in the larger unit of an unsatisfactory corporate life, the certainty of redundant schools and the question of finance. In accepting this Development Plan, the Education Committee obviously at that time rejected the "multilateral" schools and the "comprehensive" school..."¹⁰⁷

With some modifications in its details, but not in its essential principles, the 1949 Plan mirrors the Draft Development Plan. None of the Alternative Schemes set out in 1946 was accepted, despite the overwhelming support they received from the divisional executives. Furthermore, the Director insisted that only the top twenty-five per cent should go to the grammar schools. Regarding selection, Denholm said that in fixing this percentage "careful consideration has been given to the results

¹⁰⁵ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education, 1949, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Douglas Curry took over from George Metcalfe as Director when the latter retired in 1974.

¹⁰⁷ J.C. Dewdney, (Ed.), Durham County and City with Teesside, p. 469.

obtained in investigations dealing with selection for secondary education.”¹⁰⁸

However, in a gesture which must have pleased at least some of the members of the South Eastern Division, the Director was prepared to concede and move towards the Ministry's figures, which were slightly more generous.¹⁰⁹

With regard to grammar technical schools, central government gave the following caution in the same Ministry of Education circular, "The Minister has reminded local education authorities that proposals to establish grammar-technical schools will be carefully examined to ensure that there is adequate scope for development in such schools."

The Ministry also gave guidelines laying down the essential philosophy of secondary schools. In Pamphlet Number 9, *The New Secondary Education*, it was stated that modern schools would provide courses for children with widely differing aptitudes and abilities. With such a wide range of ability, modern schools were to be given freedom to carry out experiments. Indeed, the pamphlet argued, "Freedom and flexibility are of its essence and are indeed its greatest opportunity." The modern

¹⁰⁸ County Council of Durham Education Committee, Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education, 1949, p. 7. For a succinct treatment of "investigations dealing with selection" see I.C.K. Fenwick, The Comprehensive School 1944-1970: The Politics of Secondary School Reorganization, pp. 30-33.

¹⁰⁹ The Ministry of Education, Circular No. 73, The Organisation of Secondary Education, made the following suggestion: "As a general guide to the proportion of accommodation to be allocated to different types of secondary education it is suggested that under normal conditions 70 per cent.-75 per cent. should be of the modern type, the remaining 25 per cent.-30 per cent. being allocated to grammar and technical in suitable proportions according to the local circumstances of the area."

Alas, such optimism was misplaced. In 1957 the new Director of Education, George Metcalfe, was forecasting a *rise* to twenty-five percent by 1970.

school was to be given "parity of conditions" with grammar and technical schools, to enable the local education authority to develop "parity of esteem".¹¹⁰ Around these last two ideals there lies great contention. There are many who argue that this ideal was never met, or that it was an unrealistic aim.¹¹¹

As it applied to Ferryhill and Chilton, the 1949 Plan for the West Central Division showed some minor modifications from the 1946 Draft. The 1949 Plan began by giving details of the forty-three existing schools under the control of the authority. The number of categories involved makes for bewildering reading. Thus, under the aegis of the West Central Division there were eleven schools catering for 5-7 year olds; five for 5-8 year olds; three for 5-11; nine for 5-14; thirteen for 7-14, including three with separate sections for boys and girls; three for 8-14, including one with separate sections for boys and girls; and one 11-18 school. In addition, there were thirteen proposed new primary and secondary schools. With this as the background, one can understand the need for some form of rationalization. The Plan then gave details of the new proposals: there were to be two new schools to cater for 5-7 year olds; one for 7-11 year olds; eight Modern Schools for 11-16 year olds; and two Grammar Technical Schools for 11-18 year olds.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ministry of Education, Pamphlet No. 9, The New Secondary Education.

¹¹¹ See O. Banks, Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education, for a detailed summary of this debate.

¹¹² County Council of Durham Education Committee, Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education, 1949, pp. 55-61. See also Appendix Eight.

The primary schools lie outside the purview of this thesis, though it must be emphasized that for the majority of children in Ferryhill and Chilton at this time, and for several years following, the only real choice was to attend the 8-14 boys' or girls' school at Dean Bank, the 7-14 mixed schools at Broom Cottages and Ferryhill Station, the 7-14 boys' or girls' school at Chilton Buildings, or the 5-14 mixed school at East Howle.¹¹³

As far as secondary schools in the three areas of the West Central Division were concerned, the 1946 Draft Plan proposal for Spennymoor was for a new four-form entry modern school, the conversion of the old grammar school into a three-form entry modern school and the building of a new four-form entry grammar technical school.¹¹⁴ For the Coxhoe area there was to be a new three-form entry modern school at Coxhoe and a new three-form entry modern school at Cornforth,¹¹⁵ whilst for Ferryhill there would be a new four-form entry modern school near Ferryhill, a new three-form entry modern school near Chilton Buildings, a new

¹¹³ Section 11 of the 1944 Act did sanction the continuance of these all-age schools. "Provided that, if the local education authority are satisfied that any county school or voluntary school which is for the time being organised for the provision of both primary and secondary education ought to continue to be so organised, the development plan may make provision for its continuing to be so organised during such period as they think necessary."

The Education Act, 1944, Part II, 11 (2).

The three new primary schools mentioned above, two infant and one junior, were to be built in Trimdon and Bowburn and would not affect the pupils from Ferryhill or Chilton.

¹¹⁴ See Appendix Five.

¹¹⁵ See Appendix Seven.

three-form entry modern school near Trimdon and a new four-form entry grammar technical school near Ferryhill.¹¹⁶

When the full Plan was published in 1949 there were some modifications to the earlier Draft Plan. There was to be a new three-form entry modern school built at Fishburn and a two-form entry Roman Catholic modern school for Spennymoor was mentioned.¹¹⁷ In addition, the proposed new modern schools at Cornforth and Fishburn were to be increased in size from three-form entry to four-form entry and from two form-entry to three-form entry respectively.¹¹⁸

In the 1949 Plan details were also given about the estimated cost of the new building programme and the years in which the schools were to be built. In terms of the latter there were three categories: A for 1949-1954, B for 1954-1959 and C for 1959-1964. As far as the three schools in Ferryhill and Chilton were concerned, Broom Cottages Secondary Modern and Ferryhill Grammar Technical School appeared in category B, Chilton Secondary Modern in category C.¹¹⁹ As to the estimated capital cost, the Broom School site was £4,000, the building £187,175;

¹¹⁶ See Appendices Six.

¹¹⁷ The Draft Development Plan excluded Roman Catholic Schools.

¹¹⁸ This was in the light of a proposed new housing development in West Cornforth, where Sedgefield Rural District Council proposed to build 1,000 new houses on a 100-acre site. Of these houses it was estimated that half would be for new people attracted to the area. Similarly, Sedgefield R.D.C. was proposing to build 700 new houses in Trimdon Village.

¹¹⁹ In reality, Broom Cottages opened in 1951, Ferryhill Grammar Technical in 1964 and Chilton Modern in 1963.

Chilton Modern site was £4,250, the building £156,200; Ferryhill Grammar Technical site was £5,500, the building £197,550.

Whatever the changes proposed in 1949 as a result of the 1944 Education Act, the County Development Plan for Education was only one part of a much wider scheme to reorganize post-war County Durham. In 1951 the full County Development Plan was published, covering every aspect of life under the Council's jurisdiction. The introduction of this document presented the fundamental principles on which re-development was to be based:

"The purpose of the Plan is twofold. It is to show broadly how the villages and townships of the County should be developed to fit in with the emergent economic and social forces, and to show the broad use of land which will result from the co-ordination of all conflicting interests. Perhaps more important still its purpose is to focus attention on the fundamental problems of the County, and to show how these problems can be overcome by adopting and pursuing certain policies."¹²⁰

Amongst these *certain policies*, the Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education was of vital importance to the future of the County. It is therefore pertinent at this point to put the proposed educational reforms within the wider context of other projected social reforms.

¹²⁰ The County Council of Durham, Development Plan, 1951: Written Analysis, p.4.

The importance of the 1951 document cannot be over-emphasized. Its comments concerning the past reveal much about the attitude of the Authority: what emerges is an implied criticism of what had gone on before and an almost proselytizing zeal to rebuild and reconstruct. The Council commented that the towns and villages of County Durham had grown at a tremendous rate over the past two hundred years, but this growth had been largely uncoordinated. A new awakening of social conscience led to an attempt to tackle the major issues of the community: housing, agriculture, industry, commerce and, of course, education. Following the disaster of the Great War the "land fit for heroes" had not been built; now there was another opportunity to put matters to right. As Lowe says, "Whilst there was rationing, fuel shortages and austerity this was also an era of full employment, in stark contrast to the pre-war years. The collectivism of the wartime years was redirected by Clement Attlee's government towards social reconstruction and the establishment of the welfare state. Investment in housing, health, national insurance, education and food subsidies meant that by 1951 a new and unprecedented personal economic security had been achieved for individual citizens at just the moment that national economic security was least sure."¹²¹

The 1951 Plan was flexible and it was proposed that a review take place every five years in the light of changing circumstances. In addition, the authors hoped that the basic problems would be addressed not only at local level but at national level too.

¹²¹ R. Lowe, Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History, p. 3.

Underpinning all of the reforms was the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. This was stronger and more positive in all respects than the 1932 Act it replaced, which itself superseded the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909. The 1947 Act was welcomed as a major breakthrough: "The County Council has been made Local Planning Authority for the first time, in order that a broader view may be taken of the problems which could not be solved at a more local level."¹²²

The Council highlighted the need to adopt a long-term plan, claiming that there were five principal reasons for adopting such a view. It saw that, "the high tide of one period of industrial development has been passed and we are now in the midst of a difficult period of readjustment: the economic future is uncertain."¹²³ It was accepted that employment in the "basic industries" of the County had been in decline for some time and was likely to continue to decline in future years. The 1951 Plan recognized that, "the pattern and total of mining employment is changing". This fact had also been recognized in the Education Development Plan of 1949: as coal seams were exhausted and the villages around the pit-head declined, a shift in population was envisaged. Interestingly, with reference to Ferryhill and Chilton no mention was made specifically about these two communities, though the Plan did single out new growth in Bowburn, Trimdon and Spennymoor, all areas adjoining Ferryhill and Chilton.

¹²² The County Council of Durham, Development Plan, 1951: Written Analysis, p.2.

¹²³ The County Council of Durham, Development Plan, 1951: Written Analysis, p.2.

As the traditional economic base gave way to new industry, the Authority envisaged better living and working conditions. It bravely, and maybe surprisingly, accepted without reserve that the very reason for existence of some small communities would disappear completely in their new development. Indeed, the Plan also stated, "It is the only wise policy to pursue, and it is most important the cold facts should not be ignored for sentimental or parochial reasons."¹²⁴ The Council believed that if it failed to act now, the problems would be far greater in the future.

Critics could argue that such proposals might destroy the renowned community spirit prevalent in tightly-knit communities that were based on the old traditional industries. However, the authors of the Plan had a ready-made answer, believing that the new physical environment would, "engender a new and healthy community spirit to replace that spirit which was born of adverse conditions in the past."¹²⁵

Another basis for development was concerned with replacing that which the architects of the plan deemed, "the dreary development of the nineteenth century." They openly criticized the unimaginative grid-iron pattern, poor sanitation, inadequate roads and the "noise, smoke and smells" of traditional industries. They planned to replace this environment with, "healthy, beautiful, and convenient places

¹²⁴ The County Council of Durham, Development Plan, 1951: Written Analysis, p.3.

¹²⁵ The County Council of Durham, Development Plan, 1951: Written Analysis, p.3.

This view is at variance with what was found at the Billingham Campus school, opened to cater for the educational needs of a new community.

in which to live."¹²⁶ In order to create this new Utopia they had to erase the scars on the landscape left by the traditional heavy industries, and to ensure that "similar disfigurements" would not be allowed to blight the landscape in future. It was in accordance with this directive that the slag heaps at Ferryhill and Chilton were eventually landscaped.

Finally, the Council aimed to tackle pressing social problems with the help of recent legislation passed by central government. The Council insisted, "Schools, health centres, community centres, playing fields and the like should be provided as an integral part of the evolving pattern of development rather than as palliatives to the existing settlements."¹²⁷ From this it is easy to see how the reform of educational provision was seen as vital to the post-war reconstruction of the County.

However, the changes proposed in the 1949 Plan were, as Tilley predicted, a long time coming to fruition. In the early 1950s the pupils who attended the primary schools in Ferryhill and Chilton still sat the 11-plus examination as they had done before the great Act of 1944 was passed. The majority still went to an all-age school: the gifted to the grammar school. Multilateral units were a theory, not a practical reality.

As seen in Chapter Two, The Norwood Report had claimed that it was possible to identify three kinds of child. Roy Lowe says the years 1945 to 1951 may be seen as

¹²⁶ The County Council of Durham, Development Plan, 1951: Written Analysis, p.3.

¹²⁷ The County Council of Durham, Development Plan, 1951: Written Analysis, p.3.

marking the high point of the "Norwood philosophy": a period when a determined attempt was made by the Ministry of Education and many local education authorities to establish a tripartite secondary system of grammar, technical and modern schools.

Lowe also points out that it is "all too easy to dismiss this as a convenient and cynical device which permitted the public and grammar schools to experience minimal changes, while the new secondary schools, for those social groups which had previously had access only to an elementary education, were involved in a major consideration of their curricula and objectives." Nevertheless, "it is clear in retrospect that those Labour politicians who were mostly closely identified with this policy - Ellen Wilkinson, George Tomlinson and D.R. Hardman - believed genuinely that a differentiated secondary system offered the best hope to disadvantaged social groups, and it was for this reason that Labour in power clung so tenaciously to a defence of policies it inherited from the wartime coalition and which the Ministry of Education supported."¹²⁸

In the light of what happened in County Durham, this fact is of paramount importance, especially when one considers that Ellen Wilkinson, as Minister of Education between 1945 and 1947, was the Member of Parliament for Jarrow: and Jarrow was at the heart of the Tyneside Division. What Ellen Wilkinson's local influence was is difficult to assess. There is no doubt that she would have discussed the plans for secondary reorganization with both Tilley and Denholm, and have

¹²⁸ R. Lowe, Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History, p.37.

found some sympathy with them. As her biographer Betty Vernon succinctly put it, her policy was "Reconstruction before reform."¹²⁹ Her successor, George Tomlinson, built on the foundations laid by Ellen Wilkinson. "He was always very fair to the local authorities and was reluctant to overrule their decision."¹³⁰ Thus, it appears that during the period after the war, and indeed for almost the next twenty years, the County's Education Committee was free to pursue its own policy untrammelled by outside interference.

It is important at this point to look in a little more detail at the evolving attitude of the Conservative and Labour parties towards secondary reorganization, particularly the latter, in both power and opposition. The 1944 Education Act had been passed by a Conservative government, which clearly promoted the tripartite system and especially the position of the grammar school within it. It is fair to say that, in government or in opposition, the Conservative Party remained largely committed to maintaining the status quo throughout the period of this study, and beyond. That does not mean to say it was totally opposed to reorganization on multilateral or comprehensive lines, especially later when it was perceived that it might prove electorally advantageous.¹³¹ It was prepared to sanction limited experiments in secondary reorganization if the initiative came from the local authorities. However,

¹²⁹ B.D. Vernon, Ellen Wilkinson 1891-1947, p. 225.

¹³⁰ F. Blackburn, George Tomlinson, p. 177.

¹³¹ See S. Jenkins, Conservatives and Comprehensives. This memorandum of the Bow Group outlines the shift in Conservative attitudes in the mid-1960s. It is really a response to Labour's Anthony Crosland's Circular 10/65, The Organisation of Secondary Education, which required local authorities to submit plans for comprehensive reorganization. See Chapter Four for details.

if experimentation did take place, parental choice had to be paramount, even if this meant opening comprehensive schools alongside grammar schools. For example, in 1953 the Conservative Minister of Education, Florence Horsbrugh, refused to agree to the merger of a London grammar school with a comprehensive school on the grounds that it would change the nature and status of the grammar school.¹³²

Horsbrugh was convinced that comprehensive schools were being trumpeted, especially in London, for political not educational motives. Brian Simon evaluates Horsbrugh's action on the issue of the comprehensive school at Kidbrooke thus: "From now on the defence of the grammar school became a major issue of policy for succeeding Tory governments - a policy which was held to firmly throughout the 1950s."¹³³

Simon described Horsbrugh as a skinflint with a reputation as a cheese-paring Minister. Her Circular 242 called for a 5 per cent reduction in local authority estimates for 1952 with the aim of "cutting out the frills" but maintaining "the essential fabric."¹³⁴ In May 1953 *The Durham Advertiser* reported the dismay of the Education Committee over the Minister's decision to cut the County's school building budget. The County had applied to build thirteen new schools in the financial year 1954-55: only three schools were approved by the Minister. In

¹³² The Grammar School was Eltham Girls' High School, which London County Council wished to incorporate into Kidbrooke, London's first, purpose-built comprehensive school.

¹³³ B. Simon, Education and the Social Order, 1940-1990, p. 172.

¹³⁴ B. Simon, Education and the Social Order, 1940-1990, p. 164.

response to news from the Ministry, the Chairman of the Education Committee, Councillor Baines, said, "There seems to be a policy of cut, cut, cut."¹³⁵

As Michael Parkinson points out, "In many ways the 1944 Education Act was for the [Labour] Party the consummation of a generation's work and ambition."¹³⁶

The Labour Party's battle-cry *Education for All* was now enshrined in law, but as seen in Chapter Two, the Labour Party's attitude to secondary reorganization was somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand there was a desire for equality of opportunity, which some maintained could only be found in a common school. On the other hand, the aim was for equality of opportunity which meant more pupils, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, having the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a grammar school education. Although these two positions were irreconcilable, expectation in both camps was high: for the first time Labour had a majority in the House of Commons.

On gaining power the Labour Party inherited a Conservative policy document, *The Nation's Schools*, which accepted in principle the view of the Norwood Committee that there should be three types of school to cater for three types of mind.

Furthermore, multilateral schools were rejected on the usual grounds: they would be too large; there would still have to be selection within the schools; having multiple aims was unsatisfactory; planning would have to be on the basis of existing development plans. "While enterprise and experiment are certainly to be

¹³⁵ The Durham Advertiser, 15 May 1953.

encouraged, it would be a mistake to plunge too hastily on a large scale into a revolutionary change which would entail some losses which are clear and offers gains the values of which for this country are perhaps somewhat uncertain.

Innovation is not necessarily reform.”¹³⁷ There was outrage following the Labour Party Conference of 1946 when the Minister, Ellen Wilkinson, did not condemn the pamphlet’s attitude toward multilateralism.

In fact Ellen Wilkinson favoured the tripartite system, preferring to place her faith in the parity of esteem mentioned in the Norwood Report. To this end she saw the need for a common code of regulation to cover the staff, buildings, equipment and salaries of all secondary schools. Ellen Wilkinson’s attitude towards multilateral experimentation was cautious without being openly hostile: “I welcome experiments of this kind. I do not, however, wish to dogmatize about the form in which secondary education should be organized at the outset of the great experiment of educating all children according to their ability and aptitude.”¹³⁸

The Labour Party won the general election of 1945 for many reasons. Certainly the electorate was impressed with the proposals set out in the Party’s manifesto, *Let us Face the Future*. The document was drafted by a committee chaired by Emanuel Shinwell, who had defeated Ramsey MacDonald in a bitterly fought election

¹³⁶ M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 36.

¹³⁷ Ministry of Education, The Nation’s Schools, p. 24.

¹³⁸ Quoted in M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 42.

campaign at Seaham Harbour, County Durham in 1935. As M.P. for Seaham Harbour and then Easington, he was a very prominent and influential local and national member of the Party. About grammar schools Shinwell once remarked, "We are afraid to tackle the public schools to which wealthy people send their sons, but at the same time we are ready to throw overboard the grammar schools, which are for many working-class boys the stepping-stones to universities and a useful career. I would rather abandon Eton, Winchester and Harrow and all the rest of them than sacrifice the advantage of the grammar school."¹³⁹

It is impossible to believe that the views of someone of Shinwell's power and influence, who was a County Durham M.P., cannot have done anything other than confirm Tilley and his colleagues on the Education Committee that opening grammar schools was in the best interests of the Party and those it sought to represent.

This was the background against which secondary reorganization took place in County Durham. With this in mind, and the cost involved, it is hardly surprising that Durham's Director of Education was reluctant to tread the path towards full-scale multilateralism. The multilateral school was untried and its benefits only theoretical, whereas the virtues of the grammar school were well-understood. Furthermore, the Party nationally was clearly confused as to what form secondary reorganization should take. It often appeared that the same people wanted an expansion of

¹³⁹ Quoted in M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 85.

grammar school provision *and* the building of multilateral schools. In this respect, it is true to say that Durham's solution, the multilateral unit, was a very clever, and cheap, compromise.

However, Robin Pedley, a native of the North-East and a champion of the comprehensive school was harsh in his evaluation of the Labour Party and Durham County Council. He claimed that much of Labour's thinking was "a generation out of date" and that the Party's attitude was "epitomized by ... the traditionally Labour Durham County Council." Pedley continued to admonish, "When secondary education had been available only to a minority, Durham had been in the van in building its own secondary schools and accepting only "scholarship" boys and girls. Brains had rightly been preferred to wealth and birth. The bright poor boy, in the best reforming tradition, was given his chance. The trouble was that the good party men of Durham and elsewhere were so drunk with the virtue of this advance that they failed to see that it was but a step upon the way."¹⁴⁰

Following Ellen Wilkinson's untimely death in 1947 her successor, George Tomlinson, also believed in a variety of approaches to secondary reorganization. Whilst on the one hand he approved the first London School Plan in 1950, which aimed at reorganization on comprehensive lines, he had rejected a similar plan for Middlesex saying that the tripartite system was "logical and useful".¹⁴¹ Thus of George Tomlinson, *The Times Education Supplement* felt justified in saying that, "It

¹⁴⁰ R. Pedley, *The Comprehensive School*, p. 39.

was “extremely doubtful” if he ever lifted a hand to increase the number of comprehensive schools.”¹⁴² In fact in February 1951 George Tomlinson wrote, “The Party are kidding themselves if they think the comprehensive idea has any popular appeal.”¹⁴³

Certainly, as Keith Fenwick has demonstrated, the teacher unions were reluctant to commit themselves to comprehensivization during the early 1950s.¹⁴⁴ In 1951 *The Times Educational Supplement* reported that several Labour Party members of the London County Council were concerned about comprehensive reorganization.¹⁴⁵

The publication in 1951 of the Labour Party’s *A Policy for Education* signalled a formal commitment to comprehensivization. “It is our view that the tri-partite system of education does not provide equality of educational opportunity, and is, therefore, out of tune with the needs of the day and with the aspirations of socialism.”¹⁴⁶ Though even this document, after calling for a wider and more

¹⁴¹ Quoted in M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 45.

¹⁴² Quoted in B. Simon, Education and the Social Order, 1940-1990, p. 141.

¹⁴³ Quoted in B. Simon, Education and the Social Order, 1940-1990, p. 149.

¹⁴⁴ Fenwick quotes even the left-wing President of the National Union of Teachers referring in 1944 to a “synthesis of all that is best in our senior, grammar and technical schools.”

I.G.K. Fenwick, The Comprehensive School 1944-1970, p. 65.

¹⁴⁵ The Times Educational Supplement, 20 July 1951.

¹⁴⁶ The Labour Party, A Policy for Secondary Education, p. 4.

informed debate, did say that local autonomy should be preserved and that, “It would be wrong to impose a pattern of education upon local authorities.”

By 1958 the Party had produced a new policy document, *Learning to Live*, which aimed at producing wider support for comprehensive schools. In it the Party gave a very broad definition of the term *comprehensive*: “This name is particularly used if the school caters, as do the grammar schools today, for children from the age of 11 to 18. However, ... the establishment of schools of this kind is not the only way in which children can be provided, in the secondary stage, with the opportunity for real choice. A system of secondary education which succeeds, by any of a variety of means, in providing this opportunity, is described as a “comprehensive system”.¹⁴⁷

Using this broad definition, Durham’s reorganization into multilateral units, and its experiments at Wolsingham and Billingham, can be said to comprise a “comprehensive system.” Even closer to what many in County Durham wanted was Hugh Gaitskell, who said in a letter to *The Times* in 1958, “It would be nearer the truth to describe our proposals as “a grammar school education for all”... Our aim is greatly to widen the opportunities to receive what is now called a grammar school education, and we also want to see grammar school standards in the sense of higher quality education extended far more generally.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ The Labour Party, *Learning to Live*, p. 25.

¹⁴⁸ 5 July 1958. Quoted in I.G.K. Fenwick, *The Comprehensive School 1944-1970*, p. 109.

Prior to the 1944 Education Act the Labour Party wanted secondary education for all. At that time, of course, prior to 1944, to most people "secondary education" meant the grammar school. Whilst accepting that there was a need for a variety of secondary schools, the aim was to provide as many working-class children as possible with the opportunity to attend a grammar school. As Michael Parkinson points out, once in office the Ministers defended the grammar schools in part out of a "natural conservatism of the Ministry, but also because they appeared to offer working-class children the best education. And for some Party members to ask them to give up these schools appeared to be surrendering the fruits of victory with the taste still fresh in their mouths."¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, the great pre-war reports, Hadow, Spens and Norwood, promulgated the idea of individual differences in children which could be measured by means of a test. This idea was the basis of the tripartite system. Whether the premise was flawed is largely immaterial; at the time, it was widely believed and "clearly formed a part of the climate of opinion by which the Ministers were consciously or unconsciously influenced into accepting the validity of the tripartite system and rejecting the comprehensive alternative. And these factors at the time were bound to appear more important than the apparently ideological considerations of Party members."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 49.

¹⁵⁰ M. Parkinson, The Labour Party and the Organization of Secondary Education 1918-65, p. 51.

In 1946 the admissions procedure to Durham's grammar schools consisted of a qualifying examination, for which an unpublished standardized intelligence test, Moray House Test Number 31, was used, together with a paper in arithmetic and a paper in English set by the County inspectors. Immediately after the examination the papers were marked in the primary schools and forwarded to the Director. The selection of pupils to take a second examination was based upon the score in the qualifying examination, with allowance being made for the difference in age of each candidate and after consideration of the head teachers' reports. The second examination consisted of two unpublished standardized attainment tests in arithmetic and English, Moray House Tests Numbers 14A and 14E. Immediately after this examination the papers were forwarded to the appropriate secondary schools, which were closed for one day for marking.¹⁵¹ Of course, in accordance with the 1944 Act, the successful candidates would not have to pay fees. However, if subsequently a pupil withdrew from the grammar school before the age of sixteen, he was liable to be fined £5.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ See Higher Education Sub-Committee, 12 June, 1946; Minute No. 142.

Pupils who missed the examination either through illness or "unavoidable cause" were allowed to sit a supplementary qualifying examination. Also, in 1946, if pupils were absent because of evacuation they could sit the same County Durham examination or the equivalent in their temporary home.

This liberal attitude was extended to cover other circumstances, as in the examination of 1957. When a bus, which should have taken pupils to centres in Ryhope and Seaham failed to turn up, the pupils were eventually transported in parents' and teachers' cars. However, following a complaint that many were "unsettled" they were allowed to retake the examination. (See The Northern Echo, 3 April 1957).

¹⁵² However, the Withdrawals Minor Sub-Committee could recommend that the fine be reduced or remitted altogether in certain circumstances. The Minutes of the Higher Education Sub-Committee, and later the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, detail such cases of clemency, usually because of family circumstances, sadly often following the death

By 1955 nothing had changed, except that now the Moray House Test was Number 51 for the first examination and Numbers 24a and 24e for the second examination. In total nearly 14,500 pupils sat the first examination and 4,500 the second, of which 2,197 were offered places in one of the County's twenty-one grammar schools (twelve of which were split into separate sections for boys and girls).¹⁵³ In 1955 forty-five pupils from Ferryhill and Chilton were successful in winning places. The twenty-six boys and nineteen girls went to one of four schools. By far the most popular choice was the mixed grammar school at Spennymoor. This school attracted twenty-eight pupils in total, though only five girls. The three boys who passed from Dean Bank all chose to go to King James I School in Bishop Auckland. Interestingly, none of the girls wished to attend Bishop Auckland Girls' Grammar School, even though it was relatively local. Instead the most popular girls' school was Durham Girls' Grammar School: fourteen pupils went there. Only one pupil, a girl, who attended Dean Bank Junior Girls' School passed the examination and chose not to take up a grammar school place.¹⁵⁴

The debate over selection at eleven was a national one and hotly contested in the North-East. Interestingly, though hardly surprisingly, the discussion could be described as seasonal. The publication of the 11-plus examination results was invariably the trigger. Whilst the column inches devoted to it in the local press

of a parent, or on medical grounds. In the former, one can speculate that the single parent could no longer support the education of a potential bread-winner.

¹⁵³ Of the 2,197 offered places, only 1,957 accepted the offer.

¹⁵⁴ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 7 April 1955; Minute No. 1.

reached a peak in the 1960s, the 1940s were not exempt. The usual debate was that opponents thought it unfair that a child's future should be decided at so young an age, whereas the proponents believed that the examination to selective grammar schools maintained high academic standards. A variation on the debate was provided by an *Interested Parent*, from Chester-le-Street, who wrote to the editor of *The Northern Echo* for publication in the *Hear All Sides* column in June 1949. The well-informed correspondent gave detailed figures to back up a case for more grammar schools. Referring to the results of the recent 11-plus examination, in which 1,465 pupils out of 13,385 were successful (a little over ten per cent), the writer went on to detail the number of grammar school places per area in relation to the number of pupils sitting the examination. The figures quoted clearly point out the un-evenness in distribution of grammar school places. A child who lived in the Bishop Auckland area had a one in ten chance of success; in Chester-le-Street the chances were one in twelve; at Jarrow one in fifteen; in Wolsingham one in six; in Durham one in eight; and so on. "Who then, if he wishes his child to have even the remotest chance of an academic education, would live at Jarrow? Or Chester-le-Street? Surely a system of examination that distributes seats in this manner is unfair. It will be said in defence of the present system, that modern secondary schools are filling the gap. But, are they fulfilling the job required of them by the 1944 Act? How can the grammar schools, already filled to over-flowing, take more pupils? They cannot! Is there a solution to the problem presented? It would seem that ... more places are required ... a total of 900 seats ... three more schools could be built."¹⁵⁵ Whilst the *interested parent* went on to suggest that suitable sites were

¹⁵⁵ The Northern Echo, 21 June 1949.

available and that teachers could be found by offering full-time contracts to “that long-suffering, hard-working band of loyal married women teachers, known as long-term temporary,” no suggestion was made as to where the money could be found to pay for this.

What of those who *failed* the 11-plus in 1955? Their options had clearly improved since 1946. At Broom Cottages Modern School thirty pupils were registered as being on the first year of a General Certificate of Education course, whilst there were already thirteen in their second year.¹⁵⁶ However, the great speciality of the school in these days was its commercial course. Broom Cottages was one of eight modern schools selected to act as centres to run commercial courses.¹⁵⁷ The County inspector reported that these schools were adequately staffed and equipped, but that there was too much travelling during school time from the contributory schools to the centres. Furthermore, visits to the centres tended to remove the children too much from the school to which they belonged; also there were indications that in some cases the children admitted to the courses were not capable of coping with work at this level. However, most children did benefit from the course and the incentive provided by the new work had a good influence upon the pupils' attitude to their last two years of school life. The inspector went on to say

¹⁵⁶ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 27 July 1955; Minute No. 172.

¹⁵⁷ Following the Director's recommendation, Broom Cottages was officially designated as a Commercial Centre from September 1959. See Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 20 May 1959; Minute No. 76.

Indeed, such was the success of the Broom Centre that by 1960 it was attracting pupils from twelve other schools including the un-reorganized Chilton County. See Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 16 November 1960; Minute No. 339.

that with the development of the County's policy of selection for G.C.E. courses in modern schools, the selection of children for commercial courses at thirteen years of age was going to be increasingly difficult in future if it was confined to the children who had not been selected for G.C.E. courses. To solve this problem it was recommended that some of the pupils who were selected for a G.C.E. course should be allowed to take the commercial course. Furthermore, they could take some commercial subjects in the G.C.E. examination. The pupils who had not been selected for G.C.E. courses could be admitted after the age of thirteen "if they are suitable."¹⁵⁸ To get round the problem of reaching the required standard, children would have to be selected by an examination in English and mathematics. In another attempt to raise standards, it was suggested that pupils admitted to the courses should be required to remain at school until the age of sixteen.

In this commercial course one can see the idea of schools working together in units, with centres of excellence and transfer of pupils, albeit in this case for only a limited period each week: all these facets were hallmarks of the multilateral unit. It should also be noted that although there was equality of opportunity, the idea of selection by examination for a particular course was confirmed.

However, it was not until 1956 that the move towards setting up multilateral units gained full momentum, after a period in which educational developments were virtually at a standstill, despite the impressive rhetoric contained in both the 1949

¹⁵⁸ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 27 July 1955; Minute No. 172.

and the 1951 plans. In this year a new initiative was mounted to shake the somewhat tentative and at times ambivalent nature of County policy.

In 1956, a special sub-committee, made up of the Director of Education, the Deputy Director for Secondary Education, the County Architect and several members of the Education Committee, visited comprehensive schools in London, Coventry and West Bromwich.¹⁵⁹ The visits which took place during the first week in October had far-reaching consequences for the future development of secondary education in County Durham for almost twenty years. However, the visit and its consequences must be seen against the national debate about the nature of secondary education which had been going on since before the 1944 Act.

As far as County Durham was concerned, the years 1944 to 1974 can almost be sub-divided into three periods. The first period, from 1944 to 1956 was characterized by a coming to terms with the implications of the 1944 Education Act. Here the solution to the problem over what form secondary education should take was centred on the move to get rid of the all-age schools and to reorganize secondary education on bipartite lines. Such a solution was questioned in the mid-1950s until the report by a new Director, George Metcalfe, on his visit to London and the Midlands inaugurated the second phase. Thus the period 1956 to 1970 saw the end of the all-age schools and the confirmation of the bipartite solution with the setting up of the multilateral units - the compromise solution which sought to reap

¹⁵⁹ The party was to consist of eleven members but this was later increased to fourteen. See Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 June 1956; Minute No. 137: and, from the meeting on 25 July 1956; Minute No. 181.

the benefits of both selective and non-selective education. It also heralded a serious investigation into the multilateral system adopted in the County and the decision to launch two experiments at Wolsingham and Billingham. The final phase, from 1970 to 1974, saw the death of the grammar schools, which had been preserved, and in the case of Ferryhill inaugurated, during the second phase, and the replacement of bipartism with true, universal comprehensivization.

Considering the full implications of the visits in 1956, it is worth considering in some detail the Director's report and recommendations: so much of what was said reflected the debate on the nature and form secondary education should take. In many ways, if Tilley's Interim Reports and Draft Development Plan were his contribution to the debate, then the 1956 Report and what followed was Metcalfe's.

The Report, which was presented to a special meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee in February 1957, was a full and detailed one.¹⁶⁰ It began by reaffirming that it was the duty of every local authority to provide an education suited to the age, ability and aptitude of each pupil in its care. In terms of secondary education this meant providing three main types of course: one, comprising "a good general education to meet the needs of about 75% of the pupils;" secondly a technical course, which also included commercial subjects; and finally an "academic course."

¹⁶⁰ Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 25 February 1957.

Before going on to describe the school visits, Metcalfe outlined the alternative ways in which such courses could be provided. One method was the tripartite system. Another method was to provide schools to cater for two of the courses and separate schools for the third type. For example, the academic course and the technical course might be provided in a grammar technical school. A third method was to provide all the various types of courses in one school. Finally, there was the school base or *campus* method, where the different courses were provided in separate buildings each with its own head teacher, situated preferably, but not necessarily, adjacent to the playing fields serving all the pupils.

Education has always been bedevilled by jargon and phraseology, and the term multilateralism is a case in point; in his report Metcalfe gave a series of definitions of the various types of secondary organization. A modern school was defined as being one which provided a course giving a good general education without particular bias. A technical school was defined as giving a good general education for the first two years, but in the third year a bias *suitable to the needs of the area* could be introduced, as at Broom Cottages School, where a G.C.E. commercial course was run. The so-called academic course was naturally provided by the grammar school. On the other hand, a bilateral school was one organized to provide any two of the courses followed in the modern, technical or grammar schools. A multilateral school was one intended to cater for all three courses in clearly defined *sides*, whilst a comprehensive school was designed to cater for the three courses without the separation into sides. The final option was for a school base or campus. In this organization a number of schools, each usually unilateral, that is to say providing one of the three types of course, would be grouped together. Each school would be

housed in a separate building, with its own head teacher, but all would share certain common facilities. In the light of what was to follow at Billingham, the Director suggested that if the County decided to adopt the campus school system, there should be just one board of governors for all the schools, with each head teacher attending the governors' meetings.

In June 1947, the Ministry issued Circular 144, *The Organisation of Secondary Education*, which stated that, "Where two or more types of secondary education are to be combined in one school it is desirable that the following basic principles should be observed:

- (a) the arrangement should be such that the provision made for the pupils is not less favourable to them than it is or would be under a tripartite organization;
- (b) except in special circumstances there should not be, in the same catchment area, any unilateral provision for any type of education which is to be catered for in the combined school;
- (c) the proposed secondary school provision in the catchment area should be considered as a whole, so as to ensure that a balance is maintained between the provision made for pupils needing courses of technical and grammar type and those requiring courses of the modern type."¹⁶¹

For the years 1960-1970, Metcalfe forecast that in the early years of the decade twenty per cent of the County's pupils would attend grammar technical schools. It

¹⁶¹ Ministry of Education, Circular 144, The Organisation of Secondary Education.

was not until the end of the decade, "if the present rate of development is maintained" that the figure was expected to rise to twenty-five: the percentage given in Tilley's Development Plan of 1946.

At the time of the report there were only two designated *grammar technical* schools in the County, Spennymoor and Durham Johnston. However, nearly all the grammar schools provided courses with a technical bias. For example, woodwork, metalwork and engineering drawing were available for most boys and commercial classes for many girls. What Metcalfe called, "the basic education for technologists of all types" was provided in the grammar or grammar technical schools. However, "for future technicians the appropriate instruction is available in many modern schools." It is worth noting that the term technologist is matched with education and the grammar school, whilst technicians are associated with instruction and secondary modern schools.

In such terminology lies a wealth of value-loaded judgements, which can only have added weight to those who argued that the modern schools provided a second class education for second class citizens. Whether he was aware of this or not, Metcalfe was clearly proud of the contribution the secondary modern schools were making to the education of the County's children. He boasted that an increasing number of pupils were obtaining certificates which entitled them to exemption from the first stages of the National Certificate Course. Singled out for special praise were the 1,500 pupils who were following commercial courses in the modern schools before going on to complete their *training* at technical colleges. Similarly lauded were the 5,000 pupils studying for the General Certificate of Education. Any pupil who

passed in three or more subjects at Ordinary Level was allowed to transfer to a grammar school, either to add to their subjects at Ordinary Level or to study Advanced Level courses in the Sixth Form, with the chance of qualifying for a university scholarship.

Broom Cottages was one of thirty-five modern schools with G.C.E. courses. The great speciality at the Broom was the commercial course. In all, over 1,300 pupils from forty-two modern schools were registered on the two-year commercial course. These courses were run at one of eleven centres, including Broom Cottages.

Broom Cottages also had an evening institute from where students proceeded directly to further education establishments. On the pre-senior clerical course eight students were classed as being from the modern school.

Throughout the County a number of pupils were following other courses with a technical bias. Though none of their pupils was registered as being on courses with a technical bias, included in the statistics are the un-reorganized Chilton County Boys, Chilton County Girls and Ferryhill Station County Mixed. At Chilton Boys science and woodwork were on offer; at Chilton Girls there was the opportunity to study domestic science, housecraft and needlework; at Ferryhill Station the boys could take technical drawing and woodwork, and the girls domestic science, housecraft and needlework.

Before compiling his influential report, Director Metcalfe and his party visited six schools and made copious notes before reporting their findings to the Secondary Education Sub-Committee. The deputation was keen to look at the size,

organization, facilities and assessment procedures in all the schools. In many ways the schools they saw represented most of the options open to the Committee in planning the future for the County. Because of the impact of the visits on the County's policy for the immediate future, it is worth considering the party's comments in some detail.

All the schools visited lay in thickly populated urban areas with relatively small catchment areas. Nowhere within the jurisdiction of Durham Education Committee, with the possible exception of Tyneside, could comparable conditions be found. The schools were not named, nor was their location given: they were simply differentiated by a letter.

In School A, which catered for 1,640 boys, teaching took place in a nine-storey block: there would eventually be 2,200 on the school roll. Clearly, like many of the schools visited, this was in an urban area and such an arrangement was to preserve the maximum open space around the school. The school did not have its own playing fields, indeed it was expected that such facilities would be provided some distance from the school, probably up to eighteen miles away in another authority. Pupils would have to be bussed to games lessons. For their pastoral care the boys in this thirteen-form entry school were divided into eight houses. Academically, they were divided into four streams based on their performance in the local authority's test and their primary school reports. There was also further setting in some subjects. The pupils followed a common curriculum up to the end of the third year, when they had a career test before making their option choices. Unfortunately, there were two voluntary grammar schools in the same catchment area which

attracted some of the most able pupils. However, it was hoped that *when* School A became more established this would no longer happen.

School B was also a huge multi-storied school divided into eight houses for 2,200 pupils, who followed a common curriculum for the first three years. However, this mixed school had its own fourteen-acre playing fields. Although there were no distinct streams, pupils were to some extent graded by ability.

The third school, C, had been a three-form entry girls' grammar school with a high reputation. There were still only 800 pupils in the school, of whom two-thirds were from the original grammar school, though it was expected that the number would rise to 1,200. To accommodate the new intake, new buildings were added, taking over part of the playing fields. As a consequence, the local authority had to acquire additional playing fields over 30 minutes travel away. As with School A, selection into streams was based on the results of the local authority test and primary school reports. The school had plans to provide a selection of courses: an academic one for those pupils who would formerly have gone to the grammar school; technical courses including commercial subjects, dressmaking and catering; and courses of general education without any particular bias. There was transfer between streams at the end of term, though in certain circumstances it could be immediate.

Interestingly, and by no means uniquely, according to the report, "the headmistress referred repeatedly to grammar school streams and also spoke of "absorbing" the new pupils and raising them to the existing level - presumably the level which

obtained in the original grammar school of which she was headmistress.”¹⁶² With this in mind, the pupils were encouraged to stay at school for at least five years. There was no house system because it was claimed that the pupils no longer wanted to stay at school after 4 o'clock, a fact which was clearly against the grammar school tradition.

School D, for 1,800 boys, occupied a sixty-acre site and was designed in five blocks, each accommodating the pupils of two houses. Specialist rooms for science, art, craft, and similar practical subjects, were in separate blocks. The boys were put into ability sets, but house groups were mixed ability. In the first two years the boys followed courses with a common core of basic subjects and were setted for academic subjects, but for ten of the forty-period week they remained in house groups for art and craft, physical education, music, religious instruction and one period of English. As with School A, this school was in competition with two nearby grammar schools. These direct grant schools, where the local authority paid the fees, attracted some of the most able pupils from School D.

School E was a girls' school intended to complement School D. Its prefabricated buildings occupied a thirty-acre site. In terms of its internal organization it was almost identical to the boys' school.

The last school to be visited was School F, a purpose-built mixed comprehensive school for 1,800 pupils with twenty acres of playing fields. As with schools A, D

¹⁶² Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 25 February 1957.

and E, school F faced competition from a grammar school and technical school in the area: it was estimated that about ten per cent of the potential school population opted to attend one of these two selective schools. However, parents of children living outside the school's immediate catchment area could apply for admission to the school. This certainly brought extra students into the school; for example, there were fifty applications for only seven vacancies in the school's technical stream. A common curriculum was followed in the first year with setting only for English and mathematics.

In truth, none of the schools visited completely satisfied Metcalfe's definition of a true comprehensive school. For a school to be truly comprehensive it had to cater for the education of *all* the children in a given area. Alas, in the aforementioned schools there was at least one established grammar school in the catchment area, and it was freely admitted during the visit that parents were electing to send their children to this type of school rather than to the comprehensive school.¹⁶³

Furthermore, the Director reminded the Committee that it had been claimed that the introduction of the comprehensive system would eliminate selection tests.

Unfortunately, "in none of the areas we visited had this happened and only in one instance was the child notified of admission to the school before sitting the examination."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Such a feature was by no means unique. Indeed, one of the criticisms levelled by proponents of comprehensive schools was that not infrequently they had to share their catchment area with selective grammar schools.

¹⁶⁴ Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 25 February 1957.

There was an additional drawback: this was the embryonic stage of comprehensive reorganization. Whilst all the head teachers spoke of their hopes and aspirations, in no case could final results be estimated nor concrete evidence of end-products be produced. The general verdict was, "Come back in ten years time and we shall tell you whether the system is successful or not."

Metcalf was certainly not the man to embark on such a radical experiment.

Whatever recommendation he and his party made, they believed that as a guiding principle there should be "equality of opportunity for all pupils irrespective of the location of their homes." If the comprehensive system was to be adopted, it was difficult to see how such an aim could be met for pupils living in the more rural west of the County unless parents and pupils were prepared to accept long daily journeys to and from school.

Above the philosophical and ethical arguments was the ever-pressing economic factor. "If", the Director said, "*at this late stage* the Authority were to change the policy formulated and adopt the comprehensive system...[it would be very expensive.]" The overall cost of providing new buildings was estimated at £13,788,000.¹⁶⁵ However, the last allocation to the Authority for major works in the building programme was £600,000 for the year 1956-57. Assuming that the Minister of Education approved the scheme to provide secondary education in comprehensive schools, and assuming also that half the annual allocation for major

¹⁶⁵ In Ferryhill and District it was estimated that the approximate cost of a new school would be £511,000, this would cater for an annual 13-form entry and cater for 2,100 pupils.

projects was devoted to providing these schools, it would take 45-50 years to provide for all the pupils in the County.

The Director also stressed that, in the main, comprehensive schools had been approved only in areas where schools had been destroyed by enemy action and where the problem of the use to which replaced schools could be put did not arise. In County Durham this was not the case. If, by the introduction of full comprehensivization, there was a huge rebuilding programme, many schools could become redundant. It was assumed that wherever possible the existing grammar school accommodation would be used to help provide for the changeover, in which case most of the modern schools would become obsolete. Some of these schools could, however, be used as primary schools and others as county colleges or youth and community centres for use by the further education department. Nonetheless, even by making use of as many of the old secondary modern schools as possible, it was estimated that at least one third of the existing schools would be redundant. The maximum figure would be about two thirds, in real terms between thirty and sixty schools would remain for which the Authority could find no further use.

Even before he made his recommendations, it is clear that Metcalfe was not convinced from what he had seen that the provision made for pupils was more favourable than under the scheme outlined by his predecessor ten years earlier. It is with this in mind that he began the conclusion to his Report by saying how proud he was of the steady progress of education in the County under the present policy of the Committee. He did acknowledge that there was "room for improvement, especially in the facilities for transfer of senior pupils to courses suited to their

ability and aptitude.”¹⁶⁶ Then, almost paradoxically, after rejecting what he saw in London and the Midlands, in part because it was too early to evaluate such experiments in educational reorganization, he praised County Durham’s own experiments saying that it was too early to condemn them! “We are only now beginning to see the effects of the modern school education courses, that is to say commercial, technical and others; and the grammar technical school system is in its early stages in some parts of the county.”¹⁶⁷

Perhaps the County’s attitude is best summed up by the views of Mr. L. Downsland, Chief Education Officer in West Hartlepool, who said only time would decide if the comprehensive school experiment would work. “The comprehensive school has come from abroad and it is by no means certain that it will flourish on English soil.” In addition, he too saw problems over school building and the supply of suitable staff to cope with a projected rise in the school population¹⁶⁸.

Whilst acknowledging that it was an experiment and extolling the virtues of experimental educationalists, in what is the most important part of the report Director Metcalfe re-affirmed and re-defined the idea of the multilateral unit. However, that was not all. He took the idea a stage further and inaugurated the first experiment in County Durham’s own version of multilateralism in Weardale. He stated, “In County Durham this experiment should be on the basis of a multilateral

¹⁶⁶ Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 25 February 1957.

¹⁶⁷ Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 25 February 1957.

¹⁶⁸ The Northern Echo, 26 January 1956.

unit catering for all secondary education in a given area, with joint use of school buildings, playing fields, staff and equipment. The schools in the unit should be under one head teacher and one governing body in order to secure the direction necessary to provide the improved facilities we seek for ease of transfer of pupils to suitable courses. An opportunity for an experiment of this nature presents itself at the present time in the Weardale area where a new three form entry grammar technical school is being built with full playing field facilities on a site near to the existing Wolsingham Grammar School. This latter school, on the completion of the grammar technical, is proposed under the present plan to become a three form entry modern school. If these two schools were combined they would provide a suitable educational unit for the proposed experiment giving modern, technical and grammar school education with a full range of courses and the necessary facilities for ease of transfer of pupils to such courses according to their ability and aptitude.”¹⁶⁹

The experiment would also provide information on the social value of a multilateral unit. The school needed a catchment area to provide a school for approximately 900 pupils. The pupils were not required to sit the County’s Admission Examination to Grammar Schools, though the senior pupils in the experimental unit were streamed following the results of internal tests.

The Secondary Education Sub-Committee, and later the County Council and Minister of Education, approved the proposal of providing secondary education in one *school*, and that the schools forming the unit should be known as Wolsingham

¹⁶⁹ Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 25 February 1957.

Secondary School. This heralded the County's first serious investigation into multilateral education, echoing the "freedom and flexibility" first called for in the 1949 Plan.

The local press applauded the scheme. It was front-page news in *The Northern Echo* on 7 May 1957 under the headline: "*End of 11-plus exam in Co. Durham a possibility: Weardale Chosen for Experiment.*" The article gave details of this "pilot scheme" and reported the views of the Director given above. The opening paragraph of the article, in bold type, proudly stated: "Children living in the Weardale area of County Durham may, by the end of 1958, no longer have to take the controversial eleven-plus examination in its present form, and, whatever their academic ability, all might attend the same secondary school unit."¹⁷⁰ The article went on to quote Metcalfe as saying that he hoped the experiment proved a success so that the Education Committee could consider extending the scheme to the rest of the County.

Though keen to emphasise the social benefits of the scheme, the Director nevertheless stressed the tentative nature of the experiment. George Metcalfe pointed out that the County would not lose anything if the scheme did not work, saying, "It will be watched very carefully, and if it is not a success we will still have the buildings to put to ordinary secondary school use without having built a great comprehensive school. We are not being dogmatic, and we are not burning our boats. If this does not work we will be in the happy position of being able to have

¹⁷⁰ The Northern Echo, 7 May 1957.

the ordinary type of secondary school without having caused any extra expense.”¹⁷¹

Not the most inspiring of endorsements.

What was unique about the Weardale experiment is that for the first time County Durham was planning to open a multilateral school unit. Furthermore, because the schools were so close together this was the nearest the County came to adopting the type of school supported by so many divisional executives over ten years earlier. However, it should be emphasised that, like the schools visited in London and the Midlands, the children still had to take an examination once they were admitted to the school so that they could be streamed. In addition, note was taken of the primary school record card system, introduced the year before, which was intended to plot the progress of all children through the junior school. It is also important to stress that the school that was planned was not a comprehensive school: the pupils would be split into different sides each with its own bias. Ironically, in terms of what happened in the subsequent and much more geographically disparate multilateral units, one of the key elements at Wolsingham was the ease of transfer of pupils to the courses to which they were best suited.

The fact that Wolsingham was chosen for this experiment is somewhat ironic when one considers that in 1949, at the Grammar School's speech day, Director Denholm chastised the Weardale Rural Council's opposition to the siting of the proposed new Wolsingham Technical Grammar School. Denholm said that this was holding up the County's education programme and affecting the future of many children in the

¹⁷¹ The Northern Echo, 7 May 1957.

Dales. Such a school "would enhance the value of, and bring addition prestige to, the neighbourhood."¹⁷²

Eventually, what emerged from the experiment was something far more radical than was originally envisaged. The original plan had been to build a new school on a site adjacent to the existing grammar school. The new building was to become a three-form grammar technical school, whilst the old grammar school was to be converted into a secondary modern school. However, the old grammar school was organized as a junior school with both grammar and modern streams, the new grammar technical school became the senior school, also with grammar and modern streams. Furthermore, it was proposed, and this feature made it unique in the County, that pupils could transfer between the streams at any time: the real comprehensive ideal. In a letter to *The Northern Echo* one reader, Mr. N. Grant of Tow Law, expressed his delight. "In the proposed [Weardale] system the ordinary working man's child will get a fair chance. Under the present system a rich man's child can go to a high school and get primed for the 11-plus examination. Under this scheme there will be no favour. I again thank Mr. Metcalfe and the Education Committee for their splendid experiment and I hope it will prove a great success."¹⁷³

The second great experiment took place in 1962 with the development of the Billingham Campus School, which was another pilot scheme for the multilateral system the County finally decided to adopt. However, it is important to point out

¹⁷² The Northern Echo, 10 December 1949.

¹⁷³ The Northern Echo, 10 May 1957.

that as early as 1957 there were plans for a campus school in Newton Aycliffe. The aim was for a secondary modern and grammar school to share the same site and facilities. Thus, there was to be a domestic science block for use by pupils from both schools, and a practical block for woodwork, metalwork, engineering and technical drawing, as well as gymnasia and a common swimming baths.

Furthermore, the pupils were all to wear the same type of blazer. *The Northern Echo* reported that Mr. W.N. Davis, Vice-Chairman of the Aycliffe Development Corporation, addressing a meeting of the South Western Divisional Executive said, "We hope that the psychological effects of the schools being together and the sharing of the facilities would be most advantageous. We could break down the watertight compartments which exist and often cause trouble with young children."¹⁷⁴ Facilities for transferring pupils from one school to the other would be made much easier. Alas, the campus school at Newton Aycliffe, with its separate grammar and modern schools sharing facilities, and with easy transfer of pupils, was never realized. However, in 1961, the Secondary Education Sub-Committee talked of the appointment of the headmaster of Milton Hall which, alongside Marlowe Hall, formed the Newton Aycliffe Campus.¹⁷⁵ In fact, the Newton Aycliffe Campus cannot be realistically compared with Billingham Campus, either in terms of size or importance; what is significant about Newton Aycliffe is that it demonstrates that the term *campus*, with its concept of shared facilities and a separate grammar and

¹⁷⁴ *The Northern Echo*, 17 April 1957.

¹⁷⁵ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 15 November 1961; Minute No. 317.

There is a very strong argument, based largely on geographical and sociological factors, that Newton Aycliffe is where the grammar school, eventually built at Ferryhill, should have been located. See Chapter Five pp. 294-295 for further details.

secondary modern hall, was first used with regard to Newton Aycliffe and the term should not be linked exclusively to Billingham.

The idea at Billingham was to keep schools of the size associated with the tripartite system, whilst ensuring the close association of small units to produce the advantages of a comprehensive school. There were some similarities with the Wolsingham experiment and one can see how the one grew out of the other, with schools grouped together sharing common facilities. However, unlike Wolsingham, the whole idea was on a much grander scale, with a purpose-built campus to house five separate units occupying a forty-acre site.¹⁷⁶ These school buildings were referred to as "halls" rather than "schools" to give the impression of a true campus.¹⁷⁷ To integrate pupils and staff, special facilities were available to all: one block was set aside for physical education, another contained the science laboratories and domestic science rooms, a third housed the library and there was also a separate area for woodwork and metalwork, with drawing offices and an engineering laboratory attached.

Nevertheless, the Education Committee stopped short of conferring sole charge of the campus on one person. Instead, individual heads were to meet regularly, with one of them acting as chairman on a rota basis. In addition, the *comprehensive* organization was, in the eyes of some critics, tarnished by the decision to select one

¹⁷⁶ In fact this did not happen: Browning Hall was not opened.

¹⁷⁷ Stephenson, Faraday, Davy, Browning and Bede Hall.

of the halls, Bede, to provide for the "grammar school pupils" of the campus.¹⁷⁸ These students were selected in accordance with the Authority's "order of merit" list. The critics saw this as perpetuating the old idea of a separate elitist school.

Stephenson Hall was to house first year pupils only. Here there were to be fifteen forms, of which two would be "express" forms of grammar technical pupils who would proceed to Bede Hall in their second year.¹⁷⁹ However, the headmasters of the other four halls were to co-operate in devising a common curriculum for the pupils in Stephenson Hall, which, because it was to cater for first year pupils only, did not have a headmaster merely a master-in-charge.¹⁸⁰ The campus opened in two phases beginning with Davy Hall in the summer term of the academic year 1961-62.¹⁸¹ Faraday and Bede Halls opened the following September. The whole arrangement at Billingham was unique in the County and was described by one of *The Northern Echo's* reporters in graphic terms: "From a distance the buildings of

¹⁷⁸ The Campus was planned to correspond to four three-form entry modern schools and one five-form entry grammar technical school.

For the full details of the organization of the Campus, see Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 3 January 1962; Minute No. 404.

¹⁷⁹ Disastrously, parents whose children had passed the 11-plus objected to them being sent to Stephenson, which they regarded as an unnecessary "diagnostic hall", rather than straight to a grammar school.

¹⁸⁰ Whether the use of the term *master* is deliberate or merely a convention of the time is difficult to ascertain. On other occasions, both before and after 1962, head teacher is the preferred title.

¹⁸¹ Stephenson Hall pre-dates the Campus having been opened in 1959 as a modern school to cope with the rapid increase in Billingham's population, attracted by the growth of the chemical industry on Teesside; and is referred to as entering pupils for G.C.E. in September 1961.

Billingham Campus look like a rectangular chocolate layer-cake, with broad thicknesses of black material separated by thin fillings of white.”¹⁸²

In the same article the reporter, John Taylor, informed his readers that the comparison with a layered-cake was not really apt. “For the campus seeks to avoid stratification of pupils, and any idea of relative superiority and inferiority. Yet it is not a comprehensive school. The duplicated sheet given to visitors boasts that the Campus can claim to be ‘the most valuable and flexible form of secondary education yet devised.’” Alas, such a view was formally challenged by the Director himself.

In 1965, the Director of Education delivered a report to the County Education Committee, with an assessment of the two schemes. Of Bilingham Campus, he concluded that, “the hopes and intention [of the scheme] had not been wholly realized as yet.” The major criticism was that there was too much rivalry between the halls.¹⁸³ Regarding Wolsingham, the same report by the Director was initially more enthusiastic: he boasted, “Whilst it may be rather early to make extravagant claims, results are such as to indicate that it will prove a success.” However, though it may have been a relatively successful experiment in comprehensive education, as defined in the Labour Party’s 1951 pamphlet, *A Policy for Education*, like Bilingham it was never a true comprehensive school.

¹⁸² The Northern Echo, 12 May 1965.

For an overview of the national picture see: B.D. Robinson, *Campus Schemes of Secondary Education in England and Wales, 1952-82*, History of Education, Vol. 25, No. 4, December 1996, pp. 387-400.

¹⁸³ Minutes of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 14 April 1965; Minute No. 19.

The relative failure of the campus experiment must have been a great disappointment. There had been great deal of national interest in the scheme, including an article in the Association of Education Committee's journal, *Education*,¹⁸⁴ and it had been officially opened in a blaze of publicity in March 1962 by the then Minister of Education, Sir Edward Boyle.¹⁸⁵

The whole report was an honest evaluation of an experiment that was only partially successful. George Metcalfe began his report by pointing out his hopes for the scheme. When the plan was first mooted it was intended to devise a form of secondary education which "would provide all the advantages of a Comprehensive School without any of its disadvantages." One of these disadvantages, according to critics, the Director said, "was the fear that in a vast crowd of his fellows a pupil could feel bewildered and lost, that no one cared what would become of him, and that it would be difficult for him to find someone whom he could approach with confidence. The division of the pupils into Halls was designed to remove this apprehension." Furthermore, "one of the great advantages claimed for the Comprehensive School was the ease with which a pupil could be transferred from one stream to another should the initial allocation prove to be incorrect. It was hoped that transfer from one Hall to another on the Campus would be done with

¹⁸⁴ 2 November 1962.

¹⁸⁵ On 7 March 1962 Councillor J.R. Coxon, Chairman of the Education Committee, wrote to the Minister inviting him to open the Campus saying, "We consider the provision of Campus Schools to be of significance both locally and from a national point of view."

From a collection of miscellaneous letters housed in the Local Records Office, County Hall Durham, Ref. CC/E/1.

equal ease, that it would be a routine matter arousing no comment and certainly creating no emotional disturbance.”¹⁸⁶

Alas, such hopes were not realized. One of the factors cited for this was that right from the start it had not been possible to build all the halls at the same time and thus open the Campus as a single educational unit.¹⁸⁷ The rapid growth of Billingham necessitated the building of Stephenson Hall as a separate modern school.¹⁸⁸ As a result, whilst each hall appeared to have won the loyalty of its pupils there was little evidence that the whole body of pupils had been integrated into one community owing complete allegiance to the Campus. Furthermore, “the great influx of people to this rapidly expanding town provided a population without ties, without, as yet, community spirit or roots in the local soil. This may have contributed to the lack of success which attended the attempts to unite the whole body of pupils into a happy entity working and playing together.”¹⁸⁹

It is not without irony that one of the conclusions drawn by the Director from the failure of the campus experiment was to push the County along the road to full comprehensivization. The irony is in the fact that just under three years before his

¹⁸⁶ Minutes of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 14 April 1965; Minute No. 19.

¹⁸⁷ As stated above, Browning Hall had not been built. Work was to have begun on the new building in the financial year 1965-1966, but when plans for the comprehensive school were approved Browning Hall was scrapped.

¹⁸⁸ In many respects Stephenson Hall can almost be thought of as a separate self-contained unit.

¹⁸⁹ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 14 April 1965; Minute No. 19.

report, on the morning of Monday 7 May 1962, the Secondary Education Sub-Committee had decided, at long last, after sixteen years, to reorganize secondary education along the lines suggested by Thomas Tilley in 1946 into multilateral units.

George Metcalfe concluded his report by saying, "It may be that the re-organisation of the scheme so as to form a single Comprehensive School would help to bring about the desired integration. It would appear that having received notice of intention to retire from the Head Master of one of the existing Halls, and before the building of the fifth Hall, now is the appropriate time for the Committee to consider this suggestion, *while it is considering the establishment of Comprehensive Schools in other parts of the County.*"

The Secondary Education Sub-Committee, to whom George Metcalfe delivered his report, resolved: "(1) That the report be approved."¹⁹⁰ This was written just seven months after the Ferryhill Grammar Technical School opened its doors to pupils for the first time and less than a fortnight after County Councillor J.J. Vickerstaff *officially* opened the school.¹⁹¹

The failure of the campus experiment was featured widely in the local press over several days. The Director's report was quoted at length in a full-page feature article in *The Northern Echo*, referring in its page one index to Billingham campus

¹⁹⁰ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 14 April 1965; Minute No. 19.

¹⁹¹ In fact the Education Committee had approved a report of the Director on 17 February recommending a switch to full comprehensivization, which makes the official opening ceremony seem ever more anachronistic.

as "*The School that Failed*".¹⁹² However, the article went on to say that the scheme was intended to provide ease of transfer between the three modern schools and Bede Hall to suit the talents of the pupils. But in fact transfers were on a very small scale. The scheme was intended to remove the divisions of the 11-plus. But the divisions were still there. Parents, and more importantly the pupils, still regarded the Campus not as one school but as four, with Bede Hall very much the grammar school.

The Northern Echo made its own views very clear. The newspaper agreed that the Director was probably correct to suggest that the answer was to make the Campus wholly comprehensive, speculating that it might mean Bede Hall becoming the "home" of the fifth and sixth forms. In this way all the pupils would look forward to going there and would really regard it as part of "their" school. Or perhaps Durham County Education Committee could take a leaf out of Darlington's "admirable" Peter Plan¹⁹³ and convert Bede Hall into a sixth form college. "We are glad that Mr. Metcalfe and his Committee have been courageous enough to face it. There will be some who will crow that the whole idea was a mistake. But they will be those who are still defending the 1945 education system - and nothing could be a bigger mistake than that."

¹⁹² The Northern Echo, 12 May 1965.

¹⁹³ The Northern Echo, which was based in Darlington, was heavily involved in reporting the so-called Peter Plan (named after the Borough's Chief Education Officer). This plan, which polarized public opinion, aimed at re-organizing secondary education by opting for 11-16 comprehensive schools and replacing the Borough's grammar schools with a sixth form college. For a detailed analysis of this, and in particular the political aspects of the scheme, see R. Batley, et al. Going Comprehensive: Educational Policy Making in Two County Boroughs.

Just two days after the appearance of this article the editor was forced to defend the headline in his page one index by making reference to the negative comments in the Director of Education's report. However, he did print a retraction saying, "We are glad to make it clear that the word "failed" was not intended to imply failure to give pupils a good education. The failure referred to was the social one of achieving a high enough degree of mixing together among the pupils from the various halls." Furthermore, he informed his readers that the Director of Education had asked him to point out that the school had a first-class teaching staff and first-class facilities and was doing a very sound educational job. In addition, it was reported that in the Director's view the campus had, "a degree of social integration not found in the tripartite system of grammar, technical and modern schools on separate sites." Despite the retraction, the damage had been done. Using the analogy of the layer-cake, and under the title "*The layers are still separate and apart*", John Taylor wrote a convincing, if largely biased, piece on the social inequalities of selective education. It was in accord with the temper of the times and exemplified the change in mood of this most influential of regional dailies.

Less than two months later *The Northern Echo* was pleased to report: "Tonight Mr. George Metcalfe, County Durham's Director of Education, will address a public meeting at Bede Hall on *Billingham and Comprehensive Education*."¹⁹⁴ It further pointed out that the Education Committee planned to open two comprehensive

¹⁹⁴ The Northern Echo, 6 July 1965.

schools in Billingham. This would involve converting the four Campus halls and building a new school at High Grange.¹⁹⁵

Three years before his report on these two experiments, the Director and the Education Committee had opted for a wholesale programme of secondary reorganization, which involved the setting up of multilateral units throughout the County. The reasons why the multilateral plans, first mooted in 1949, took so long to implement are not difficult to assess. One fundamental problem was that engendered by the heated philosophical arguments as to which type of system to choose, which finally foundered on the rock of economic expediency and reality. Secondary reorganization would be very expensive, and the County had neither the ability nor the resources needed to build the schools necessary to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of educationalists.

There is no denying the willingness to reconstruct during the post-war period, but what appears to have been lacking was the economic base on which such vital reconstruction could be founded. The economic infrastructure was just not there: the Country was in a period of transition. The capital expenditure for all the proposed changes laid out in the 1951 Development Plan was enormous; an estimated £323,338,250 would have to be spent in two proposed periods, 1950 to 1957 and 1957 to 1972, if its recommendations were to be fully implemented.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ This would be a fourteen-form entry 11-18 school for nearly 2,000 pupils. The proposal for the Campus was to create extra teaching space by building "house blocks" linked to Bede, Davy and Faraday Halls. Stephenson Hall, which stood apart from the others, would become a sixth-form block.

¹⁹⁶ See Appendix Nine.

The education reform budget was expected to account for a mere 14 per cent of the overall cost: £14,867,805 in the first phase and £30,957,707 in the second.¹⁹⁷

Although regarded in political manifestos and County Hall pronouncements as vital to the interests of the region, as has often happened, education was given a relatively low priority. The arguments for this appear very plausible: the decline in the old traditional industries necessitated investment in other forms of employment. Thus, emphasis was increasingly laid on attracting new industry and consumer services into the area, as attempts were made to diversify the region's economy. Housing slum clearance, repairs and redevelopment were targeted as being worthy of the highest consideration, and were given a higher profile than the proposals for educational reform. Huge amounts of capital expenditure were allocated for housing; nearly 60 per cent of the total estimates were set aside for housing and attendant services, such as sewers and roads.¹⁹⁸

However, the Director adopted a far more optimistic tone on 17 November 1961 when he delivered an address to the County branch of the National Association of Schoolmasters entitled, "Educational Developments in the County." In George Metcalfe's hand-written notes prior to the meeting, which almost certainly also formed the basis of the numerous speech nights he was asked to attend, there is a passionate outline of his many educational philosophies. He opened with: "At the

¹⁹⁷ This figure was for primary and secondary education only and excluded the amount to be expended on provision for colleges of further education and technical colleges, which accounted for 2½ per cent of the estimated total expenditure.

¹⁹⁸ For a more detailed analysis of the low priority given to education in County Durham see S. Robinson, Regional Underdevelopment and Education: The Case of the North-East.

beginning of this century the majority of people could not afford to be interested in Education while now they cannot afford to be disinterested in Education.”¹⁹⁹ This was a rallying cry for teacher, parents and pupils alike.

The Director was concerned about the need for an educated democracy and, in a highly competitive world, of making the best use of the country’s scientific and technical resources. He was worried about the emergence of a more complex and less coherent society in which traditional social sanctions were weakening. Children in particular had to be safeguarded against “improper pressures”. Schools were seen as defenders of “the best of our democratic principles.”

The rallying cry continued, “In a highly complex technical and commercial world it is essential to make sure that potential talent is not, as so largely in the past, neglected, and that the best possible use is made of everyone’s abilities ... We are pressing on with developments as rapidly as the money becomes available. We are building new secondary schools of great variety. Indeed we claim in this field to have practically every kind of secondary school. These include single sex grammar and modern schools, mixed grammar and modern schools, grammar-technical schools, secondary schools providing commercial and technical courses and secondary modern schools taking General Certificate of Education courses. There is facility to transfer between all of these schools. In addition we are experimenting with a multilateral school in Weardale, and of course the campus school at

¹⁹⁹ From a collection of miscellaneous letters housed in the Local Records Office, County Hall Durham, Ref. CC/E/1. The letter is undated but was clearly written between the 3rd and 6th of November 1961.

Billingham. These are all steps in the right direction but much remains to be done. If the money were available we would wish to replace our old schools with new ones ... Above all if we had more teachers ... we would get down the size of classes.”

He concluded, “Parents of today and you citizens of tomorrow who believe in a real democracy of opportunity and social justice [you must] play an active part in bringing pressure to bear to see that the vision of those who prepared the 1944 Statute is brought to reality as quickly as possible.”²⁰⁰

Sixth months later, at special meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee convened at County Hall Durham on 7 May 1962, for some, the vision was to become reality.

In terms of its significance for the development of secondary education in Ferryhill and Chilton, indeed for the County as a whole, it is no exaggeration to call this Monday morning meeting historic. Minute 47 laid out in precise detail the proposals for the development of multilateral units within the County. In it was the ghost of the Draft Development Plan of 1946.

In truth, there had been some progress prior to 1962, most significantly in the purchase of land either for school buildings or playing fields. In 1948, the County's Buildings Sub-Committee made recommendations for the purchase of land in the

²⁰⁰ From a collection of miscellaneous letters housed in the Local Records Office, County Hall Durham, Ref. CC/E/1.

area of Dean Bank, Broom Cottages and Merrington to meet the needs of senior pupils in a four-form entry secondary modern (mixed) school "near Ferryhill".²⁰¹ The minute of the Sub-Committee also referred to the purchase in 1939 of over 11 acres of land for a senior school in Ferryhill: proof indeed that education reform, prior to the 1980s, moved at its own slow, inimitable pace. The Sub-Committee also recommended that the Minister be requested to approve such a school and that the bureaucratic wheels be set in motion. Thus, architects were commissioned to draw up plans for new buildings, accountants asked to estimate the cost of the new proposals, and a special sub-committee was set up to approve the purchase of the land.²⁰²

The above proposals were, with the obvious exception of the 1939 purchase, a response to the 1944 Act, and form a part of the numerous draft proposals prior to the 1949 Plan submitted by the County to the Minister for his approval. However, there can be no denying that the really significant changes came about only after the 1962 decision to opt for the wholesale reorganization to a system of multilateral units. The report of the Director stated quite categorically that the Authority was now committed to the *type* of education provided in the schools at Wolsingham and Billingham, though it must be stressed that there were differences as well as similarities between these two experimental projects and the rest of the County. It was reported that long after the proposals for multilateral units appeared in the 1949 Plan, with its series of appendices indicating how such groupings might be arranged,

²⁰¹ School Buildings Sub-Committee, 21 April 1948; Minute No. 22.

²⁰² School Buildings Sub-Committee, 21 April 1948; Minute No. 22.

the extensive building programmes undertaken by the County were now sufficiently advanced for the scheme to be put into operation.

The multilateral unit was defined in the clearest terms: it should be centred round an existing grammar or grammar technical school and should include, initially at least, one secondary modern school catering for the General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level within a group of similar establishments. One secondary modern school in the group should provide commercial courses, namely shorthand and typing, both for its own pupils and also for those from other schools. Such courses were also to be offered in the grammar technical school serving the unit. The remaining schools in the unit were to develop courses to suit the locality they served, with a technical, rural, or other bias relating to the interests of the community. The primary aim was to offer a suitable variety of courses and to facilitate transfer of pupils where appropriate, to eradicate the notion of elitist grammar schools and break down the social barriers which had separated the different educational establishments until this point. As at Billingham Campus, it was suggested that the schools in a unit might wear similar uniforms; as well as being a unifying feature, this could also cut down on the expense of pupil transfers.

Though not essential at the outset of the scheme, the Director hoped that a multilateral unit would have only one governing body, made up of representatives from all the schools involved and members of the community they served. Details were given as to how often the heads of the schools forming the unit should meet. Most importantly, the Director laid down strict principles upon which the

organization of the unit should be based. These principles covered all aspects of school life.

The report took into account the different schemes of work for the various attainment groups. Interestingly, it went on to say that there should be a common curriculum in basic subjects for each pupil during the first two years. The top streams in the secondary modern schools were equated with the lowest stream in the grammar technical schools - these two groups were to follow similar courses in English, mathematics, history, geography, science and modern languages; they were even to have a common homework timetable.

To facilitate transfer between schools, and to ensure that pupils were pursuing courses relevant to their needs and intellectual abilities, in the final term of the first two years students were to be examined in the subjects of the common curriculum. The results of these tests, however, did not constitute the sole factor determining transfer: the year's work, the head teachers' reports and the wishes of the parents were also to be taken into consideration. Another aid to the smooth transfer of pupils was, where appropriate, the adoption of common examination boards.

The figure of 25 per cent, used in the 1949 Plan, was retained as the target for pupils who would be suited to a grammar school education. The "late developers" at the modern school would be encouraged to transfer to the grammar technical school, even though they had originally been considered unsuited to follow a G.C.E. Ordinary Level course. In previous years such pupils would have had to continue their education at a local technical college.

One of the hoped for advantages in encouraging the transfer of pupils between schools, especially from the modern school to the grammar technical, was that the lower stream in the latter would be encouraged to try harder. The fear factor was seen as a potent motivating force. The Director stated, "The knowledge that others will have the opportunity to replace those who are not taking full advantage of the opportunity they enjoy should have an enlivening effect."²⁰³ In fairness, the threat of being demoted was expected to have the same effect on pupils in the top stream of the modern school, who would be spurred on to greater achievements. The concept of transferring pupils was not envisaged in absolute terms; it was more subtle and discriminating, allowing for the gifted pupil to attend another school in the unit at certain times to study perhaps only one or two subjects for which he had displayed a special aptitude.

The thorny problem of parity of esteem, which had dogged many attempts at educational reform, was singled out in the report for special comment. Importantly, it was clearly stressed that parity of esteem between the schools in the unit must be more than a mere administrative procedure. Schools were actively encouraged to break down traditional prejudices. Every opportunity was to be taken to foster inter-school activities and develop a sense of community within the unit.

Consequently, head teachers were encouraged to organize a variety of events involving every school, such as sports fixtures, art exhibitions, music festivals, careers talks, school visits and the like. It was also envisaged that pupils might wear

²⁰³ Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 7 May, 1962; Minute No. 49.

a common uniform, with only a different badge to show which of the schools in the unit they attended.

These praiseworthy aspirations of the Director, as set down in his report, were to lay the foundations for the most far-reaching development in secondary education in County Durham. The advancement of the building programme made it possible for a number of pilot schemes to be set up, to act as a pattern for future reform. It was on this pattern that the secondary schools in Ferryhill and Chilton were to be reorganized, culminating in the setting up of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit in September, 1963.²⁰⁴

The Northern Echo was swift to praise the plans for reorganization, focusing in a lead article on the social as well as educational benefits of the scheme.²⁰⁵ It proudly announced that the new plans “would take the sting out of the 11-plus,” and compared the move to multilateral units with the schemes already in operation at Wolsingham and Billingham, quoting the Director as saying, the new groupings “may be considered as the first step towards a closer comprehensive integration.” It was forecast that the few schools housed in old buildings and lacking up-to-date facilities would quickly disappear. One of the reasons why in the 1940s Tilley had rejected the move to multilateral schools was on the grounds that not all the schools would be ready in time. Whilst it would be unfair to make a serious comparison, for

²⁰⁴ The Ferryhill Multilateral Unit was in the second phase of the plan. Seventeen units were opened in September 1962. Indeed Ferryhill Grammar School did not begin to admit pupils until September 1964.

²⁰⁵ The Northern Echo, 17 May 1962.

the economic circumstances were very different, nevertheless Metcalfe's attitude was in contrast much more positive. "It would be a defeatist policy to wait until all schools possessed equal facilities before attempting further progressive developments." *The Northern Echo* further reported that the reaction to the proposals was "best summed up by Mr. Dand, head master of Wolsingham, the only comprehensive school in County Durham: "Wait and see," he said."

The County Durham Assistant Masters' Association, whose members were mainly grammar school teachers, responded positively. Its press officer, Norman Sunderland, said, "our policy is to support any plan which extends the benefit of a full education." Whilst the Durham County Secretary of the National Union of Teachers commented that it was a step in the right direction.²⁰⁶ Further support came later in the month. The Chester-le-Street Association of the National Union of Teachers announced that it was in favour of establishing multilateral units and admired the flexibility of the scheme. *The Northern Echo* reported that the N.U.T. believed the scheme "would aid the interchange between varying types of secondary education depending on ability and aptitude. There would be difficulties to solve, but co-operation between teacher, parent and authority could make the scheme a great success."²⁰⁷ In addition, during a meeting of the local Labour Party at Haswell, where the members were discussing the Education Committee's decision to close Haswell Secondary Modern School, to which they were opposed, they concluded that, "whilst the Education Committee's scheme for multilateral units did

²⁰⁶ *The Northern Echo*, 17 May 1962.

²⁰⁷ *The Northern Echo*, 25 May 1962.

not implement the policy of comprehensive education envisaged by Labour Party policy, it was a marked step in the right direction.”²⁰⁸

However, the pages of *The Northern Echo* were not totally dominated by praise for the Education Committee’s new plans. There were dissenting voices like that of Mr. J. Allison, a member of Durham Divisional Education Executive. He said at a meeting of the Executive held a month after the announcement of the plan, that the decision to start the scheme in September had been made with "indecent haste", and added,—"There seems to be a case here of, "Let it in quickly before there is any opposition to it.”" In addition he felt that, "Many of the traditions built up in our schools are going to fall flat", whilst claiming that the re-organization would lead to the displacement of over 2,000 school governors. However, at the same meeting Mr. Allison’s views were countered by Councillor N.W. Sarsfield who believed that the County Education Committee and Mr. Metcalfe were to be congratulated on their plan, commenting that, "It is impossible to work this scheme with separate governing bodies for separate schools." The scheme was also supported by County Councillor F. Kidd, who remarked, "No one can deny it is improving our education services at the secondary level." Nor were there qualms in Stanley, where the Stanley Education Executive approved the new scheme. One member, who believed that the formation of multilateral units would facilitate moves between the modern and the grammar school, described the proposed changes as, "a step in the right direction." ²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ The Northern Echo, 5 June 1962.

²⁰⁹ The Northern Echo, 14 June 1962.

Clearly, if the multilateral system was to be a success one of the key elements was the transfer of pupils from the modern schools to the grammar schools and vice versa. It is clear that there was transfer. Whether there was enough it is impossible to determine. Undoubtedly, many teachers thought this was the great weakness of the system. It was certainly one of the reasons why the multilateral units were eventually disbanded in 1974.

Even before the units were established, transfers between schools had taken place. As mentioned above, for academic or personal reasons some pupils just could not cope with the demands placed on them by the grammar schools.²¹⁰ By reciprocal arrangements pupils were transferred to and from other schools if, for example, they moved home. At a meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee the Director made his views on the transfer of pupils very clear. Metcalfe had asked head teachers of the County's grammar and modern schools who had a tradition of entering pupils for G.C.E., to provide details of the performance of pupils who, having failed to gain admission to a grammar school at eleven years of age, had "since acquitted themselves meritoriously in the academic field." Each school was asked to send particulars of four or five such pupils and a number stated they could have supplied considerably more. The Director was delighted with the result, which he saw as a pleasing "justification of the County's policy," which "along with other lines of research strengthens our conviction of the unpredictability of the

²¹⁰ In the minutes of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, dated 21 June 1961; Minute No. 216 gives details of thirteen pupils who according to the Regulations relating to Secondary Schools were recommended for compulsory withdrawal from their County Grammar School, "being incapable of profiting by further Grammar School education."

development of children after the age of eleven.” The transfer of pupils from modern to grammar schools leading to success at G.C.E. O- Level, or their transfer after taking O- Levels at the modern school, was overwhelmingly justified. Indeed, one grammar school head master reported, "they have not only justified their admission, but have, in many cases, outstripped their contemporaries." Forty-five of the pupils went to university; 120 entered teacher training colleges; whilst others went to art, music, marine colleges and naval college. Many of these pupils who had *failed* the 11-plus examination subsequently entered the professions.

The Director concluded by saying, "It is gratifying to report that the machinery now in existence has brought us much nearer to the day when the examinations for admission to Grammar Schools will have little significance beyond an initial grading with the consequent alleviation of parental anxieties."²¹¹

In the light of what was to happen in 1974, it is important to point out that towards the end of George Metcalfe's report to the special meeting of the Primary Education Sub-Committee in May 1962 was the following: " There are certain localities within the Administrative Area where owing to the amount of new building still required under the Development Plan, these multi-lateral groupings may be considered as the first step towards a closer Comprehensive integration."²¹² The report then went on to list five locations where these *Comprehensive Units* might be set up: Houghton-le-Spring, Washington, Birtley, Chester-le-Street and Newton Aycliffe. All the schools were to have sixth forms and all bar one, Birtley, were estimated to house

²¹¹ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 21 June 1961; Minute No. 216.

over 2,000 pupils. Indeed, the one at Houghton-le-Spring was expected to have almost 3,000 on its register.²¹³

Comprehensive units were not the only plans under discussion. In January 1964 the Director reported to the Secondary Education Sub-Committee about proposals to re-organize secondary education in Newton Aycliffe. This scheme involved the opening of a 16-form entry junior secondary school for 1,440 pupils aged 11-14; and a 16-form entry senior secondary school for 1,100 pupils aged 15-18, of whom 150 would be in the sixth form. As far as this scheme, which in fact never came to fruition, is concerned, George Metcalfe saw four main benefits. The scheme provided an integrated system of comprehensive education. There was no segregation of academic and social groups. Those who left at 16 would have the benefit of the two-year course advocated by the Newsom Report.²¹⁴ Finally, the junior school would still have the challenge and influence of the more gifted pupils and "all the advantages provided by such leadership."²¹⁵

²¹² Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 7 May, 1962; Minute No. 49.

²¹³ Houghton-le-Spring a 19 form-entry unit for 2,850; Washington a 14 form-entry for 2,100; Birtley a 13 form-entry for 1,950; Chester-le-Street a 14 form-entry for 2,100 and Newton Aycliffe a 15 form-entry for 2,250 pupils.

²¹⁴ This Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), entitled *Half Our Future* and published in 1963, was an investigation into pupils of average or less than average ability. In 1966 George Metcalfe wrote a report on the implications of the Newsom Report for County Durham. In the report he stressed the need to strengthen links between primary and secondary schools, and between secondary schools and the wider world of employment.

²¹⁵ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 8 January 1964; Minute No. 412.

Whatever the alternatives, comprehensive units or junior and senior secondary schools, the County was dominated by multilateral units. When, as a result of the Director's reorganization plans, the details of the changes proposed for the West Central Division were published, it was recommended that, as well as a Spennymoor Multilateral Unit, there should be a second unit centred on the new Grammar Technical School to be built at Ferryhill. This Unit should comprise the Grammar Technical School, Broom Cottages and Trimdon Modern Schools, and the un-reorganized all-age schools of West Cornforth, Cornforth Lane, Ferryhill Station, Chilton Boys and Chilton Girls. There was also mention of Sedgefield Modern School, even though it was part of the South Eastern Division, being placed in the Ferryhill Unit.²¹⁶ However, in September it was suggested that, in the first instance, the Unit should be made up of Ferryhill Grammar Technical School, Chilton Modern School and Cornforth Modern School.²¹⁷ Two months later it was decided to defer the establishment of the Unit. Consequently, Chilton Modern School was to be incorporated into the Spennymoor Multilateral Unit.²¹⁸

At a meeting of the West Central Division on 4 June 1962, the Executive agreed to accept the County's multilateral unit proposal for the area. The Ministry too was in support of the County's re-organization plans. The Director received a letter dated the last day of August 1962, "noting the Authority's report on the grouping of the

²¹⁶ Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 7 May, 1962; Minute No. 49.

²¹⁷ Secondary Education Sub-Committee 5 September 1962; Minute No. 224.

²¹⁸ Secondary Education Sub-Committee 21 November 1962; Minute No. 320.

secondary schools to constitute multilateral units, and welcoming the provision of facilities for the placement of pupils where they can obtain an education best suited to their capabilities.”²¹⁹ By this time the Conservative government was not looking for confrontation, it was just pleased that progress, with local approval, was being made.

One of the main features of secondary education which had caused endless debate was the 11-plus examination, which had been boosted by the Hadow Report of 1926. Chapter Two of this thesis explored some of the reasons why it was thought to be a good forecaster of a pupil’s innate abilities. However the validity of the arguments in support of the examination were becoming increasingly difficult to accept, particularly for supporters of the Labour Party. All but its strongest supporters felt a little uneasy about the system: whilst for some, the idea of making such an important decision on a child’s future at so early an age was indefensible. In many ways, it was on this that the argument for comprehensive schools was based. By 1963 Durham Education Committee had decided on the future of the examination as a means of selection at eleven.

In May 1963 the Director submitted a report entitled "The Entry to Secondary Education and a Proposed System of Entry by Recommendation." In this report George Metcalfe laid down one of the basic tenets on which the County’s reorganization into multilateral units was based: “One of the most important aims of the Authority's developments in secondary education is that which seeks to ensure

²¹⁹ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 5 September 1962.

that at no point in a child's secondary school course is any decision as to the type of course to be followed to be regarded as unalterable. Whether schools are organized as a campus or as a multi-lateral unit, provision has been made to eradicate any semblance of finality in the "selection" of pupils at any particular age."²²⁰

However, there was no attempt to disguise the County's belief in the importance of a split at eleven, and thus by implication rejecting the middle school option, exemplified by Sir Alec Clegg's scheme in West Yorkshire.²²¹ As ever, the key lay in each child finding the course best suited to his aptitude and ability. The multilateral unit offered the best solution: "The common curriculum, the head teachers' committee, the single governing body, the common uniform, the combined social and sporting activities and the increasing recognition being given to the importance of educational guidance should all help to ensure that a sensible guidance into suitable courses of study is the normal procedure."²²²

The common belief that all of the County's 15,000 children eligible for selection to secondary school where chosen on the basis of the 11-plus is, in fact, false. In total there were several other ways to get into a selective school or stream. If a pupil failed the 11-plus, he could be transferred to a grammar technical school at a later age on the recommendation of his secondary modern school head teacher and a County inspector. If vacancies occurred later in a G.C.E. stream, perhaps because

²²⁰ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1963; Minute No. 44.

²²¹ See Chapter Four.

²²² Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1963; Minute No. 44.

pupils had transferred elsewhere or been demoted as having failed to benefit from a grammar school education, he could transfer at a later stage by means of the County's Occasional Tests and Recommendations.²²³ Another possibility was to gain access to a G.C.E. stream in a secondary modern school at 11 years of age on the recommendation of a panel made up of the primary and secondary school head teachers and the primary inspector. Another method was by transfer to commercial courses following success in an examination.²²⁴ Finally, there was the possibility of transferring to grammar technical schools for sixth form work after obtaining appropriate O-Level results elsewhere.²²⁵

However, despite these other options, the 11-plus examination was still the main method used to determine a child's educational future. With one important difference, little had changed since the examinations of 1946 and 1955 outlined above. By the early 1960s, prior to part one of the examination, the primary school head teachers were asked to submit an "order of merit" list to the County office. A child's performance in part one of the examination and the order of merit were both

²²³ The minutes of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee give details of these and they amount to perhaps as many as a dozen pupils each year.

²²⁴ As happened at Broom Cottages, which was a centre for such commercial courses. Similarly, pupils from several local un-reorganized primary schools, who had *failed* the 11-plus but who were still thought capable of benefiting from an *academic* education were transferred to the Broom's O-Level stream.

²²⁵ There was quite an intense debate as to what constituted "appropriate O-Level results." For example, the Durham Branch of the Joint Four Secondary Association said it should be a pass in English Language and at least three other *academic* subjects. However, at a meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee in July 1963 this idea was rejected on the grounds that it was felt English Language was relatively easy to pass whilst following an Advanced Level course at the same time. Consequently, the old entry requirements of accepting pupils who had obtained passes at Ordinary Level in any three subjects was retained.

taken into account before selecting the pupils eligible to sit for part two of the 11-plus. Selection was such that, for part two there were about twice as many candidates as grammar school places. Part two was a standardized test in English and Mathematics and marked by the grammar school staff in whose premises the examinations were held: no account was taken of the order of merit.

Such a system clearly had its adherents. The 11-plus provided a common yard stick against which all pupils were measured. The tests were objective and, in part two, marked by independent assessors. Most importantly, *in the majority of cases*, it worked: the most gifted were selected for the grammar technical schools, the least able went to the modern schools. Of course, the rub is that it succeeded *in the majority of cases*.

After pointing out the benefits of the examination, Director Metcalfe began his reform of the 11-plus system in the County by making his views on the iniquities of the system very clear. "All human qualities cannot be measured by any yard stick and neither attainment tests nor psychological tests can present a complete picture of all the traits and circumstances which together form a living and growing personality. The passing minor ailment, the recent bereavement, the domestic upheaval may easily alter an examination mark, but they may not change a character and there is no scale of allowance which can eradicate the influences exerted by a variety of home backgrounds."²²⁶ After such an impassioned statement the 11-plus examination as the main means of selection was doomed.

²²⁶ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1963; Minute No. 44.

There were, of course, additional arguments against retaining the old system. In the final selection process there was no allowance made for the quality of the child's work in the primary school.²²⁷ Furthermore, some children, particularly those with affluent parents, were being coached to pass the examination. Some primary schools were concentrating so much of their efforts on getting pupils through the 11-plus that other parts of the curriculum were being neglected. However, perhaps the most overwhelming argument was centred on the phrase *in the majority of cases*. Between the two ends of the spectrum, that is to say, those who should clearly go to the grammar technical school and those for whom a less academic modern school was more appropriate, there was the amorphous middle group. Classically, this usually refers to the late developers, or the ones who had been unwell on the crucial day of the examination; but equally there were those for whom a grammar school place was as much a sentence as for those who were inappropriately selected for the modern school.

As a consequence of his report the Director recommended that selection at eleven should no longer be solely on the basis on the 11-plus examination, but on the

²²⁷ Very interestingly, for the 1963 examination the County did a comparison between those who were specially recommended on part one of the 11-plus by their primary school headteachers as being "pupils of outstanding ability" and their eventual results. Out of 800 girls who were recommended only 14 (1.7 %) failed to secure a place in a grammar technical school. Whilst for boys the figures were even more impressive: 770 were recommended and only 12 failed, a discrepancy of only 1.5%.

Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1963; Minute No. 44.

recommendations of the primary school head teachers.²²⁸ Thus, primary school heads were asked to put their pupils into one of four categories: S.R. - specially recommended and denoting pupils of outstanding ability; R - recommended and denoting pupils of marked ability; Z - border zone, denoting pupils of real ability but with whose progress there is some element of doubt (head teachers were asked to report fully on these cases); N.R. - not recommended and denoting those pupils unsuitable for grammar technical school courses.

Primary school heads completed the first three sections of confidential Form 1 with their recommendations for transfer to secondary school courses in grammar technical schools or secondary modern G.C.E. classes.

The first part of Form 1 asked for details of the destinations of the school's pupils over the previous three years. Supplementary notes suggested that in the County as a whole about thirty per cent of the year group were usually selected to follow O-Level courses, but that the percentage did vary from one location to another and that there were fluctuations from year to year, often due to shifts in population.

Part Two required the head teachers to submit their order of merit based on the S.R., R., Z. and N.R. classification given by the Director. The names of all the pupils were to be entered on the form and the documentary evidence to support the recommendation had to be retained in the school and be available for inspection.

²²⁸ Barnard Castle was chosen as the area for the pilot scheme. Although it must be remembered that there was no 11-plus at Wolsingham, where the pupils attended a common school.

Documents could include class lists, test papers, written work, and such like.

However, the notes for guidance pointed out, "Whilst term tests will have an important bearing they should not be the only basis of assessment." This was clearly a marked shift from the concept of the 11-plus examination. Heads were reminded that "The order of merit should reflect all that is known about the pupils concerned." Thus they were asked to comment on a number of factors: a pupil's special aptitude; his attitude to work; number of years at his present school; his attendance record, and if necessary, reasons for absence. With the warning that it must not be assumed that a child from a poor home background might be "unable to overcome the disadvantages incurred", head teachers were instructed not to comment on a pupil's home conditions.

It was suggested that the classification S.R., specially recommended, should normally contain about five per cent of the County year group; and R, recommended, about fifteen per cent. Z, borderline pupils, were to be very carefully classified. Here a child's position on the order of merit could be due to a variety of factors. These were listed as a child's date of birth (May to August),²²⁹ to illness, to frequent changes of school, to domestic worries or temperamental difficulties. It was further pointed out that this section should be part of the "academic overlap",

²²⁹ In May 1952 Durham County's Chief Schools' Inspector, Mr. T.W. Nightingale, reported to the Education Committee that children born in the summer had a "painfully evident handicap" in their school progress. When junior school head teachers classify entrants by attainment tests during the first term, the May to August pupils were at an immediate disadvantage. There was a uniform pattern - the higher the stream, the less the proportion of May to August pupils and the lower the stream, the greater the proportion. In the 11-plus examination, of the pupils who gained a score of over 170, only 25 per cent were from the May to August group. Mr. Nightingale emphasized that the problem was not confined to County Durham.

which was “inherent in the multilateral unit scheme”, and such children should either be chosen for the G.C.E. class of a modern school or else for work on the common curriculum in the secondary modern school, to which the primary school was normally contributory. It was suggested that under normal circumstances about twenty per cent of pupils should be placed in this category.

Part Three of Form 1 asked for the percentage of pupils in each category. Where there was an obvious discrepancy between these figure and those for the pervious three years given in Part 1, the head teacher was asked to give an explanation. It was also required that in small schools both the class teacher and head teacher should sign the form; in larger schools there was a need for three signatories. This insistence on joint responsibility was aimed at averting accusations of bias, which might have been levelled at the head teacher if he was the sole arbiter. If there was disagreement between the co-signatories, the County inspector had to be informed immediately.

The form was then sent to the Director of Education, who would convene a meeting of the multilateral unit head teachers' panel to endorse the recommendations. This group was empowered to examine the previous term's work of individual pupils. This work consisted of English, mathematics and any written expression in history, geography, science, nature study and any other subject where a sustained piece of written work was available. Dictated notes or notes copied from the blackboard, or

work re-written after correction, could not be included in the evidence to the selection panel.²³⁰

Schools were asked to keep one or two places in reserve just in case parents successfully challenged the County's decision. However, if after a few weeks in a school it became evident that a child was manifestly in the wrong group, the multilateral unit was ordered to make arrangements for the child's transfer at the end of the term. In such cases the primary school had to be informed and given the reasons for transfer, so that in the case of faulty assessment, the same mistake would not be made in the future.

The idea of transfer, of course, was one of the basic principles behind the County's reorganization into multilateral units. However, in complete contradiction to this seminal point the Director's report stated, "Transfers of this type should be rare and carried out only after the most careful investigation." In one sentence the main reason for the failure of the multilateral unit is explained.

Admittedly, the above refers to transfers in the first term of the course, but the rule applied throughout all the years. Transfers were rare. In the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit it was a handful over the whole of the ten-year period. There was no need to transfer from Broom Cottages to the Grammar School, for the Broom had its O-

²³⁰ A year later, following proposals submitted by several head teachers' organizations and multilateral unit head teachers' panels, the role of the latter was reduced to allocating pupils recommended by the primary school heads to G.C.E. courses in either grammar technical or modern schools. Thus the power of the primary school heads was increased and the multilateral unit panel did not have the burden of making the decision.

Level stream; in any one year no more than two or three pupils were transferred *down* to the Broom. Similarly in Chilton, there was more likelihood of transfer to the Broom School than the Grammar, for that is where the tradition lay - the Broom School pre-dating the Grammar School by thirteen years, and pupils had transferred to the Broom's commercial course. From oral evidence alone, like at the Broom, the rate of transfer was at most four or five pupils a year, and invariably from the Grammar School to Chilton.²³¹

The Director's comments on the transfer of pupils concludes, "It must be remembered that the greater the number of transfers, the greater will be the feeling of insecurity on the part of the child and all possible evidence should be obtained before action of this type is taken."²³² George Metcalfe's report was finally accepted at a special meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee on 3 October 1963.

As previously outlined, when details of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit appeared, it was expected to consist of Ferryhill Grammar Technical School, Broom Cottages and Trimdon Modern Schools, a number of un-reorganized schools centred on Cornforth and Chilton and, surprisingly, because it lay outside the administrative area controlled by the West Central Division, Sedgefield Modern School. However, even more curious was the temporary inclusion of the modern schools in Newton

²³¹ See pp. 219-221 for further details.

²³² Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1963; Minute No. 44.

Aycliffe, Eggescliffe and Hurworth.²³³ The area covered by this region was vast. Eggescliffe was on the edge of the Stockton-on-Tees conurbation and Hurworth, something of an administrative anomaly, was part of the County administrative area but was situated well to the south of the County Borough of Darlington. Both Eggescliffe and Hurworth were approximately twenty miles away from Ferryhill. Such a wide catchment area was acknowledged by the Education Committee, who believed it would be reduced when the Newton Aycliffe Multilateral Unit was formed.²³⁴ Furthermore, it was suggested that in view of the long distances involved in travelling to Ferryhill, G.C.E. pupils from Hurworth and Eggescliffe should be allowed to travel to Stockton-on-Tees.²³⁵

This last point was recognized when the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit was formally established on 22 May 1963. It was to consist of "Ferryhill New Grammar Technical School; Chilton New Modern School; Broom Cottages Modern School Trimdon Modern School and Newton Aycliffe Campus (temporarily associated pending the establishment of a multilateral unit in Newton Aycliffe.)"²³⁶ However, by 12 June 1963 Sedgefield Modern School been added to the Unit.²³⁷

²³³ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1963; Minute No. 44.

²³⁴ Although the Newton Aycliffe Multilateral Unit was set up in September 1968, a grammar school was not and talented pupils from Newton Aycliffe still attended Ferryhill Grammar Technical School.

²³⁵ Stockton-on-Tees was an Excepted District and not organized as a multilateral unit, but it was thought that the grammar school accommodation there was more than sufficient to meet the academic needs of these additional pupils.

²³⁶ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 22 May 1963; Minute No. 65.

²³⁷ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 12 June 1963; Minute No. 126.

In this enlarged structure lies the basis for Ferryhill Grammar Technical School's extra-ordinarily wide catchment area referred to in Chapter Five. It was also the foundation for its excellent examination results, as the talents of the most academically gifted pupils from this vast region were channelled towards the school.

At a meeting in November 1963 the Director recommended that pupils of the required academic ability aged 12-14, who lived in the area covered by the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit and attending grammar schools, as well as Sedgefield, Spennymoor Durham Road, Newton Aycliffe and Broom Cottages Modern schools, be offered transfers to the new Grammar Technical School. From preliminary enquiries it was estimated that this would provide 106 second year pupils, 85 third year pupils and 67 fourth year pupils. Added to this, it was proposed to admit 192 first year pupils, making a total roll of 450 in 14 forms.²³⁸

One of the great benefits of a multilateral unit was the co-operation it encouraged between the schools in the unit. Certainly the idea of transfer of pupils between schools had by the mid-1960s become well established. For example, the use of Broom Cottages as a commercial centre, and before that the sharing by the local un-reorganized primary schools of the Broom's woodwork facilities. In many respects this was born out of necessity and forms part of the general recovery from the 1939-45 war. Due to other post-war priorities and economic constraints, County Durham did not possess sufficient resources: it was easier to combine or concentrate

²³⁸ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 20 November 1963; Minute No. 322.

resources in a few key areas. Such collaborative efforts were given a boost by the formation of the multilateral units. The regular meeting between of the Head Teachers' Committee in the Ferryhill Unit helped to spread good practice, both in terms of school management and organization, and also the broader school curriculum. Thus, by January 1964 the Director received a request for the expansion of the curriculum in six of the modern schools in the unit. Three schools wanted to set up commercial courses: Egglecliffe, Milton Hall on the Newton Aycliffe Campus and Trimdon; at Chilton an engineering and pre-nursing course was set up whilst at Sedgefield and Hurworth there were applications for rural science courses.²³⁹

With regard to the latter, these were really quite ambitious. For example, at Hurworth the project originated with the school staff and had the support of the governors, a number of whom were farmers. Both schools were situated in rural areas and a high proportion of the schools' pupils were farmers' sons and daughters. The course involved the use of pigs, rabbits and poultry. Goats were to be an additional feature at Sedgefield as well as a garden. The aim was to sell the produce resulting from the projects and in this sense both schemes were to be as cost effective as possible. The broader educational benefits of both courses were very imaginative and they were fully expected to benefit the wider school curriculum as well as the pupils' social and personal development.

²³⁹ Minute 30 of a meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1964, states that it was resolved "to ask the Department of Education and Science to approve the addition of Hurworth and Egglecliffe Secondary Modern Schools to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit." Two months later approval was duly given.

After the first meeting of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit on 2 October 1963 the work of the Unit was not especially distinguished. At this first meeting, which the head of Broom Cottages, Mr Gleaves, chaired, there was an agreement that there should be a common curriculum for pupils in the first year in English and Mathematics.²⁴⁰

This was in line with County policy and seen as a way of correcting any anomalies in the selection process. If mistakes occurred it was easier to correct them during the first year by transferring pupils to the most appropriate course. The two courses were to run parallel with the one at the Grammar Technical School and all head teachers in the Unit were asked to suggest syllabuses for English and mathematics and a list of literature books. Each school was allowed to retain its own examination board, and the decision as to a single exam board was postponed until the head teacher was appointed at Ferryhill Grammar Technical School.²⁴¹

Further examples of co-operation at this first meeting included the proposal for a Unit sports meeting and the agreement that any member school taking a party abroad should offer places to other pupils within the Unit. At the next meeting in November 1963 it was agreed to hold a two-day careers exhibition, whilst the idea of a shared curriculum was strengthened with the agreement to share common schemes of work. Other later examples of co-operation included an invitation to pupils from Broom Cottages and Chilton Modern to use the Grammar School's swimming pool. Similarly, pupils from Chilton were invited to see the Grammar

²⁴⁰ Minutes of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' Meeting, 2 October 1963.

²⁴¹ The Secretary of the meeting was Mr. Bowman, the head master of Sedgefield Modern School. Mr. Bowman was appointed head master of Ferryhill Grammar Technical School in January 1964.

School's production of *The Mikado*, and there was a joint performance of *Noye's Fludd* at Broom Cottages for three days in May 1966.

However, despite twice-termly meetings and a modest degree of co-operation on curriculum matters, nothing really came out of the multilateral unit. Sporting and cultural links were forged but the promised transfer of pupils never really took place on the scale that some expected. Keith Evans pointed out that in 1957 a high powered investigation on behalf of the National Foundation for Educational Research revealed a 12 per cent margin of error in selection procedures at the age of eleven.²⁴² The number of transfers between schools in the Unit was minimal, a handful each year.²⁴³

In 1964 four pupils were transferred to the Grammar School: three from Sedgfield Modern (one first year and two second year pupils) and one from Milton Hall in Newton Aycliffe. On the other hand, four pupils went from Chilton Modern to Broom Cottages G.C.E. stream and a further four pupils were transferred into the same stream from within Broom Cottages.²⁴⁴ These transfers took place throughout the year. In 1966 there were only two transfers to the Grammar School,

²⁴² K. Evans, The Development and Structure of the English Education System, p110.

²⁴³ See also Chapter Five.

²⁴⁴ See Head Teachers Reports to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' and Managers' Committee; 26 February 1964, March 1964 and 27 January 1964 for the Grammar School, Chilton Modern and Broom Cottages figures respectively.

one from Marlowe Hall in Newton Aycliffe and one from Sedgefield Modern.²⁴⁵

However, in the same year the Grammar School had a Lower Sixth for the first time. Of the thirty pupils who began studying Advanced Level in 1966, seven came from outside the Grammar School: three from Broom Cottages, two from Marlowe Hall, one from Sedgefield Modern and a transfer from another part of the country.²⁴⁶

Even less frequent were the transfers from the Grammar School to the modern schools. Although in 1967 three girls were admitted into Broom Cottages G.C.E. stream from the Grammar School, principally for enrolment on their commercial course. In the same year, following parental requests, two pupils were transferred from the Grammar School to Chilton Modern because they could not cope with the pressure of work at the Grammar School.²⁴⁷ The Head Teachers' Committee who met to agree these transfers also approved the transfer of five pupils from Broom Cottages G.C.E. stream to the schools non-G.C.E. stream; there were similar transfers for six pupils at Marlowe Hall.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Ferryhill Grammar School Head Teachers Report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' and Managers' Committee, 6 January 1966.

²⁴⁶ Ferryhill Grammar School Head Teachers Report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' and Managers' Committee, 5 October 1966.

²⁴⁷ Ferryhill Grammar School Head Teacher's Report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' and Managers' Committee, 17 March 1967.

²⁴⁸ Meeting of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Head Teachers' Committee, 12 April 1967.

The relatively small number of transfers outlined above was reinforced by a visit of Her Majesty's Inspectors to the Tyneside Multilateral Unit. In this unit Jarrow Grammar Technical School formed part of a group along with nine secondary modern schools.²⁴⁹ The inspectors found that from modern schools with a G.C.E. stream, the number of pupils transferred to the Grammar School at Jarrow was only 4 in 1965-66 and 3 in 1966-67. From the Grammar School to the secondary moderns the figures were equally small, 5 and 7 respectively in the two years covered by the report. By far the greatest figure was for transfer within the modern school streams. However, even here only 35 and 12 pupils had been transferred to the modern schools' G.C.E. streams in the two years.²⁵⁰

In one sense, what happened in the Ferryhill and Tyneside Multilateral units was a condemnation of the multilateral system in the County and a vindication of the argument for comprehensivization. On the other hand, the number of transfers between streams in Ferryhill Comprehensive School was very small, and certainly not significantly greater than under the Multilateral Unit. The great difference with the Comprehensive School was that it was much easier for pupils to take a mixture of O-Levels and C.S.Es. The argument for comprehensivization had raged for a long time and in the end it proved too powerful for the multilateral system to resist.

²⁴⁹ For a study of secondary education in Jarrow at this time see S. Davis, The Evolution of a Jarrow Senior School, 1944-1974.

²⁵⁰ Department of Education and Science, Report by H.M. Inspectors on A Survey of the Multilateral Unit Organisation in the Tyneside District of County Durham, September 1967-February 1968.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHALLENGE OF THE COMPREHENSIVES

1. COMPARATIVE STUDIES AND FORCES FOR CHANGE

R.W. Dargavel puts it quite succinctly, "English education, like the English climate, is notable for its diversity."¹ It is the contention of this thesis that the post-1944 policy adopted by Durham County Local Education Authority was, in a large measure, unique in England and Wales. To illustrate this point it is important to put the Durham solution in its wider context by looking in some detail at measures adopted by other local authorities.

In 1945 the new Labour Minister of Education, Ellen Wilkinson, claimed she had two guiding aims, "to see that no boy or girl is debarred by lack of means from taking the course of education for which he or she is qualified...and to remove from education those class distinctions which are the negation of democracy."² She saw the fulfilment of the terms of the 1944 Act, the establishment of universal secondary

¹ R.W. Dargavel, *North-Eastern Approaches: Secondary Provision in Northumberland and Durham*, *Forum*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Autumn 1960, p. 24.

² R. Lowe, *Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History*, p. 38.

schooling and the raising of the school-leaving age as keys to the realization of these objectives, despite the fact that many within the Party desired a wider programme. When attacked at the 1946 Party conference by Labour Party colleagues, who reminded her that earlier conferences had committed Labour to multilateral secondary education, Ellen Wilkinson fell back upon a policy of parity of esteem. There were many experiments in secondary reorganization and for a long time the Ministry of Education seemed very tolerant of a wide range of schools, many of which seemed to co-exist inside the same county.

Stuart Maclure, in his introduction to a collection of articles written in 1965 by the chief education officers of eleven L.E.A.s, all of whom had to grapple with the reorganization of secondary education called for by the 1944 Act, summarizes the six main types of comprehensive organization suggested by the new Secretary of State for Education³ Anthony Crosland when he issued Circular 10/65, *The Organisation of Secondary Education*.⁴ First, he cites the “*all through*” comprehensive schools, as exemplified by the reorganization in Coventry. Secondly, he describes the “*three-stage system*”, as found in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Finally, he distinguishes between four types of “*two-tier*” secondary organization represented in the first instance by Cardiff and Doncaster, followed by the Leicestershire Plan, then the Bradford scheme and finally the system adopted in

³ The Department of Education and Science had replaced the Ministry of Education in 1964.

⁴ S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. This is a collection of articles which provides the basis for a comparative study of the approaches to comprehensive reorganization adopted in Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Coventry, Doncaster, Durham, Glasgow, Leicestershire, Liverpool, Stoke-on-Trent and the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Stoke-on-Trent. These four two-tier systems are distinguished from each other largely by the age of transfer from junior to senior secondary school and in combining common junior secondary schools with grammar schools and sixth form colleges. Interestingly, *and significantly*, the Durham plan is not included in any of Crosland's, or Maclure's, six categories.

It would appear that some authorities, for example Leicestershire and Stoke-on-Trent, had more clearly formulated plans which demonstrated a firm commitment to full comprehensivization. Conversely others, of which Durham and the West Riding of Yorkshire are examples, were rather more tentative in their approach and only produced what Maclure calls "partial schemes".⁵

The selection policies adopted by different local education authorities for the transfer of pupils between schools at either eleven or thirteen showed numerous variations, and in some cases even disparity within the same authority. In Bradford, selection to the new high schools or extended high schools was based on parental choice and the advice of the head teacher. In some Bristol schools, where the post-1944 bipartism arrangement continued after 1965, in the north and south central areas of the city, there were *tests of general ability*.⁶ Furthermore, in some local authorities, largely if not exclusively where the Conservative Party held sway and

⁵ S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 5.

⁶ It should be pointed out that in Bristol the formal 11-plus examination was abandoned. See below for further details of Bristol's reorganization programme.

where comprehensivization was anathema, they retained the 11-plus or 13-plus examinations as a means of selection.

Coventry's solution, which was considered, and rejected, by County Durham's Education Committee, was to plan along the now familiar pattern of all through comprehensive schools catering for pupils aged 11-19. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, the Chief Education Officer, Sir Alec Clegg, described his three-stage system in which a pupil passed from one comprehensive school to another. The three schools were for pupils aged 5-9, 9-13 and 13-19: what came to be called the middle school system.

Another form of middle school system was evident in the two-tier schemes adopted by Cardiff and Doncaster. All pupils would attend a common junior secondary school from 11-13. Parents could decide to allow their children to stay on until 15 or 16 in the same junior secondary school, or else transfer to a grammar school which catered for full-time education until the age of 18 or 19. A variation of this two-tier system could be seen in the Leicestershire Plan, which is described below in greater detail; this provided for transfer at 14 with an express stream a year earlier. This plan then evolved into another type of two-tier scheme in which all secondary aged pupils began by attending a junior secondary school from 11-13 or 14 before transferring to a senior secondary school for 14-16 or 18 year olds. A further variation on the two-tier system was provided in Stoke-on-Trent, with high schools from 11-15 or 16 supplemented with sixth form or junior colleges. The sixth form college could be at the top of the same school, as at Mexborough in the West Riding of Yorkshire, or in a separate sixth form college.

Although it is outside the scope of this thesis to investigate in any great detail the circumstances in which the various schemes were adopted, it is important to place the Durham experiment with multilateralism in both its national and regional context. The brief outlines given of the arrangements in London, Bristol, Leicestershire, Bradford and the West Riding of Yorkshire will stand for the national picture; whilst the plans adopted in three other North-Eastern regions, Tyneside, Gateshead and Darlington boroughs, must bear testimony for the region. All three border County Durham and the latter two were part of the administrative county: each adopted a different solution to the challenge of secondary reorganization. Of the three the most closely investigated are the cases of Gateshead and Darlington. In their comparative study, published in 1970, Richard Batley, Oswald O'Brien and Henry Parris investigated educational policy making in these two county boroughs.⁷

What emerges from this analysis is that *all* authorities are unique. The over-arching principle is that the education system in England and Wales, despite the wishes of successive governments since 1870, is essentially ad hoc. Indeed, if for the sake of argument one accepts that the Durham multilateral system was a *form* of comprehensivization, which according to Labour's 1958 pamphlet, *Learning to Live*, it was,⁸ then in County Durham there were different comprehensive systems

⁷ R. Batley, et al., Going Comprehensive: Educational Policy Making in Two County Boroughs.

⁸ See Chapter Three p. 157.

co-existing side by side in the *same* county. This diversity of provision within the same geographical area is not un-typical. For example, in Bradford, prior to Circular 10/65, there were nine grammar schools, twenty-five secondary modern schools, two comprehensive schools and two other schools which the Director of Education, Mr. T.F. Davies, described as “for the more academically able.”⁹ The new plan aimed at retaining the comprehensive schools and adapting the other schools to fit into the two-tier arrangement of junior high (11-13) and high schools (13+). The eighteen junior high schools occupied old secondary modern school buildings. The next stage of education in the high school was sub-divided into simple high schools and extended high schools, the latter offering education from 13-19. At the beginning of this new arrangement in September 1964 there were four high schools, housed in former secondary modern schools, and nine extended high schools occupying former grammar school premises. The L.E.A. was divided into four areas each containing four or five junior high schools, one new mixed high school and two single-sex extended high schools. However, in two areas there was also a comprehensive school and in one area a mixed extended high school. Added to this were the city’s direct grant grammar schools and the Roman Catholic voluntary schools!¹⁰

In terms of its complexity, the Durham experience was by no means unique, and attempting to make sense of such bewildering variations in provision is somewhat

⁹ S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 52.

¹⁰ For a detailed treatment of the Bradford scheme see: A. Dark, An Historical Study of Secondary Reorganisation in England and Wales up to 1965 with Special Reference to Bradford.

challenging. In many ways the provision of education is a mirror which reflects the somewhat enigmatic relationship that exists between local and central government. This relationship was always complex and often stormy.¹¹

Following the destruction caused by the war, London's task of rebuilding the city was enormous and Robin Pedley is not alone in believing that the capital faced its problems with courage and imagination. It has been estimated that half of London's 1,200 schools were either destroyed or seriously damaged by aerial bombing during the war: only fifty schools were left unscathed.¹² London's example of post-war reconstruction, in Pedley's words, "shines like a beacon."¹³ In response to its educational problems, London County Council opened up eight "interim comprehensive schools" of what by pre-war standards were seen as of enormous size, some in excess of 2,000 pupils. Like other authorities, London was forced to adopt a two-tier system with the new comprehensives competing with grammar school, direct grant and public schools in the same area. However, London certainly set the pace for the rest of the country to follow.

Outside London, one of the most frequently cited plans for post-war secondary reorganization is the so-called Leicestershire Plan, which began in 1957. In essence the plan involved the use of a form of middle school, with all pupils of secondary

¹¹ For a detailed study of the way this relationship has evolved see, J. Stanyer, County Government in England and Wales.

¹² S. Maclure, One Hundred Years of London Education 1870-1970, p. 138.

¹³ R. Pedley, The Comprehensive School: England, Forum, Vol. 5, No. 1, Autumn 1962, p. 4.

age attending a common high school from the ages of 11 to 13. Because the experiment in Leicestershire pre-dated Circular 10/65 by several years, it attracted a great deal of attention from other local authorities. The Director of Education, Stuart Mason, wrote passionately against the iniquities of the 11-plus examination when he talked of the “deadening backwash of 11-plus on the curriculum of the primary schools” and of the increasing evidence that selection at eleven “was failing by too wide a margin to pick out those who would be successful five or ten years later.” Furthermore, the selection process was too narrow and there was a growing realization that what was being measured, “represented only one or at most two of the colours of the spectrum of human talent and even those within a narrow range of tone, and that other talents should no longer be regarded as second class. A sense of success in a few was being paid for by a sense of failure in many. A sense of social injustice was being engendered while reservoirs of talent were doomed to remain untapped.”¹⁴

Leicestershire, like many other authorities, began with a pilot scheme and for a time there were several different systems operating within the same county.

Leicestershire’s two-tier solution must have seemed very tempting and certainly Mason makes a very convincing case for adopting this type of organization. The Leicestershire high school was a comprehensive school with limited objectives and as such did not have to be of a vast size. The great fear of many who were unsure

¹⁴ S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 5.

For a more detailed account of the Leicestershire Plan see, S.C. Mason, The Leicestershire Plan and Experiment.

about adopting the all through 11-18 comprehensive scheme was that schools of upwards of 2,000 pupils would be created, and that this would be very unsuitable for children who had previously attended junior schools of just a few hundred pupils. This was certainly a cause for concern in County Durham.

After three years in the high school, pupils could opt to stay on at the school for a further year or else transfer to an "upper school", where they would remain until the age of 16 or 18. As in the case of many local authorities, whichever scheme they adopted the high schools were to be housed in the former secondary modern schools, whilst the old grammar schools would become the upper schools.¹⁵ There was to be no test of pupils' academic ability, the decision was to be made by the pupils and their parents and was to be based purely on the pupils' willingness to remain at school beyond the statutory requirement. Initially, this was seen as an interim measure until the school leaving age was raised to 16, after which all pupils would have to proceed to the upper school. The L.E.A. fully understood that many pupils who were in the middle and lower ability range might opt to remain at school, and therefore seek to attend what might have been previously described as the grammar school. However, the Director of Education was convinced that with the relatively small size of the upper school, having been relieved of the responsibility of teaching 11-13 year olds, teachers would be able to cater for pupils with a wide ability range.

¹⁵ In essence, the former grammar schools were regarded as better equipped to deal with examination classes than the secondary moderns - not only did they have more specialist teaching rooms they had staff who were more used to preparing pupils for the rigours of the examination system. The obvious exception to this "rule" was where new purpose-built schools were constructed, particularly in new areas of population growth.

Interestingly, and this backs up Gordon Batho's classification of education during this period as an "age of consensus",¹⁶ Stuart Mason claims that party politics were not an issue in settling upon this type of system. The system was a practical compromise based on educational, and possibly social, grounds which, if it did not succeed, could be modified or scrapped altogether. This was exactly the same attitude adopted by Durham's Director over the Wolsingham experiment.¹⁷

Initially, some designated "high fliers" moved from the primary school to the high school at the age of 10 instead of 11, and consequently moved from the high to the upper school a year earlier. This was on the insistence of the former grammar school, which demanded the continuation of a *fast stream*. However, after seven years this was abandoned. The Leicestershire Plan was certainly flexible as the age of transfer, in particular between the primary and high school, could be modified to meet changing demands. It also appeared to be the best way of utilizing the existing schools in the county without having to build a number of unacceptably huge schools in a relatively short space of time. It also avoided having to build sixth form colleges, which the L.E.A. thought of as little more than *transit camps*.

The claims made for the Leicestershire Plan were impressive. The primary schools were released from the burden of having to prepare children for the 11-plus and this led to, "an explosion of creative activity in all subjects, innumerable experiments, a

¹⁶ G.R. Batho, Political Issues in Education, p. 49. Professor Batho neatly divides educational development into four ages: he sees 1833-1944 as an age of expansion, 1944-1964 as an age of consensus, 1964-1979 as an age of politicization and 1979-1988 as an age of centralization. Few could find cause to argue with him.

¹⁷ See Chapter Three pp. 178-179.

ferment of discussion and a search to understand the true nature and needs of the primary school child.”¹⁸ High praise indeed. In addition, the high schools, that is to say the former secondary moderns, gained by having the *academic* top twenty-five per cent formerly denied them under the bipartite system. They gained parity of esteem with the old grammar schools - though, this was not the Ferryhill experience, when in 1974 the Comprehensive School was divided into the Upper and Lower School. C.J. Hetherington, deputy headmaster of Bushloe High School, one of the schools covered by the scheme, saw the less traumatic transition for children moving between primary and secondary school as being of enormous benefit, as too was the release from the pressure of having to prepare pupils for external examinations.¹⁹ This *pressure*, though the negative connotations of the word are debatable, was ironically felt in both the grammar and secondary modern schools. In the case of the latter, it was not unusual for the school curriculum and staffing to be manipulated in order to enter pupils for examinations, particularly G.C.E.s which were seen as offering pupils (and staff) parity with the grammar schools.

Before the raising of the school leaving age to 16 in 1972-73, one of the weaknesses of the Leicestershire Plan was seen as the split between the group which opted to

¹⁸ Mason in S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 53. For a comment from a primary school headteacher, George Freedland, former head of Mowmacre Hill Junior School, Leicester, see *Forum*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Autumn 1962, pp. 25-27.

¹⁹ C.J. Hetherington, A Leicestershire High School: A View from Within, Forum, Vol. 5, No. 1, Autumn 1962, pp. 20-22. This is a balanced article which does not try to avoid the potential problems of reorganization, particularly in changing the accepted work patterns of established teachers (something which was mirrored at Ferryhill) and the problems in the high school of the pupils who did not self-select to go to the upper school. However, overall, the article is very positive about the adoption of this type of middle school system.

proceed from the high school to the upper school and those who chose to stay behind. The likelihood was that if more pupils decided to move on, those remaining at the high school would be at the lower end of the ability range. The fewer pupils who remained, the more difficult it would be to provide a full range of courses for them. However, this was seen as a *benefit* for the former grammar school staff in the upper schools, who were *saved* from having to cope with those whom they perceived as being less highly motivated. Understandably, many believed that when the comprehensive system was introduced, the schools which had to make the greatest sacrifices were the grammar schools, insofar as they now had to cope with a non-selective intake. In Leicestershire the claim was that by adopting the Plan they gained more "practical subjects" and had the advantage of teaching *students* rather than *pupils*. Overall, the supporters of the Leicestershire Plan claim that where the scheme was operating it increased the staying-on rate by on average nearly 20 per cent when compared to schools in those areas of the county where the bipartite system still existed. Importantly, proponents of the Plan claimed that the more academically able were not being slowed down as was first feared by the doubters, but in fact the gifted were inspiring the average and weaker pupils to improve their performance in school.²⁰ Furthermore, the reorganization brought huge social benefits for pupils and there was increased co-operation between the primary, high and upper school staff.

Bristol's adoption of the comprehensive system in 1964 contrasts quite sharply with Durham's decision to set up its multilateral system with the opening of so many new

²⁰ Such claims were at the centre of a huge nation-wide debate as to the success, as measured by examination statistics, of the comprehensive schools over the grammar schools.

grammar schools. Yet there are several obvious similarities: both were keen to abolish the 11-plus examination, both were interested in fostering local pride in the new secondary schools and both councils were dominated by the Labour Party.²¹

Bristol's intensive building programme, which had begun as a result of the 1946 and 1951 development plans, led to the opening of seventeen comprehensive schools. However, most started as bilateral schools, with "un-selected" pupils coming from the immediate catchment area and a "selected" intake as a result of the 11-plus examination. It was clear to many in the Labour Party that with over thirty per cent of children going to grammar schools, or having free places paid for by the L.E.A. and attending direct grant schools, the comprehensives were being deprived of potentially their most academically able pupils. Not only was this contrary to the highly valued ideal of parity of esteem, it was also detrimental to the numbers attending the comprehensive schools. The formal discussions in the education committee lasted well over a year before, in October 1964, the L.E.A. decided to adopt a long-term and short-term plan. The former involved the creation of an additional nine comprehensive schools to cover the whole of Bristol. The long-term plan also envisaged the assimilation of the maintained grammar schools. Not surprisingly to opponents of the plan this was seen as the destruction of the long-cherished grammar school tradition in Bristol, whereas proponents saw it as extending such traditions to the benefit of all. It is worth noting that the grammar

²¹ For three years, between 1960 and 1963, the Labour Party in Bristol lost its majority to the Citizen Party. However, despite a commitment to preserving the traditions that the best grammar schools represented, the latter generally supported the Labour Party's plans for comprehensivization.

school supporters were not universally against comprehensive schools; they believed that the two systems could co-exist side by side.

Bristol's short-term plan was based on the understandable assumption that the long-term plan would take up to fifteen years to implement, consequently a more realistic time scale had to be adopted to meet the immediate needs of the city. The short-term plan contained several variations. First, the existing comprehensive schools could no longer receive a selective entry from outside the immediate catchment area, though there was some flexibility and parents could appeal to the L.E.A. for alternative accommodation for their children. In addition, two single-sex secondary modern schools were to be joined together to form a new comprehensive school. In East Bristol, which contained schools housed in older buildings, the two grammar and complementary secondary modern schools were to be joined to form two three-school comprehensive units.²² This plan, which was implemented in September 1965, in effect set up a two-tier system, with two schools catering for pupils aged 11-15 or 16 and the third, the old grammar school, catering for 13-18 or 19 pupils. The long term plan envisaged building two new comprehensive schools to cater for the needs of the children from East Bristol. A fourth variation was the continuation of the bipartite system set up as a result of the 1944 Act. Here pupils would be selected at eleven to attend either the grammar or the secondary modern school. However, the 11-plus examination was formally abolished and replaced with primary school recommendations, though it should be noted that there was provision for tests of general ability at the discretion of the head teacher. Finally,

²² Though it should be noted that this was markedly different from Durham's multilateral system.

Bristol's Secondary Technical School for Boys and the Secondary Commercial School for Boys and Girls received their last intake in 1965 and were allowed to run down.

In many ways the most contentious aspect of the Bristol plan was the policy the L.E.A. adopted towards the city's seven direct grant grammar schools. Through its free place system the Education Committee paid the fees of between half and a quarter of the pupils attending these schools. However, despite the undoubted quality of the education provided in these selective schools, after a great deal of what was at times acrimonious debate, it was decided to withdraw support for the free place system. The education committee was prepared to honour its commitment to those who were already attending the direct grant schools, but it was unwilling to send in new free place pupils from September 1965.

Of Anthony Crosland's six possibilities for secondary reorganization, as set out in Circular 10/65, the three most popular were the all through 11-18 school, the 11-16 school with transfer to a sixth form college and the middle school system with transfer to a comprehensive high school at 12, 13 or 14 years of age. Since abandoning multilateralism Durham County Council has chosen the first two options. In the 1980s every effort was made to remove sixth forms from the all through schools and provide tertiary colleges for 16-19 year olds. Some schools did succumb to the pressure: fortunately not Ferryhill. However, under the new powers vested in schools through the 1988 Education Act, which eroded the control of the local authorities by introducing Local Management of Schools, some schools are attempting to reverse this and restore their sixth forms.

What emerges from this comparative study is that whilst County Durham's multilateral system is a unique solution to the demands of the 1944 Act, not surprisingly the factors that influenced the L.E.A.'s decision were in large measure the same as in the case of all the other authorities. In essence these factors can be put into six rough categories: geographical location, existing provision, financial constraints, the influence of central government, local opinion and political will. As one might expect, all are almost always inextricably linked and, whilst it is convenient for the purpose of analysis to distinguish between them, it must be emphasized that in nearly all cases the divisions are artificial.

Maclure points out that in 1965 the 5,900 or so secondary schools could cater for on average a little under 500 pupils each. These statistics should be seen in the light of Circular 10/65, which asked all Local Education Authorities who had not already done so to submit plans for comprehensivization to Anthony Crosland. As Maclure goes on to say, "The administrative conundrum is, therefore, how to bring about a viable scheme of secondary education within existing buildings of modest size, in such a way as to meet the canons of comprehensiveness now laid down."²³ Added to this was the problem of school catchment areas. In both rural and urban communities the possible catchment areas did not readily fit in with the scheme for comprehensivization.

²³ S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 5.

It is very difficult to pinpoint the most crucial factor when analysing the plans adopted by local authorities in response to either to the 1944 Act or Circular 10/65: it seems to have varied from county to county. Certainly the problems of providing secondary education in predominantly rural counties were different from those found in urban L.E.A.s. Having the space to build or modify existing school buildings is a case in point. Not all were as farsighted as Bristol. Like Durham, Bristol drew up a wide-ranging Development Plan in 1946 which was modified in 1951. Bristol's 1951 Plan involved the purchase of a number of sites for the development of secondary schools. The crucial factor was that the sites were large, and in some cases remarkably so. Areas of thirty, forty and even fifty acres were acquired so that the local authority had the flexibility to choose several alternatives, one of which, ironically, would have been suitable for the Durham multilateral system. As Bristol's Chief Education Officer, Mr. G.H. Sylvester, explained, "The reasoning behind this choice of large sites for secondary schools was that ... [such sites] ... would leave the Authority free either to create on each site a comprehensive or multilateral school, or to have a school base in which the different schools would have their own autonomy but would combine for various purposes."²⁴ Furthermore, Bristol L.E.A. believed that a large secondary school strategically placed in the proposed new post-war housing estates would have a positive settling influence and help to build up a sense of community. Interestingly, what was finally agreed in Bristol was not a Durham-style multilateral system but a more traditional transition to comprehensivization.

²⁴ S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 12.

Whilst the Labour Party returned to office in 1964 determined to end selection at 11-plus and to eliminate separation in secondary education by introducing full comprehensivization, there was no Whitehall blueprint which all local authorities were forced to follow. When Anthony Crosland issued Circular 10/65, he gave only broad guidelines for local education authorities. There was a range of possibilities and L.E.A.s had a lot of opportunity to adopt plans which catered for local needs. Initially the discussions about reform were conducted in a spirit of genuine co-operation, both within local authorities and between the L.E.A.s and central government. However, as the debate became polarized the decisions of the L.E.A.s were made along strict political party lines, with the vexed issue of direct grant schools being particularly contentious, for example in Bristol and Coventry. In Lancashire the status of direct grant schools was bound up with the problem of voluntary schools, whilst in Liverpool there were four Roman Catholic direct grant schools.

One crucial factor in deciding which policy to adopt was the way in which public opinion was sought and often manipulated. In Bradford, for example, the Education Authority arranged fifty-five public meetings and explained its policies to over 10,000 parents. Furthermore, the local press was mobilized and every effort was made to explain the transition from the old system, with nine selective grammar schools, to full comprehensivization.²⁵ On the other hand, in Bristol there was no formal consultation with parents. This was largely on the grounds that it was too time-consuming and that the L.E.A. would have found it very difficult to draw valid

²⁵ S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 9.

conclusions from such meetings: the Authority believed that members of the Education Committee and teachers were sufficiently in touch with public opinion. In any case it was felt that parents would have been able to make their views known through local government elections.

It would be wrong to assume that all Labour Party members were for the abolition of grammar schools and for the move towards comprehensivization to happen as quickly as possible. Indeed, the case in Durham forms the central plank of this thesis. It is equally erroneous to assume that in Conservative dominated Local Authorities the opposite was true and that comprehensive schooling was to be avoided at all costs. What is nearer the mark is that many right-wing politicians, both at national and local level, saw the possibility of grammar schools and comprehensives existing side by side. The glorious grammar school tradition had to be preserved; it seemed almost an act of vandalism to destroy something which was obviously of such value. On the other hand, Conservative politicians did not want to be associated with the negative idea that two-thirds of children were *failures*, as those who attended secondary modern schools were increasingly being branded. What cannot be denied is that the whole movement towards secondary reorganization which began in the 1960s, and which still rumbles on today, caused a huge national debate and as a result there emerged something of a contradiction: polarization and flabby compromise existing almost cheek by jowl.

Peter Gosden points out the bitter resentment and opposition to the move towards comprehensivization from the supporters of the grammar schools. This was particularly true where a long-established and highly regarded grammar school was

to be subsumed in a split-site comprehensive and so "lose its character in one of these mish-mashed concoctions."²⁶ The supporters of the grammar schools thought that the promise held out by the 1944 Act would be denied. In other words, the opportunity for a bright pupil of modest means from a relatively under-privileged background to achieve advancement was, if not removed entirely, now certainly reduced. In essence that was, and to a large extent still is, the nub of the argument - do comprehensive schools, for all their social coherence, offer the many the same opportunities that the old grammar schools offered the few? There are those who argue that they do not. Nor must it be forgotten that the secondary modern schools too had their vocal supporters: it is all too easy to be swept along with the "secondary modern schools means a second class education" lobby. In Ferryhill there was local dissatisfaction with the move to comprehensivization from *both* the grammar school and secondary modern school supporters.

That there was a national movement towards comprehensivization cannot be denied. However, the importance of local conditions cannot be over-emphasized. It is only comparatively recently that politicians from all parties have been seriously prepared to tamper openly with the autonomy of the L.E.As. Prior to the 1980s, attempts to interfere with local control usually brought a speedy rebuff. For example, the introduction in 1970 of Ted Short's bill to force those local authorities who had not yet done so to put forward schemes for comprehensive reorganization was attacked by the Association of Education Committees on the ground that it undermined local

²⁶ P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Education System Since 1944, p. 37.

government rights. This was despite the fact that the Association advised its members the year before to abandon grammar schools.²⁷

However, when what Professor Batho calls the “breakdown in educational consensus”²⁸ was added to the central government’s wish to control public expenditure, the independence of the L.E.A.s was under serious threat. As a consequence of the 1944 Act, one-third of educational committees were made up of non-council members, and as proof of increased political polarization, Professor Batho notes that, whilst in 1964 forty-four per cent of local authorities drew just over half their members from national political parties, by 1973 the percentage had risen to sixty-four. Increasingly education committee decisions were in effect being made not during regular committee meetings but in private by the majority party. Further divisiveness was caused by the 1974 Local Government Act which, amongst other things, led to the education departments bidding on equal footing with other agencies for increasingly dwindling local government funds.²⁹ Though prior to the passing of the 1976 Education Act, central government’s power to control local authorities’ secondary organization was largely confined to approving or disapproving their plans.

In the mid-1960s ministers genuinely tried to avoid confrontation with the local

²⁷ P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Education System Since 1944, p. 38.

²⁸ G.R. Batho, Political Issues in Education, p. 49.

²⁹ Local authority funding came via the levy of a local rate which, in 1958, was supplemented by a block grant. The latter was replaced in 1966 by the rate support grant.

education authorities: in effect, control was exercised by the approving or the withholding of consent for new building programmes. Whilst there had been some local difficulties, for example with Surrey and Cheshire, there was a fair degree of consensus. However, the introduction of the 1970 bill proved highly contentious. The new Secretary of State, Edward Short, was keen to force those local authorities which had so far been reluctant to submit plans for comprehensive reorganization to do so quickly. As well as being Secretary of State, Ted Short, educated at Bede College, Durham, had for nearly twenty years been the Member of Parliament for Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central - and Durham County Council had not yet submitted a plan for full comprehensivization. The dilemma at a local level was plain for all to see. On a national level, the views of the Secretary of State and the Association of Education Committees are worth recording. When the Association complained that the bill was subverting local authority prerogatives, Ted Short replied that, "The majority of authorities have co-operated excellently but a minority have not, and freedom for authorities in the education sector can scarcely include the possibility of frustrating national policy." The Association of Education Committees remained unmoved and replied that it was anxious to avoid any harm to educational provision in the current political climate, "in which extreme is countered with extreme and educational policy tends to be determined by reference to a majority of votes at a time when it can quite easily happen that another Party is in power within a matter of months."³⁰ In answer to this, the Secretary of State replied that the government was not about to alter its position. Indeed he said, "My colleagues and I believe that comprehensive education has overwhelming support throughout the country

³⁰ See P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Education System Since 1944, pp. 38-39 for further details.

and that we should be failing in our duty if we did not attempt to ensure, after this length of time, that all authorities begin to plan to achieve it.” Although only a small minority of authorities were failing to submit plans for reorganization, many more appeared to have adopted at best a half-hearted approach.

The statistics relating to educational reorganization make interesting reading:

Year	1950	1955	1960	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Number of Schools	10	16	130	262	387	507	748	960	1145
% of secondary school pop. in comp. schools	0.3	0.6	4.7	8.5	11.1	14.4	20.9	26	31

Table 1: Growth of Comprehensive Schools in England and Wales 1950 - 1970 ³¹

According to the figures, the increase in the number of comprehensive schools and the percentage of pupils attending them had shown a steady increase since Circular 10/65. Despite this, for many supporters of the comprehensive system the figures were somewhat disappointing; especially when one takes two important factors into account. First, the Department of Education and Science statistics refer only to pupils in state maintained schools - pupils who attended direct grant, public, independent and other “private” schools were not included. Thus the government’s percentage figures of children attending comprehensive schools are inflated.

³¹ The figures are taken from B. Simon, Education and the Social Order 1940-1990, p. 299. Professor Simon points out that the 1960-1968 percentages were given by the Minister of State for Education and Science, House of Commons, 15 May 1969, whilst percentages for 1950 and 1955, and the number of schools from 1950 to 1970, rely on Department of Education, *Statistics*, Vol. 1, p. viii, and Vol. 1, 1970.

For the full D.E.S. figures, which are slightly a variance with Simon’s, see Appendix Ten.

Secondly, and even more significantly, was the fact that very few of these schools were *true* comprehensives, in the sense that they catered for children of *all* ability ranges in their catchment area and did not have to lose potential pupils to other selective schools, most often grammar schools. Brian Simon suggests that over half of all comprehensive schools had to compete with local grammar schools, “in only 43 per cent of cases were comprehensive schools the only ones available.”³²

In 1968 Caroline Benn was prompted to ask, “Is it good enough that only one-quarter of secondary school pupils should be in comprehensive schools almost five years after the government was elected with a clear mandate for national reorganisation, almost four years after that policy was implemented by Circular 10/65, and a full quarter of a century after the introduction of comprehensive schools into Britain by local education authorities? The answer must be that it is certainly not good enough.”³³

In the next edition of the Comprehensive Schools Committee’s survey, Caroline Benn again complained about the lack of progress towards comprehensivization and about the continued co-existence of grammar schools and comprehensives. Worst of all were those L.E.A.s which paid lip service to reform and where the names “grammar” and “modern” had been dropped from the names of their schools but

³² B. Simon, Education and the Social Order 1940-1990, p. 299.

³³ C. Benn, Comprehensive Reorganization Survey 68-69, p. 4.

In Survey No. 1, 1966/7, the author talked about the scheme operating in a large part of County Durham where there was selection at 11 “within a group of ex-grammar and ex-modern schools called multilateral units.” Ferryhill Grammar Technical School did not regard itself as an *ex*-grammar school!

where the divisive organization still remained. " In these circumstances, some sort of selection must continue. In some areas it is disguised by being called guided parental choice (as opposed to free choice). In others it is selection by teachers' recommendations, by a child's place in a class list, or by a series of unannounced tests. In hundreds of areas without any reorganisation, of course, it is still selection by the old 11-plus. As one parents' group wrote this year when the results were announced: *'No end to the annual ceremony of disappointment in sight. On the general reorganisation of secondary education, the silence remains so intense you could hear a brick drop.'*"³⁴

Although the Comprehensive Schools Committee's survey was not published until 1971, it was against this background that Ted Short's bill was given a second reading in February 1970. However, the Secretary of State's hopes were dashed by his party leader: Prime Minister Harold Wilson decided to call a national election in June. The result of the 1970 general election was a victory for the Conservative Party under Edward Heath and a new Secretary of State for Education, Margaret Thatcher.

Professor Gosden, writing in 1983 commented, "Edward Short and Margaret Thatcher from their opposite viewpoints injected strong doses of party political warfare into the reorganization of secondary schools, thus assaulting the consensus

³⁴ C. Benn, Comprehensive Reorganization: Survey and List of Comprehensive Schools in Britain 1970, p. ii. The quotation from the parents' group comes from the Bulletin of the Association for the Advancement of State Education, June 1969.

of the 1960s created by educational administrators, leaders of teachers unions, sympathetic politicians and journalists.”³⁵

During Mrs. Thatcher’s period in office at the Department of Education and Science, not only was the 1970 bill abandoned, Circular 10/65 was repealed and replaced with Circular 10/70, also entitled *The Organisation of Secondary Education*, which suggested that the recent changes in secondary school provision had put such a strain on the system that there was an urgent need for a period of calm. Furthermore, there was no need to alter existing arrangements where these were working to the benefit of the local communities. Grammar schools and comprehensives could co-exist if need be - Durham’s multilateral system could have been saved.

Ironically, if the figures in Table 1 are examined a little further then Simon and Benn’s reaction, and the view that the Conservatives were violently anti-comprehensive, can be seen as a little harsh. In the four years after 1970, during the new government’s term of office, the number of comprehensive schools virtually doubled.³⁶ However, the number of L.E.A.s which had submitted schemes for reorganization had begun to drop: 30 had gained approval in 1966, then by 1969 the figure had risen dramatically to 129 before slowing down to 148 by March 1974. Yet despite this slowdown in the rate of approval, only 15 L.E.A.s had received no

³⁵ P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Education System Since 1944, pp. 41-42.

³⁶ See Appendix Ten. For the full DES figures, which are taken from DES, Report on Education, No. 87, March 1977.

approval at all and the number of pupils attending comprehensive schools had jumped from thirty-two per cent in 1970 to sixty-two per cent by 1974.³⁷

In terms of the North-East, in the early 1960s there were considerable differences in attitudes towards comprehensivization. In 1964 an article in *The Times* reported that the education authorities in Sunderland and Newcastle were “committed” to comprehensivization, as too was Darlington with its “Peter Plan”.³⁸ Everywhere in the region the 11-plus examination was being replaced by the recommendation of head teachers. However, as Ken Harrop demonstrated, in the mid-1960s the Northern Region had barely begun to move towards comprehensivization.³⁹ In 1966 only 2.4 per cent of schools in the North were comprehensives, compared to 5.8 per cent in the South-East and 6.7 per cent in England and Wales as a whole. However, by 1969 the figures for the North were more in line with the rest of the country: 17.5 per cent for the North, 18.8 per cent for the South-East and 17.6 for England and Wales.

The return of Harold Wilson’s Labour government in 1974 led to a renewal of the commitment to full comprehensivization. New instructions were issued and Circular

³⁷ P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Education System Since 1944, p.42.

³⁸ The Times, 16 November 1964.

³⁹ K. Harrop, An Educational Profile of the Northern Region in Comparison with Other Regions, pp. 19-20. See Appendix Eleven.

In his paper, Harrop considered the Northern Region to be the former counties of Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland and the North Riding of Yorkshire. This was one of the nine Standard Regions into which England and Wales were divided for statistical and planning purposes in the mid-1960s. Harrop took his figures from The Department of Education and Science, *Statistics of Education*, Vol. I, Schools, 1966-1974, London, H.M.S.O.

4/74 appeared, which updated the requirements of Circular 10/65. Local authorities were required to inform the DES of their progress towards ending selection and completing secondary reorganization. Of the 105 L.E.A.s in England and Wales, the figure having been reduced following the Local Government Act of April 1974, 67 replied that they were on course to complete reorganization by the end of the decade, and a further 31 committed themselves to the principle of reform, providing the resources were available. However, 7 said that they would only reform if they were compelled to do so by law.⁴⁰ In the highly charged political atmosphere a new bill was introduced in December 1975 to force reluctant local authorities to comply to the wishes of the government. By November 1976 there was a new Education Act.

Many local authorities and their organizations were opposed to the new law, which appeared to extend the powers of the Secretary of State.⁴¹ It appeared to many that what in the 1960s had been largely an educational issue was now very clearly a political one. Consensus was being replaced by confrontation. Although Durham County Council had complied with the wishes of the comprehensivization lobby in September 1974, this is the background against which the whole issue of grammar schools versus secondary modern, multilateral units versus comprehensives was debated.

⁴⁰ P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Education System Since 1944, p. 43.

⁴¹ Most notably the Association of Education Committees and the Association of County Councils.

The new authority of the Secretary of State was successfully challenged in the courts when in 1977 the Conservative-controlled borough of Tameside's refusal to comply with the government's demands was upheld first by the High Court, then by the House of Lords. A new election brought former Secretary of State for Education Margaret Thatcher's government to power in 1979, where it remained for almost twenty years. Not surprisingly one of the first pieces of legislation of the new Conservative government was to replace the 1976 Act with the 1979 Education Act. This new Act removed all compulsion from local authorities to reform along comprehensive lines. Indeed, it went further in allowing those which had submitted plans for approval but had not carried them out, to apply to have the plans annulled. However, by 1979 approximately eighty-five per cent of secondary school pupils were attending comprehensive schools.

As a postscript, it is somewhat ironic that many local authorities regarded Mrs. Thatcher's government as the promoter of local democracy. Yet few politicians can have done so much to increase the powers of central government at the expense of local government. Furthermore, there is a National Curriculum which dictates what should be taught in all state schools and an army of watchdogs to see that standards are maintained. In addition, even under a new Labour administration selective schools not only survive but seem set to flourish.

2. COMPREHENSIVES TRIUMPHANT

With hindsight it could be argued that the move toward comprehensivization in the

North-East began in 1945 when the divisional executives began to challenge Director of Education Tilley's *Principles* behind his Development Plan. Such a view, however, would be difficult to uphold. Admittedly, as seen in Chapter Three, the majority of executives were in favour of small multilateral schools. Whilst the organizational differences between multilateral schools, with separate biases under one roof as opposed to comprehensive schools with the same course for all pupils, has been considered in some detail, it would be folly to argue that the two were the same. Certainly one was father to the other, but in the end, with a greater or lesser degrees of enthusiasm, the executives accepted the multilateral unit as a half-way-house lying between the selective education epitomised by the elitist grammar schools and the multilateral units most craved for.

However successful the multilateral units were, and the argument that they were bipartism by another name is very persuasive, from the early 1960s onwards the move towards comprehensivization began to gather momentum. It is easy to see this progression as inevitable, but it was not. The Labour Party, both nationally and locally, was for long periods of this study far from united about the form secondary education should take.

There is no denying that there was support for comprehensivization in the North-East. In her paper on regional under-development, Suzanne Robinson points out that the arguments about comprehensive schools were often "rooted in social and political matters, and that decisions taken about comprehensives often serve class

interests.”⁴² She goes on to say that although Circular 10/65 was issued by a Labour government, “The preservation of local interests both in the Durham area and elsewhere in the North-East acted to delay the advent of a full comprehensive scheme for the region for several years. It would be inaccurate to say that the North-East has displayed a contempt for “the education of the masses”, but on the other hand, “local boy makes good through local grammar school” is an acknowledged ideal of Labour Party people in the region.”⁴³

However, Durham County Council could not fight off the attack from the comprehensive lobby from both inside and outside County Hall. Whether the proponents of the comprehensive schools were welcome suitors is difficult to assess. There is no doubt that many felt more comfortable with the social and moral aspects of comprehensivization than perhaps with the educational. However, the Education Committee was forced to respond to Circular 10/65.

It must be admitted, however, that the Education Committee had begun to act before the publication of Circular 10/65. In May 1964 the Director had ordered an investigation into the provision of secondary education in the County, which had hinted that comprehensivization was the way forward.⁴⁴ The Secondary Education Sub-Committee had received several submissions from teachers’ representatives

⁴² S. Robinson, Regional Underdevelopment and Education: The Case of the North-East, p. 73.

⁴³ S. Robinson, Regional Underdevelopment and Education: The Case of the North-East, p. 73.

⁴⁴ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1964; Minute No. 30.

demonstrating support for comprehensivization, interestingly, often followed with requests for information about the protection of staff salaries. Thus in May 1964, before the opening of Ferryhill-Grammar Technical School, the Committee received a report of a meeting of representatives of the Durham County Association of Teachers. Before asking about staff salaries, the appointment of head teachers and the movement of staff following reorganization, the teachers' representatives began by assuring the Committee that the Association was "wholeheartedly in favour of the principle of comprehensive education in its various forms as already established in the Authority's area and as proposed in the future grouping of schools and erection of new types of schools."⁴⁵

George Metcalfe and the Education Committee saw the move to full comprehensivization as the culmination of a gradual process that had begun at Wolsingham in 1958, which itself had grown out of the Committee's visit to London and the West Midlands. In 1965 the Director had been asked to contribute to the symposium on the reorganization of secondary education whose reports opens this chapter. As part of a short article he wrote, "In each of the three experiments [Wolsingham, Billingham Campus and the multilateral units] it will be noted that there is complete fluidity right through the secondary stage of education and that ease of transfer has been a salient point. This clearly indicates the evolution of a type of secondary education on comprehensive lines if not in completely

⁴⁵ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 May 1964; Minute No. 45.

comprehensive schools.”⁴⁶

Metcalfe went on to say that the success at Wolsingham, coupled with the realization that comprehensive schools did not have to contain over 2,000 pupils, encouraged the Education Committee to consider experimenting with all-in schools. Thus, in 1964 the Committee decided to reorganize on comprehensive lines in those parts of the County, such as in the new town of Washington, where there had been no new schools built.

At a meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee on 10 February 1965 the Director submitted a report on comprehensive development. The report was of such moment that consideration of its contents had to be deferred to a special meeting of the full Education Committee a week later. At this meeting George Metcalfe placed a new policy document on the table which was to signal the end of the multilateral units.

The Director's report was entitled *Comprehensive Schools - General Lines of Development*. There was no discussion of the merits of comprehensivization, just the details.⁴⁷ The only real question was when the changes would take effect. The Director believed that the answer was bound up with the size of the building programme the Department of Education and Science was prepared to support.

⁴⁶ G.H. Metcalfe, County Durham, in S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 43.

⁴⁷ County Council of Durham Education Department, Report of Director: Comprehensive Schools - General Lines of Development, in Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Education Committee, 17 February 1965; Minute No. 173. See Appendix Twelve.

However, as *The Northern Echo* reported, a few pockets of multilateralism would remain, including the unit at Ferryhill: but their days were numbered.⁴⁸

The Northern Echo, which believed that the Authority was working “at full throttle”, was convinced that the main reason for abandoning the multilateral units in favour of comprehensivization was due to the intense pressure from central government. In May 1965 *The Northern Echo* reported that “last year’s proposals included 35 comprehensive schools, 14 of them brand new buildings. Now among the extra 22 to replace the multilateral units are ... new schools at Seaham, Parkside, Houghton, Stanley and Egglecliffe. The remaining 18 would be converted from existing grammar and modern schools.” Mr W.N. Linkleter, Deputy Director in charge of secondary education, said: “There is a lot of work to be done yet on this scheme. It has been adopted in principle, but we have to work out now how and when we can put it into operation.”⁴⁹

At its meeting the Education Committee resolved to approve the Director’s report on comprehensive schools in principle and refer it to a special sub-committee for consideration. In addition, the Committee requested a meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss the financial implications of the scheme. Metcalfe estimated that if the financial support offered by the government in the recent past remained the

⁴⁸ *The Northern Echo*, 4 March 1965.

⁴⁹ *The Northern Echo*, 4 March 1965. See also Appendix Twelve.

same, it would take nearly forty years to complete reorganization.⁵⁰ It was hoped that by accepting the necessity for split-site comprehensives, the schools built after the war would not become redundant.

In addition to new building, there was the increased payment to teachers for posts of responsibility. Large comprehensive schools were usually sub-divided into houses; this necessitated paying a special allowance to a head of house.⁵¹ Furthermore, subject departments too increased in size and this meant additional allowances and posts of responsibility for heads and deputy heads of departments.⁵²

The house system was seen as an essential feature of the new comprehensive schools, though all three secondary schools in Ferryhill and Chilton were already divided into houses. It was understood that the new comprehensive schools would be huge, consequently it was necessary to break them down into manageable units. In a report on the house system, George Metcalfe emphasized the basic principle that each individual pupil needed "to be given at least the degree of personal help and guidance then associated with the smaller traditional school."⁵³

⁵⁰ G.H. Metcalfe, County Durham, in S. Maclure, (Ed.), Comprehensive Planning: A Symposium on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, p. 44.

⁵¹ In the case of Ferryhill Comprehensive School the division was into year groups, each under the supervision of a head of year.

⁵² See Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 12 June 1968; Minute No. 122: and, from the meeting on 15 January 1969; Minute No. 333.

⁵³ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 9 July 1969; Minute No. 149. Report by the Director of Education, The House System in Comprehensive Schools - the Evolving Pattern.

It was suggested that a house should be grouped vertically, that is, having pupils from all years and containing between 150 and 200 pupils. However, at Ferryhill Comprehensive this proved impossible. It was a split-site school: the junior or Lower School, based at Broom Cottages, contained first and second year pupils; the rest of the school was housed in the Upper School on the Grammar Technical School site. At Ferryhill a horizontal pattern was preferred with pupils split into year groups. The big disadvantage here, of course, was that there was no continuity unless the year heads moved up with the pupils, although if the form tutors stayed with their forms there would be some form of stability for the pupil on a day-to-day basis.

With the house system in mind, the new purpose-built comprehensive schools in the County were designed with separate house areas, sometimes with separate house assembly halls and dining rooms. However, with regard to the latter, the Director was keen to point out that with an increasing reluctance of staff to dine with the pupils there was a strong argument for centralizing dining facilities. Such an arrangement would greatly cut costs, reduce design problems and encourage pupils of different houses to socialize at lunch time.

Whatever system was adopted, the Director was realistic enough to point out that, "The purpose-built comprehensive school is still comparatively new and its potential largely unexplored. It is inevitable that it must evolve and change. It is essential that it is designed in a way which caters for these changes by looking not only at the

present and the foreseeable future but towards the next half century which represents the useful life of the building.”⁵⁴

The move to comprehensivization cannot be disassociated from the relative failure of Billingham Campus, the ultimate multilateral unit experiment, and the success of the Wolsingham experiment. In March 1965 Mr. Dand, the head master, announced at the school’s speech day that every pupil on the register had known no other form of secondary education. The school, opened in 1958, seemed to vindicate non-selective education as twelve of the sixty-five pupils in the upper sixth had started out in non-G.C.E. forms. The Minister of Agriculture, Fred Peart, an old boy of the school at Wolsingham, said, “I am a passionate believer in comprehensive education, and I think it was wrong to separate children in a tri-partite system. From this experiment will be provided information which will help the pattern of education not only in Durham but throughout the country.”⁵⁵

The debate in County Durham over the virtues of the grammar school or the benefits of the comprehensive mirrored the debate in the country at large. The arguments featured heavily in the pages of the local press, becoming particularly polarized and frequent from the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s. The most common arguments in favour of the status quo were that grammar schools were excellent and must continue, whereas comprehensive schools were too large and un-tried. On the

⁵⁴ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 9 July 1969; Minute No. 149. Report by the Director of Education, The House System in Comprehensive Schools - the Evolving Pattern.

⁵⁵ The Northern Echo, 13 March 1965.

other hand, the grammar schools were socially divisive and branded children as failures at the age of eleven. Two examples will stand for the rest.

Following a programme produced by the B.B.C. entitled *Everyone Matters*, which extolled the virtues of a small, tightly-knit grammar school, Nancy Eaglesham, the wife of the University of Durham's Professor of Education, wrote an article in *The Northern Echo* which largely supported the tenor of the programme. This aroused the ire of one reader, a comprehensive school teacher. Nancy Eaglesham defended herself from attack thus:

"The comprehensive and the grammar schools, far from being two aspects of the same thing, are based on fundamentally different principles. One exists to emphasise the majority, the other the minority.

I ...feel that the size is all-important...a head who can know all his pupils personally can exert more influence than one who is perforce an administrator - however good his form masters. And if schools are in smaller units, a greater number of children ... have a chance of being a prefect, a games captain, or just acting in the school play.

You don't make revolution in education by crossing out "tripartite" on a piece of paper, writing in "comprehensive" instead, and waving it at the House of Commons. And this is my real worry - that we are destroying existing schools, living entities, for the sake of theory. There are many excellent comprehensive schools - apparently your correspondent teaches in one of them, and I agree that experiments in comprehensive education must continue. But what I fear is the hasty

“comprehensive unit” born of a political decision, and no more than a fancy name for a reshuffle of children in the same old building.

Many Labour politicians condemn selection for our children, but not for their own. First the tripartite system is *in*. Then (in Durham County) the dual system is *in*. Then it's *in* to abolish the 11-plus. Now the current theories are all for co-educational comprehensive schools - so it's all change again!

So as I see it until and unless the country has a truly “comprehensive” system with no private schools, we should try to avoid at all costs the pointless destruction of good schools doing a good job, for the sake of a political cloud cuckoo-land. I refuse to be rushed pell-mell into an egalitarian paradise whose guardian angels worship quite a different deity at the back door.”⁵⁶

On the other hand there were those who saw the iniquities of selection at eleven. A month after Nancy Eaglesham's article there appeared in the *John North Column* a piece entitled, *Dear Parent is this the Future for Your Child?* The article pointed out the trauma associated with selection. “Dear parent,” began the letter that dropped into letter boxes all over Durham yesterday. “In September, your son...will leave his present school and will embark on what will be a new and, I hope, satisfying phase of education.” “After considering the report made on him by the head teacher, and staff of the junior school, the Head Teacher's Panel of...has recommended he should be admitted to...”

⁵⁶ The Northern Echo, 16 June 1965.

So, in thousands of homes, the worry was over... or just beginning. Parents still call it the 11-plus, although it is no longer any such thing. The result is just the same, either a place at a grammar school, or a secondary school, but in Durham, it is now decided by report and consultation, with the old tormenting test gone for the time being.

The man whose name rested at the bottom of those letters was that of G.H. Metcalfe, Director of Education. "It's gone well: I haven't had a comeback," Mr. Metcalfe said. "I think parents, as the years go by, are becoming more sensible about the whole business. They know what we're doing is in the best interest of the boy or girl."

Already I had spoken to some triumphant parents, but I asked Mr. Metcalfe about the disappointed ones. "We all get disappointments in life," he said. "Our safeguard is that the selection is not final and irrevocable. If a youngster proves he is in the wrong school he can always be transferred without an examination."

Ah yes, Fine. And Mr Metcalfe emphasised that parents could always see teachers, inspectors, even himself or the chairman of the education committee to discuss his son's or daughter's education.

Still I think it's hard to have a crisis in the family just because a kid has reached eleven. I look on the selection system as yet another case of the perverted values of

July 1965. Education is in the melting pot. Then, what isn't."⁵⁷

Just before Christmas in 1967 the County instructed its modern and grammar technical schools to adopt the title secondary school. Thus, Ferryhill Grammar Technical became Ferryhill Secondary, Chilton Modern became Chilton Secondary and Broom Cottages Modern became Broom Secondary. By October 1970 all secondary schools which admitted pupils on a non-selective basis were known as comprehensive schools. In the years prior to comprehensivization in 1974 the County's schools worked hard to prepare for the impending reorganization. In 1972 a split-site working party was set up to help all those schools who would be faced with a twin-site comprehensive school, as was the case at Ferryhill.⁵⁸

In 1974 the last multilateral units were disbanded and virtually all of the County moved over to full comprehensivization.⁵⁹ In September 1980 the final step was taken to complete the scheme for comprehensivization when pupils in the Wingate area were admitted to Wellfield Comprehensive School. It seemed that the time for experimentation was now at an end: for some it had only just begun.

⁵⁷ The Northern Echo, 2 July 1965.

⁵⁸ See Chapter Five.

⁵⁹ See Appendix Thirteen for details of proposals for comprehensive reorganization outlined in Durham County Council, Report of Survey 1976: County Structure Plan.

CHAPTER FIVE

ETHOS AND ORGANIZATION

1. THE BROOM, CHILTON AND THE GRAMMAR

“Any true description of school should convey, like the Luttrell Psalter of the fourteenth century, the plodding rhythms of the seasons, but should not ignore the humours and grotesques. Teachers and pupils may, to outsiders, look morose, even violent on occasion. Nevertheless, within the classroom, fantasy, affection and exuberance do keep breaking in - and let us hope they always will.” So Hilda Pickles ends her wonderful autobiography, which covers seventy-five years of schooling.¹

The development of secondary education in Ferryhill and Chilton can be looked at in many ways. It can be seen as part of a much wider growth in secondary provision throughout England and Wales. Similarly, it can be seen to reflect the gradual transition within County Durham itself from the all-age schools of the late

¹ H. Pickles, Crooked Sixpences Among the Chalk, p. 192.

nineteenth century, and in the case of Ferryhill and Chilton the first half of the twentieth century, into the multilateral units which emerged as a result of the reform movement of the 1940s, until finally in the 1970s, came comprehensivization. It is tempting to view such a history as fundamentally legislative and administrative, with the changeover from one system to another the result of a philosophical and professional debate being mixed with economic and political expediency.

Providing the historian has access to the records, writing about the bureaucratic and administrative development of a school presents few insurmountable problems.

Even such an undertaking as writing about the fragmented history of secondary education in Ferryhill and Chilton, though fraught with difficulty insofar as locating, gaining access to and collating all the surviving sources is concerned, and requiring time and effort and a degree of empiricism to knit the story together, is achievable within certain limits. Why secondary education developed along the path it did is another matter: the national reorganization after the 1944 Education Act, Durham County Council's post-war reconstruction plans, the late move to multilateral units and then to true comprehensivization, all have to be measured against the national and local debate. Yet even this is possible: indeed it is the work most historians are called upon to do. Accepting the fact that the historian tries to write objectively, and often fails, the methodology, the techniques employed, generally might be expected to lead to an acceptable, if not definitive, outcome. However, important though such analyses are, they can often lack emotion. Schools are living entities, and it is all too easy to look at them with a cold intellectual detachment. This type of investigation, though important, can be sterile. To give a more worthwhile picture it is necessary to probe deeper beneath the surface to see the ideals,

attitudes, aspirations and realities of those who actually worked there, pupils and teachers alike. Only then can one hope to capture something of the most vital yet intangible aspect of any school - its ethos.

Tony Lawson and Joan Garrod define ethos as, "The particular social and cultural characteristics and norms of a group, organisation or society. Being socialised into accepting or adopting the prevailing ethos is usually an important part of becoming a member of a group or institution, such as a religious group or public school."²

Certainly, the compilers of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary acknowledge that the term owes its roots the Greek word for character and concerns "the prevalent tone of sentiment of a community" and the "genius of an institution or system."³

What was it like to be a secondary school pupil in Ferryhill and Chilton between 1944 and 1974? In the strictest sense, there were no pupils in secondary schools in Ferryhill and Chilton before 1951, when Broom Cottages Modern School was opened. How different was life in an un-reorganized all-age school? Was there a clear difference in attitude to schooling for those who worked and studied during wartime, or just after, and those who attended school in the so-called *swinging sixties*, when, in the words of David Thompson, "cultural bulldozers were at work"?⁴ Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to look at the wider cultural influences on the pupils of the post-war years, it is nevertheless important to see the

² T. Lawson and J. Garrod, The Complete A-Z Sociology Handbook, p. 91.

³ The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary; Vol. I, p. 686.

⁴ D. Thompson, England in the Twentieth Century; p. 272.

schools in relation to their broader national and local issues.⁵ Attitudes towards something as value-loaded as education are very difficult to assess, and to make any kind of definitive statement is virtually impossible.⁶ The problem lies in trying to collect data and to write objectively on something so essentially nebulous as the ethos of a school. One method is to combine statistical data collated from a questionnaire, with written depositions and oral evidence gleaned from conversations with former pupils and teachers.

It is well understood that collecting and analysing oral evidence is fraught with difficulties. It is easy to rely on platitudes or to elicit a certain response because of the way the question is worded or asked. A person's view of the past is almost certain to be coloured by what has happened to them since; maybe they hope to create an impression on the interviewer; for example, sometimes people wish to distance themselves from events or alternatively exaggerate their own importance; dates are often confused; events can be telescoped together and their order changed: the response is invariably subjective. However, whilst it is so easy to rely on platitudes, it is equally tempting to dismiss them as worthless. If the only record says that Broom Cottages Secondary Modern School was a superb school, should it be dismissed? Surely it would be folly to do so. Providing the limitations of the information are pointed out, then the evidence is valid. As Bill Williamson says,

⁵ There is a vast body of work devoted entirely to the post-war culture and, more specifically, to the way in which cultural development had an impact on education. For a summary of the first twenty years after the war, see R. Lowe, Education in the Post-War Years, Chapters 1 and 5.

⁶ E.J. Goodacre, School and Home: A Review of Developments in School and Home Relationships, pp. 123-126.

“The real promise of oral history does not depend upon being able faithfully to record the detailed memories people have of their lives. Nor does it lie in the ability of the historian to weave the oral record in with the written to evoke a richer and more sharply focused image of the past. Oral history does, however, hold out both promises.”⁷

It must be admitted that the oral evidence that follows is to a large extent anecdotal, limited in scope and not totally representative - for total representation lies in interviewing everyone. However, even though limited, it does have worth and must be allowed to stand as a supplementary record of secondary education in Ferryhill and Chilton between 1944 and 1974. The recollections were compiled as a result of a written questionnaire⁸ and interviews conducted and recorded over eight years. The questions asked at the interviews were not as proscribed as in the questionnaire and the length of interview varied from only five minutes to several hours in three or four sessions. However, the aim was to amplify the questions asked on the questionnaire, which was designed to find out what the similarities and differences were in the ethos found in Ferryhill and Chilton’s secondary schools.

The real value of such evidence - oral, statistical and written - is when it is combined with the *official* records and the works of bona fide historians. As Robin Perks points out in a recent Historical Association pamphlet, "The important point, of

⁷ W. Williamson, *Oral History: Dialogue or Technique*; in Image, Culture and Action in Re-search of the North East, p. 7.

⁸ For the questionnaire, first distributed in 1990, and supplementary questions see Appendix Fourteen.

course, is that all historical sources, whether they are documentary or oral, are subject to the same influences of selectivity, interpretation and partiality. Each oral history interview is one individual piece of a complex jigsaw which, when assembled, gives us a clearer view of our past."⁹

The questionnaire, loosely based on the ALIS¹⁰ project of Carol Fitz-Gibbon and Peter Tymms, sought, with a small sample of sixty former pupils, to look at some of the organizational features of the secondary or all-age schools, the ways in which the pupils were taught, the opportunities they had at school and their overall attitude to their schooling. In addition to two groups of questions requiring only a limited response, the former pupils were also given the opportunity to make an extended written deposition about any aspect of their schooldays. In the hope of eliciting accurate answers, anonymity was guaranteed, as indeed it was to former, and current, members of the teaching and ancillary staff.

The first ten questions sought to look at learning opportunities; the second part of the questionnaire was concerned with the organization of the school and the wider opportunities the schools provided. There were an additional two questions which asked for an overall judgement on the quality of education the pupils received. The pupils and staff were sub-divided into categories based on the dates they were in school and the school they attended, or in the case of five pupils who started at

⁹ R. Perks, Oral History: Talking About the Past, p. 7.

¹⁰ The Advance Level Information System project, formerly based at the University of Newcastle and now at the University of Durham, which seeks to investigate the performance, process and attitude of A-Level students. See also C.T. Fitz-Gibbon and L.L. Morris, How to Analyze Data.

Broom Cottages Modern and then transferred to the Grammar Technical School, schools they attended. In terms of the time they were registered at their schools, they were divided into three groups roughly corresponding with the years 1944-1954 (twelve students), 1955-1964 (twenty students), 1965-1974 (twenty-eight students) - there was, however, some over-lapping between the groups. As for the schools they attended, there were five distinct categories. The first group consisted of all those pupils who attended the all-age schools, which included everyone in Chilton up to the opening of Chilton Modern School in 1963, and in Ferryhill until Broom Cottages Modern School was opened in 1951.¹¹ The second, third and fourth groups were those who attended Broom Cottages Modern, Chilton Modern and Ferryhill Grammar Technical schools respectively. Finally, the sixth group consisted of those who attended the first months of the Comprehensive School.

With such a small survey,¹² viewed in isolation the results reveal little that can be relied upon. For example, only one pupil, who left the all-age school at Ferryhill Station, said that her secondary education in the senior section was bad. The pupil went on to say, "Slower pupils didn't receive any extra help from teachers. Pupils were not encouraged to ask questions if they didn't understand something. Not much homework was given to pupils. Not up to a very high standard of learning or teaching." Another pointed out that it was, "very limited." However, the six other former pupils were at least satisfied and, in one case, thought their education at

¹¹ Those who were selected at the age of eleven to attend a local grammar school, usually at Spennymoor or Bishop Auckland, lie outside this analysis.

¹² Only just over one-third of the former pupils who were asked returned their questionnaires.

Ferryhill Station was better than that offered at the Comprehensive School when the survey was undertaken in 1990. However, when the questionnaire results are combined with the additional oral evidence and written statements, they can illuminate the other more traditional historical sources.

Interestingly, and sadly, with a bitterness that is not disguised, the pupil who thought the education she received at Ferryhill Station School was very limited went on to write about her experience of the 11-plus examination. Her words, reproduced verbatim, stand as a testimony for so many others: "At the age of eleven I sat the 11+, the first half of which was sat in my own school. In the years previous to taking the 11+ we often did old exam papers for which I always attained over 80%, therefore I was quite confident though a little nervous perhaps. I passed the first half of the 11+; the second half I sat at Spennymoor Grammar School which was then a very new building smelling of paint and varnish. This so overwhelmed me, the strange procedure; my nerves really let me down. I probably did nothing right. I remember dividing a sum I should have multiplied for example. I FAILED.¹³ In those days (1956) once you had failed the 11+ you stayed at the school where you were. There was really no way to better the situation (that I knew of) until I reached 15 when I started night classes taking English and typing at Broom Cottages, then English, typing and shorthand at Bishop Auckland Technical College."

¹³ Technically, as the 11-plus was a diagnostic examination, no one *failed*. However, the connotations of the results were clear to all; teachers, parents, pupils and the public at large.

Like the other un-reorganized all-age schools in Chilton, and at Dean Bank and Broom Cottages, until 1951, clearly the type of education offered here was limited when compared to the modern school. In fact, some of the more able pupils were transferred to Broom Cottages when it opened as a reorganized secondary modern school. Even when a senior section was added, often referred to as the senior school, one can see that the education offered there was more in keeping with the higher-tops, which in effect is what they were. Indeed, at Ferryhill Station School it was only with the arrival of four new teachers in September 1958 that "a system of specialisation in the Senior School is now possible."¹⁴ The system of having a timetable split into different time slots with separate teachers for different subject specialisms did not emerge, if at all in some cases, until quite late. This was not peculiar to the all-age schools, even at Broom Cottages modern school, newly appointed staff were expected to teach general subjects to their form class. In many ways the all-age schools were a type of half-way house between the primary schools to which they were attached and the secondary modern school. As shown in Chapter Three, the fact that Broom Cottages was a centre for commercial subjects meant that pupils from Chilton had the opportunity to study bookkeeping, typing and commerce in a specialist room. Furthermore, at Ferryhill Station the boys could take technical drawing and woodwork, and the girls domestic science, housecraft and needlework. At Chilton Boys' the pupils had the opportunity to study science and woodwork, whereas at Chilton Girls' there were lessons in domestic science, housecraft and needlework.

¹⁴ Taken from the notes of Mr. Leslie Naylor, formerly head teacher of the school who compiled a list of extracts from the school log book, now lost. See Ferryhill Station School.

As one might expect, and this was the same for all ages and all schools, including those who attended the early years of the Comprehensive School, there was unanimous agreement that schools had better discipline "in the old days". The older former pupils used phrases such as, "You did as you were told; you had to." "There's less respect for teachers today. If you did anything wrong you got the slipper or the cane." More than one interviewee thought the abolition of corporal punishment was a retrograde step. Less than five per cent of those pupils interviewed remember their fellows being put on report for misbehaving and only in extreme cases were parents contacted. With the sanction of corporal punishment, which was used both formally and informally, most matters of discipline were dealt with inside the school. Lines were not infrequently given, but detentions appear to have been rare. Standing in the corridor, picking up litter and running round the school playing field were the other more common sanctions. Whether the latter was for a misdemeanour in a physical education lesson was not clear. Only one pupil responded by saying that pupils might have had to stand in the corner of the classroom: a form of punishment more commonly associated with the junior school. This was a former pupil of Ferryhill Station school, who was there at the end of the war. Some of the older pupils clearly remembered the celebrations after the war and the return of teachers from active service in the armed forces.¹⁵ One former pupil

Centenary 1878-1978, Souvenir Brochure, p. 26.

¹⁵ The notes of Mr. Naylor referred to above and the Log Book of Dean Bank Boys' School add weight to these recollections, as does the case of two former pupils who remembered the delight when the school was closed because of wartime air raids and the arrival of evacuees from Newcastle. Mr. Naylor himself returned from service with the Royal Air Force in February 1946.

of Ferryhill Station school even remembered being excited at receiving her gas mask.¹⁶

Hardly surprisingly, in the smaller all-age schools there were fewer discipline problems than in the larger secondary moderns. Pupils had been in the school so long that they knew the staff and were less inclined to misbehave. Certainly, the smaller the school the less likelihood of avoiding attending classes. A former teacher at East Howle¹⁷ remembers very little truancy. In such small communities everyone knew everyone else and so the chances of avoiding detection were much reduced.

When analysing all the schools covered by this thesis, the bulk of the data came from the separate secondary schools rather than the all-age schools. Furthermore, more information came from Broom Cottages and the Grammar Technical School than from Chilton Modern. This was despite the fact that there was an equitable distribution of questionnaires and, where there was a shortfall, of interviews and written depositions. Whilst it is difficult to be dogmatic, the lack of evidence of schooling in Chilton seemed to coincide with a lack of real academic tradition at the school. Certainly, those who attended Broom Cottages and the Grammar Technical were more literate and more vocal in their testimonies. It must be admitted that the view which suggests an apparent lack of academic rigour at Chilton is founded more on inference and implication than on hard evidence. Nevertheless, on more than one

¹⁶ Ferryhill Station School, Centenary 1878-1978, Souvenir Brochure, p. 23.

occasion such an opinion was expressed by members of staff at the Comprehensive School. That does not mean to say that the pupils at Chilton Modern School felt themselves to be under-valued or under-privileged. Clearly, Chilton Modern School was a caring school and catered for the pastoral, social and academic needs of the majority of its pupils. Although few pupils could remember being given homework to do on a regular basis, they were entered for a variety of external examinations run by the Northern Counties Technical Examination Board, and later for the Certificate of Secondary Education.¹⁸ In 1966 the head teacher, Mr. McManners, reported to the Multilateral Unit Committee that one pupil had stayed on into the fifth year and passed C.S.E. in eight subjects. However, the head went on to bemoan the fact that no-one had chosen to stay on the following year.¹⁹ Furthermore, when compared to Broom Cottages, the lack of a G.C.E. stream at Chilton must have been to the detriment of the academic standards of the school. There is no doubt that pupils from Chilton and Ferryhill Station performed as well in the school's internal examinations immediately following comprehensivization. Certainly, the Broom

¹⁷ East Howle, like its neighbour Metal Bridge, was virtually pulled down and the families re-housed largely in Ferryhill. The all-age school closed down in 1966.

¹⁸ First introduced in 1965 following a controversial investigation by the Beloe Committee. This group reported in 1960 and led to the Secondary Schools Examinations Council, under Sir John Lockwood, producing a report in 1962 entitled Examinations in Secondary Schools - The Certificate of Secondary Education. The C.S.E. examination was taken at 16 and thus required pupils to stay at school for an extra year until, of course, the raising of the school leaving age in 1973.

¹⁹ Chilton Modern School Head Teacher's Report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' and Managers' Committee, 5 October 1966.

Cottages staff and pupils were always proud to claim that they were the first modern school in the County to enter pupils for the General Certificate of Education.²⁰

What pupils who attended the Chilton Secondary Modern school benefited from was a contented staff who were keen to tailor courses, particularly for the pupils in the fourth year, which they would find interesting and stimulating, if not in every case academically challenging. For example, there were classes on two afternoons a week in which pupils could take part in a variety of activities, such as needlework and handicrafts which, amongst other things, gave pupils the opportunity to try their hand at basket weaving. There was a car-maintenance class in which pupils could drive an old car round the school playing field as well as looking at basic car mechanics. In addition, there was a school garden and greenhouse for those interested in horticulture. One particularly well-received course was a human biology and home nursing course. As part of the course pupils visited Dryburn Hospital in Durham to see the premature baby unit. There were further visits to ante-natal and post-natal clinics in Ferryhill and to Roseburn Premature Baby Unit. Right from the start such courses were seen as an important part of the school curriculum and as a preparation for the workplace. From its opening in 1963 the head teacher, Mr. J.E. McManners, was keen to start an industrial course for boys with an engineering bias and a pre-nursing course for girls. In fact, to help with the former they advertised for a metalwork teacher to teach partly at Chilton and partly at the new Coxhoe Secondary Modern School.

²⁰ This was a distinction they shared with several other modern schools. See Chapter Three for details.

Such an overtly practical course, geared to meet the interests of the pupils and linked to the world of work, was one of the main recommendations of George Metcalfe's report on the findings of the Central Advisory Council for Education's investigation into pupils of average or less than average ability.²¹ The Council's findings, published in 1963 and invariably named after its chairman John Newsom, were welcomed by the Director who recommended: "That on at least one afternoon each week pupils in their fourth and fifth years at school should have the opportunity of taking part in a wide variety of activities which have not normally figured in a programme of school work."²²

Football and netball were particularly popular extra-curricular activities. Alas, the footballers suffered when it came to the quality of their playing surface. When the school opened there was an urgent demand for soil to cover the sub-soil, which was formerly the spoil heap for Windlestone Colliery. There were also annual visits to the Ferryhill Children's Theatre, whose productions were mentioned by several former pupils.²³

Staff morale at Chilton Modern School was very high right from the start and there was clearly popular support for the school from the local inhabitants, seven hundred

²¹ Department of Education and Science, Half Our Future: A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), (Newsom Report), H.M.S.O., 1963.

²² County Council of Durham Education Committee, Report of the Director of Education's Commission on the Implications of the Newsom Report in County Durham, 1966, p.70.

²³ The Theatre, which was run on a voluntary basis, was situated at Ferryhill Station and opened in May 1952.

of whom attended the first open evening on 19 December 1963 to be served with light refreshments by staff and pupils. The school had opened on Monday 9 September with a complement of 286 pupils, the head teacher, nine class teachers and what were described as “two teachers of special subjects.”²⁴

Even when the school was closed in 1974 there were only fourteen members of staff and less than 300 pupils. Thus, there was no need for the usual trappings of staff bureaucracy. For example, if a member of staff was absent it would be announced in the staff room in the morning and volunteers would offer to cover a colleague’s lessons during their non-teaching period. For a long time after comprehensivization former members of the old Chilton staff recalled fondly their time at the school. More than one commented that it was a “happy school where everyone worked together as a team. We knew all the pupils by name. Now, I don’t even know all the members of staff; so how can you be expected to remember the names of the pupils? It’s impossible.”

In contrast the history of Broom Cottages was, as one might expect, far more distinguished. When the Comprehensive School was opened in 1974, Broom Cottages had a history over twice as long as Chilton Modern and the Grammar Technical, even though this amounted to less than a quarter of a century. One cannot help but feel that Broom Cottages, or the Broom as it was more generally

²⁴ Chilton Modern School Head Teacher’s Report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors’ and Managers’ Committee, Autumn Term 1963.

In fact, this was one teacher less than the Education Committee recommended; thus it was necessary to arrange the school into 9 forms instead of 10 as had been anticipated.

known, was the real secondary school of Ferryhill. It drew virtually all its pupils from the town; whereas Chilton was seen as a separate community and the Grammar Technical School, which in effect lay outside the town, had a vast catchment area.

From the oral and written evidence, over seventy per cent of those who attended the Broom thought the education they received there was good or very good.

However, only fifteen per cent believed that their education at the Broom was better than that in the Comprehensive School. Such figures must be treated with caution, for those questioned had only a second-hand impression of the education in the Comprehensive School. Nonetheless, with the exception of the former Grammar School pupils, only one-third of the pupils in all other schools believed that the education they received was better than that at the Comprehensive School.

The Broom opened on 10 September 1951 and took the majority of its pupils from the mixed Broom Cottages all-age school and the other all-age school in Ferryhill, Dean Bank, which had separate sections for boys and girls. Until 1965, when the school moved into a new building (which later became the Comprehensive Lower School), the Broom shared its premises with Broom Cottages Infants' School. On re-organization in 1951 the pupils of junior school age were transferred to Dean Bank, which thus for a time became the only junior school in Ferryhill.

In November 1956 the Broom was visited for four days by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. The resulting inspectors' report gives an excellent description of a school which, despite cramped and unsatisfactory accommodation, was a flourishing

secondary modern school in the mid-1950s. In many ways the school stands testimony to the demands of the 1944 Act and the slow pace of change in education. The school had a young staff made up of ten masters and ten mistresses, more than half of whom were still in their twenties.²⁵ Only four members of staff had been appointed before 1951, including the two handicraft masters who had been teaching since 1920 and 1933 and the head master, Mr. Walter Gleaves, who had been appointed head of Broom Cottages Senior School in 1947.²⁶ When it first opened the school had 461 pupils on its register, but by the time of the inspection this number had risen to 527, of whom just over 50 formed a selective stream, transferred not from Dean Bank but from the un-reorganized schools at Ferryhill Station, East Howle, Chilton, Cornforth, Bishop Middleham and Trimdon.²⁷ In the words of the inspectors, "The school has achieved an encouraging measure of success both with the main body of its pupils and with the predominantly selective forms."²⁸

²⁵ This was two more than when it opened. For details see Broom Cottages Modern School Log Book 1951-1974, p. 1.

²⁶ Mr. Gleaves retired in 1970 and was replaced by Mr. Edward Armstrong.

The senior handicraft master was Jack Stephenson whose son, John, was also on the staff. John, who eventually became head teacher after Mr. Armstrong, remained at the school beyond comprehensivization, finally retiring as Head of the Lower School in 1982. Thus, father and son's contribution to the education of the pupils of Ferryhill spanned sixty-two years.

²⁷ These were pupils who had *failed* the 11-plus examination, still referred to as The Scholarship, but who found places at the Broom based on the recommendations of their head teachers.

²⁸ H.M.I., Report on Broom Cottages County Secondary School: Inspected on 26, 27, 28 and 29, November 1956, p. 2.

As well as giving details of the organization of the school and the quality of teaching, the report lists a depressing catalogue of structural faults and inadequacies. Many of the problems with the accommodation, which collectively form a stark example of the problems faced by school overcrowding and doomed attempts to turn former elementary schools into something they were not designed for, were remembered forty years later by staff and pupils alike. There were several prefabricated buildings. "I remember we used to get lessons in a tin hut. It was always freezing", said one former pupil. A fact which was backed up by more than one member of staff, who clearly remembered the room being heated by open stoves. As one might imagine, seats next to the fire were at a premium in the winter months - though there was presumably no lack of fuel. There were several prefabricated buildings of the type built under the so-called HORSAs scheme, set up by the Ministry of Education to provide supplementary accommodation for schools like Broom Cottages which had to cope with the raising of the school leaving age in 1947.²⁹ In fact, the head teacher's office was in a HORSAs building, as were a housecraft room and four classrooms. In addition, there was a corrugated iron building which housed the science and needlework rooms, as well as two workshops and two small staff rooms. In all there were eleven classrooms, of which six were equipped for specialist teaching. One of the workshops was used each morning by

²⁹ The Hutting Operation for the Raising of the School Age scheme was an emergency measure complemented by the School Furniture Operation for the Raising of the School Age. The latter, known as SFORSA, was an attempt to remedy the dreadful shortage of school furniture in the immediate post-war years when the priority use of timber was for house building.

The County had begun providing additional classrooms and practical rooms in un-reorganized primary schools as early as 1948. For details see the Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Education Committee, 21 April 1948; Minute No. 12.

senior pupils from Chilton, Ferryhill Station and East Howle, whose schools were not at this time so well-equipped.

It is clear that the school's accommodation was totally inadequate and it was not unusual for teachers to share classrooms.³⁰ Even when the school used part of the old brick-built infant school, conditions were barely suitable. For example, there was a shared assembly hall which the infants were allowed to use for an hour a day in the summer term. In addition, there was a housecraft room which had to be reduced in size to house a small scullery needed for the distribution of school meals.

In the older parts of the school there was no hot water and meals were served in a corridor. The meals were eaten in the classroom which, in 1956, the inspectors described as "depressingly inelegant."³¹ With such a demand for space there was no room for a separate school library. The inspection report indicates that there was a small library of about six hundred volumes, mostly fiction, housed in two bookcases in one of the HORSAs classrooms. The library was manned each lunch time by pupil librarians. Prior to this, one former pupil remembers the regular visits of a mobile library, which pupils were encouraged to use under close staff supervision.

³⁰ Such piecemeal measures continued long after the prefabricated buildings at Broom Cottages were built. In October 1974 the head master of Ferryhill Comprehensive School complained to the Director of Education that prefabricated buildings, vital for teaching accommodation, had not yet been built.

³¹ H.M.I., Report on Broom Cottages County Secondary School: Inspected on 26, 27, 28 and 29, November 1956, p. 3.

Conditions outside were a little better, but here too there were problems. There were two playgrounds, one of which was shared with the Infants' School, and a school field. Alas, the grass on the latter was in very poor condition, as was the state of the boundary fence, which had holes in it. There were jumping pits which the pupils had prepared themselves but which lacked boarding and a run-up track. There was also a need for a permanent hard cricket wicket for the boys and boundary nets for tennis. There were no changing facilities for games lessons. Boys and girls got changed, often having to borrow sports shoes and clothes provided by the County, in two small cloakrooms. There were no showers. One bonus of the post-war prefabricated buildings for the boys was that they supplemented the two outside toilet blocks. One of the latter was for use by the senior girls, who shared this facility with the infant girls. At the best of times such arrangements were unsatisfactory, during winter they were unbearable.

However, it must be pointed out that whilst the above description of the school and its environment appears in some cases positively Dickensian, the rooms, though often inadequate, were not bare or unwelcoming. For example, in the cramped housecraft room the girls and staff had done much to improve the environment by using horse-brasses, flowers and coloured plates to decorate the walls.

In 1956 the pupils were organized into sixteen streamed forms, three of which contained thirty pupils or more.³² The top streams followed G.C.E. Ordinary Level courses, success in which could lead to transfer to a sixth form grammar

³² There were four forms in years 1-3, three in year 4 and one in year 5.

school - usually at Spennymoor.³³ Always providing, of course, that the parents could afford the extra cost of supporting their child through an A-Level course, for not only was there the loss of potential earnings to consider, sixth form studies carried additional expenses. Sadly, such factors continue to play a part even today.

Whilst acknowledging that the pupils in the O-Level stream had many advantages; for example, they had more specialist teaching as well as having personal copies of textbooks, the inspectors said that the other streams were not so disadvantaged. These other pupils were generally "effectively taught and make good progress; the second stream in particular, containing the main body of the abler unselected pupils, do themselves credit by their oral responsiveness and the presentation of the written work."³⁴

For most of the pupils there was a well-balanced curriculum consisting of history, English, mathematics, science, geography, religious instruction, art, music, woodwork and technical drawing for the boys and housecraft and needlework for the girls, physical education, French for the upper stream, and commerce. As at Chilton, except when they went to a specialist room, as for woodwork, pupils stayed in their own classrooms. Thus, unlike the Grammar Technical and later the Comprehensive School, the teachers moved round at the end of lessons, not the pupils. Although the County did occasionally organize refresher courses for

³³ In the year prior to the H.M.I. inspection, six pupils had gone on to study at Advanced Level having collectively obtained thirty-three Ordinary Level passes.

³⁴ H.M.I., Report on Broom Cottages County Secondary School: Inspected on 26, 27, 28 and 29, November 1956, p. 4.

experienced staff, there was no school policy to induct newly qualified members of staff. Craft knowledge was passed down to the new teachers of the profession by older and more-experienced practitioners. Schemes of work, which included clearly set out aims and teaching methodologies, had to be copied by hand, a task which was particularly time-consuming for those who had to teach a number of subjects. There were few staff meetings and virtually no departmental meetings. Departments would at most consist of two or three members of staff, thus most meetings would take place on an ad hoc basis at break or lunch times. Unlike Chilton Modern School, there was a staff duty rota and if staff were absent through illness colleagues would check the daily cover sheet and be expected to cover lessons in their non-teaching periods.

History was taught by non-specialists. In all, eight teachers were involved; the O-Level classes were taught European and British history from 1688 to 1815 by a temporary teacher with an English honours degree. Here "a difficult political narrative is persuasively and effectively elucidated." For the non-examination classes the teaching staff adopted a topic approach which involved a survey of largely British history. The teaching was supported by the use of film strips and reference books. Although the inspectors commented that the past was studied "from a variety of perspectives," it is clear that the subject concentrated more on the acquisition of knowledge rather than the development of transferable historical skills. Furthermore, "Items of knowledge tend to remain detached and disconnected

...there is a need for coherence and perspective, which could be promoted, perhaps, by means of time-charts and cross references.”³⁵

With the exception of the O-Level stream, a broad-based English course was taught by the form teachers. The pupils were encouraged to read, both to help with their studies and for pleasure. There was an emphasis placed on children's classics, both old and new, as well as a study of Shakespeare and of poetry. A great deal of effort was put into reading and writing, a fact borne out by the testimonies of several past pupils of the school who believed that, in this respect, the education of the Comprehensive School pupils was distinctly inferior. Thus a great deal of time was spent on comprehension exercises and in writing compositions and letters.

As in English, the O-Level mathematicians were taught by a specialist mathematics teacher. The other forms were usually taught by their form teachers. There were differentiated schemes of work and all but the least able were taught arithmetic, algebra, geometry, graphs, trigonometry and surveying.

Prior to the 1956 inspection, all the pupils followed a general science course, with the most able taking it at O-Level. However, after the 1957 examination there was a split: girls were to take biology and boys chemistry and physics. This split of the sexes, like the ones for the housecraft, needlework and handicraft, was commented on by several former pupils, as was the time when only the most able were allowed

³⁵ H.M.I., Report on Broom Cottages County Secondary School: Inspected on 26, 27, 28 and 29, November 1956, pp. 5-6.

to take separate sciences. All thought the distinctions unfair; with two exceptions, none of the boys wanted to take housecraft or needlework.

The science facilities in the school were very restricted. There was only one small dedicated science room, where most of the general science was taught. Biology lessons were taught in the ordinary classrooms with other lessons going on at the same time, or else they took place in the hall or even the staff room. During most of the biology lessons seen in the course of the inspection a second teacher was teaching another subject in the room at the same time. Under such conditions it was very difficult for the pupils to conduct individual experiments. When one considers that pupils were being entered for a public examination, such a state of affairs was rather bleak. Matters were improved somewhat with the addition of a second laboratory in 1957.

Unlike history, geography was taught to some of the forms by a subject specialist. However, in addition there were six non-specialists teaching the subject. Unfortunately there was no specialist geography classroom and, as was the same for many others, the teachers had to carry their teaching material around the school. Some of the O-Level group were also able to do field work and study basic geology. As in many of the other subjects, most of the teaching was didactic; a point backed up by the *process survey* on the questionnaire.³⁶ However, one advantage of having the same teacher for several subjects was that it was much easier to make cross-curricular links between subjects. In this respect the

³⁶ See Appendix Fourteen.

geography teaching was singled out for special praise, with frequent references during lessons to history, science and current affairs.

Religious education, which in less ecumenical times was called religious knowledge or religious instruction, was taught by a number of teachers who followed the Durham agreed syllabus.³⁷ Teaching mainly involved re-telling stories from the Bible, studying the major characters of the Old Testament and the teaching of the New Testament. Like the daily assembly, there was usually a moral aspect to the teaching.

Six teachers taught art, but there was only one specialist. Nor was there an art room; materials were scarce and the contribution which the subject made to the overall appearance of the school was severely limited. Music, like art, was under-equipped but in the hands of a young specialist teacher and the school choir was remembered fondly by one former member as the highlight of her school days.

Woodwork was taught to the boys by two experienced teachers in specialist rooms. There was also a little metalwork for the boys. Several girls still feel aggrieved that they were not allowed to take what was known as handicraft. However, there was less concern over the other all male subject, technical drawing. This was taught by the two woodwork masters in the woodwork room to the pupils in the top stream. For their part, only the girls were allowed to take housecraft, needlework and commerce. However, the latter was later opened to boys.

³⁷ See Durham County Council Education Committee, The Durham County Agreed Syllabus of Religious Instruction.

At this time commerce, which was in its infancy and involved only a small number of girls studying economic and business practice and book-keeping, soon came to enjoy a very high profile, not only in the school but in the County. Indeed, by the following year the Broom was mentioned in a report by the Director of Education as one of eleven proposed commercial course centres in the County.³⁸ Although pupils from other schools did study commerce at the Broom it did not, in fact, become a centre until September 1959.³⁹ By the following year pupils were attending the Broom from twelve other schools, including Chilton and East Howle,⁴⁰ and the Secondary Education Sub-Committee was pleased to note that there were almost 150 pupils at various stages on the course. Of those who had so far left, 18 were enrolled on further education courses and 20 were following commercial careers.⁴¹ The growing importance of the Broom as a commercial centre can be seen in the fact that in November 1961 the West Central Division recommended that pupils who were selected by examination to attend the course at the Broom should be transferred to the school on a permanent basis. Furthermore,

³⁸ See a report given at a Special Meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 25 February 1957.

³⁹ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 20 May 1959; Minute No. 76.

This Minute points out that the school already had twenty typewriters in a specialist room which were used "for further education."

⁴⁰ The full list was Bowburn Modern, Byers Green County, Chilton County, West Cornforth County, Tudhoe R.C., East Howle County, Spennymoor Rosa Street County, Trimdon R.C., Spennymoor Modern, Tudhoe Colliery, Cornforth Lane County, Trimdon Modern and, of course, Broom Cottages Modern.

⁴¹ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 16 November 1960; Minute No. 339.

the school should also be allowed to become a centre for the Royal Society of Arts examination.⁴² The Director supported both recommendations, except that in the case of the transfer of pupils, the number should be limited to twenty-four.⁴³

Housecraft, which largely consisted of cookery, laundry and household cleaning, was a very popular subject for the girls and was taught by two specialist teachers. The girls, who were encouraged to plan their own projects, staged weekly exhibitions to demonstrate the results of their work. There was a small room in the main building but the other room was in one of the prefabricated buildings where the girls performed less well. There were also two teachers who taught needlework, both of whom were described by the inspectors as working tirelessly to make their own teaching aids and to provide the girls with books and magazines to help with their design work. There was one well-equipped dedicated needlework room, though it lacked a sink and water supply. This subject was clearly very popular. The girls were taught simple dressmaking and embroidery and encouraged to work on individual projects. Their original designs, which in many cases were of a high standard, were kept in specially decorated folders.

The final subject on the curriculum was physical education and in this the school had an enviable reputation, particularly for football. The importance of winning the County Championship cannot be over-stated. In a predominantly male dominated society, where association football was held in such high regard, such an

⁴² Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 13 December 1961; Minute No. 350.

⁴³ Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 14 April 1962; Minute No. 22.

achievement continues to stand out for some as the highlight of their school career. Staff too speak with pride about the championship-winning side of 1967. There was also the annual visit to Wembley Stadium in London to watch a schoolboy soccer international.⁴⁴ In addition to football, the other sports for boys included cricket, athletics, gymnastics, tennis, cross-country running, basketball and hockey. The girls also had a full programme of activities, which included netball, gymnastics and athletics. In addition, pupils travelled to the swimming baths at Durham.⁴⁵ There was also a voluntary gymnastics club and a dancing club; mixed country dancing prior to the Christmas parties became something of a tradition.

Former pupils and staff recall individual teachers, pupils and subjects with various degrees of satisfaction. Some remember the school blazer and forming lines to walk into school; others being prefects or school librarians. "We didn't get as much homework as they do nowadays. We didn't go to school loaded down with books and folders and I can't remember any of my friends taking P.E. gear to school. We just used the school's."

Moving to the new school in 1965 was a red-letter day for staff and pupils alike. The school was clearly much better than the old building they shared with the infants. Now Broom pupils and staff attended a school with good, well-equipped

⁴⁴ Pupils from Chilton Modern School also went to Wembley; a tradition that was carried on with great success after the merger of the three schools in 1974.

⁴⁵ Following the opening of the Grammar Technical School in 1964, pupils from the Broom and Chilton were invited to use the Grammar School pool.

science laboratories and practical rooms for woodwork, metalwork and domestic science. Furthermore, they now had a school with a gymnasium.

However not everything about the new school building was well-received. A pupil wrote to *The Northern Echo* complaining that the new school was infested with mice. An article with photographs of the new building, which had cost £233,000, appeared in February 1965 under the title *Pupils Complain of Mice in School*.⁴⁶ The 450 pupils now had a large hall, gymnasium, two science laboratories, two domestic science rooms, and handicraft facilities. In the newspaper article the reporter commented that the two main features of the new school were “the liberal use of glass and the separate site levels.” The opening of the new Broom Cottages building, which was as architecturally undistinguished as the Grammar Technical and Chilton Modern, meant that there had been three new schools opened in the area within two years.

These schools were the so-called CLASP schools.⁴⁷ As *The Durham Advertiser* reported, since 1958 thirty-two schools had been built in the County and a further thirteen were planned. This was expected to save the County £350,000.⁴⁸ The building had no real foundations. A slab of reinforced concrete was constructed on the site and a steel frame built on to it. This allowed the school to flex and so

⁴⁶ *The Northern Echo*, 23 February 1965.

⁴⁷ CLASP was a Consortium of Local Authorities which sought to provide schools more cheaply through a system of bulk buying and Special Purchases for buildings of a common design and construction.

⁴⁸ *The Durham Advertiser*, 27 March 1964.

follow ground movements, particularly useful for a county criss-crossed with old mine-workings. Window frames walls and internal partitions were designed to allow distortion to take place without damage. The idea of this method was to reduce construction costs by using prefabricated components. This not only saved money but it also reduced the time taken to build the new school.

One of the most frequently remembered aspects of school life was the discipline. Nearly all the pupils could remember receiving corporal punishment or knowing someone who had. "Discipline was strict. Pupils were more wary of teachers." "Discipline was more rigid in class and in play areas." "You knew what you had to do; and if you didn't do it you got the stick and that was that." However, life was not all punishment. One old boy of the school, who had no intention of passing the 11-plus, preferring to go to the Broom with his friends and get in to the football team, remembers receiving a copy of "The Gypsy in Scarlet" as a reward for coming top of his class. In addition, "If you were prepared to work, encouragement was given."

Certainly, with its O-Level stream and the opportunity for transfer to a grammar school to study G.C.E. Advanced Level, there were rewards for those of ability and determination. However, not every one felt like that. "The exams we could sit. I don't think they would have got people better jobs. I also think they could have encouraged you more in subjects you weren't very good at and they could have introduced subjects we didn't get, like languages, biology, etc. I also think they should have done away with needlework and like today they should have let girls do woodwork and metalwork. In P.E. we never got the chance to play the same thing

every week e.g. hockey, in the gym or athletics.” Yet for the majority of pupils interviewed, Broom Cottages was seen as a very good school. They speak of the school and its staff with genuine affection; even those who did not get into the O-Level stream seem to be proud that the school provided such an opportunity for others. In many respects it is tempting to think of Broom Cottages as a small comprehensive school; just as today the Comprehensive School has more in common with the old Broom Cottages than with Chilton Modern or the Grammar Technical School.

The success of the Broom School does raise some important issues which help to bring the wider debate over comprehensivization into sharper focus. On the one hand, the success of the Broom’s O-Level stream demonstrated that the decisions about pupils’ academic potential at the age of eleven were not always accurate. This can be cited as an argument in favour of comprehensivization. On the other hand, some staff at the Broom resented the attacks on the grammar schools because of the implication that pupils who did not attend the grammar schools were receiving a second class education: they did not feel they were providing second best.

The Grammar School, which cost £350,000 to build, was opened in September 1964 with twenty staff and 489 pupils in 14 forms. Even though the school had been planned for twenty years, for the residents of Ferryhill its opening must have seemed something of an anomaly.⁴⁹ The town already had a secondary school,

⁴⁹ The irony of the situation cannot have escaped those who read the banner headline, *County Plans Giant all out Switch to Comprehensives*, in *The Northern Echo* on 4 March

Broom Cottages. Locally it was rumoured that the school was a reward for two local politicians: John Vickerstaff and Joseph Slater. Councillor Vickerstaff, who had been appointed to the West Central Divisional Executive as far back as November 1945, had been a County Councillor since 1949 and was former chairman of the County's influential Finance Committee. Joe Slater, created Baron Slater of Ferryhill in 1970, had a national reputation. Like many local politicians, he came from a mining background. From 1944-1950 he was a Durham County Councillor, before becoming the Labour Member of Parliament for Sedgefield for the next twenty years.⁵⁰

Geographically, when one considers the catchment area it served, a strong case can be made that it was built in the wrong location. The school was built on an elevated, isolated and windswept site on the very edge of Ferryhill, half-way between the town and Kirk Merrington. It drew pupils from a vast catchment area largely to the south and east. The head master of Bede Hall at Billingham Campus complained that he was having problems recruiting from the eastern part of his catchment area because of the new grammar school at Ferryhill.⁵¹ Pupils were attracted to the school from the northern outskirts of Darlington; vast numbers also came from the burgeoning new town Newton Aycliffe, where for geographical

1965: the month *before* County Councillor Vickerstaff officially opened the school. See Chapter Four for details.

⁵⁰ Joe Slater rose in the Labour Party ranks, becoming Private Parliamentary Secretary to Harold Wilson, when he was in opposition from 1960-64; and finally becoming Assistant Postmaster General from 1964-69.

⁵¹ The Northern Echo, 12 May 1965.

reasons if not others the school should have been built;⁵² to the east Sedgefield, Fishburn, Trimdon, Cornforth and Bradbury were just a few of the areas from which pupils travelled. In total, over half the pupils who attended the school came from outside Ferryhill or Chilton. It is for that reason that, whilst the Grammar School engendered a great deal of civic pride, it developed few strong connections with the majority of people who lived in the two communities. As a former Grammar School teacher said, "Sometimes I thought we were an alien intrusion into the community."

Many of the Grammar School pupils from the outlying areas, particularly Sedgefield, north Darlington and Newton Aycliffe, came from the wealthier parts of the region and what in this context can be described as middle-class backgrounds. In several ways, academic, sporting and cultural, the school was dominated by the pupils who were bussed in from outside Ferryhill and Chilton. As seen in Chapter One, the nineteenth and twentieth century growth of Ferryhill and Chilton was centred on the railway and mining industry. Even today the majority of its population can be described as working class. Research in the 1960s and 1970s indicated that gifted children from working class families did particularly well at selective schools.⁵³ Ferryhill Grammar Technical School certainly proved this point. Traditionally in the North-East a grammar school education was the way out

⁵² Minute No. 141 of a meeting of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, held on 15 June 1960, gives details of a proposed five-form entry Newton Aycliffe Grammar Technical School to cater for 800 pupils. The school was never built. Instead there was a form of campus arrangement, in part on the Billingham model, but without the grammar school. Two *schools*, Milton Hall and Marlowe Hall, were part of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit.

⁵³ See in particular the work of B. Jackson and D. Marsden, Education and the Working Class: Some General Themes raised by a Study of 88 Working-class Children in a Northern Industrial City.

of a pre-determined life in the mines, the shipyards, the steelworks, the railway fitting shed or the factory. In one sense there was a dichotomy between the working-class child for whom education meant very little, as exemplified by the former pupil of Broom Cottages referred to above who saw little value in the examinations she was expected to sit, and the other Grammar School pupil who said that, "for me the grammar school meant everything, it led to a place at university and to an eventual career as a solicitor."

Although fewer former Grammar School pupils were interviewed, as one might expect, their views were more detailed than those of the modern school pupils. All who were interviewed believed that the education they received at the Grammar School was either better or the same as that at the Comprehensive School. The opinion of some former pupils was expressed in forceful terms: "When I attended Ferryhill Grammar School the discipline was quite strict. God help you if you were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Teachers' dress was different - all teachers wore black gowns⁵⁴ (some even wear jogging suits and shorts now!) What a terrible example. Uniform was compulsory and how smart we all looked! What's happened to daily assembly? When it was a Grammar School everyone was keen to learn, now there are some disruptive children who slow up the rest of the class."

Clearly being selected for the Grammar School was a source of pride and, as shown by the attitude of the pupils who went to the selective Bede Hall at Billingham

⁵⁴ Unlike their modern school counterparts, the Grammar School staff were predominantly graduates. Several wore gowns, though by the time of comprehensivization this distinction had begun to die out: and after 1974 only the head master wore academic dress.

Campus,⁵⁵ could lead to the breakdown of junior school friendships. As one former pupil confessed, "The 11+ had just been abandoned so we were selected on assessment of our general performance at junior school. I remember being pleased to be selected, but the girl I sat next to (who was not selected) opined that it had been inevitable because I was "posh" and a "swot" - I think she was probably half-right. I wondered if I would ever see her again - despite only living streets apart, I never did. I would say around 30% of the pupils from my junior school made it to the grammar." For others the decision was less clear cut: "My primary teachers thought I was university material. The headmaster queried this and I remember being called into his office to answer several questions. All a bit of a mystery for an eleven year old really." For some the impact of selection had potentially serious social consequences. For example, one old-boy wrote, "I was from a working-class background in Ferryhill and to get to the Grammar School was a major event: but there were many costs: inter-school rivalry, splits within the family - my brother went to the secondary modern."

There were always problems, which occasionally spilled over into violence between the grammar and modern school pupils. Generally, the former tried to keep a low profile in the community. Of course, the schools did come together at the annual Multilateral Unit Sports Day, but other than that contact appears to have been minimal. However, the few pupils who were transferred between the modern

⁵⁵ A thirteen year old girl at Bede Hall told a *Northern Echo* reporter that she and a girl five doors away had always been great friends, until at the age of twelve the other girl was transferred from Bede to a secondary modern hall. "She used to call for me until the beginning of the second year. Since then we speak to each other, we go to Red Cross class, but otherwise we don't bother. I go to school with my dad now. As soon as they know we come from Bede they say we are one of those snobs." *The Northern Echo*, 12 May 1965.

schools and the Grammar, never more than two or three a year, were quickly assimilated into their new environment. One detrimental effect for the future of the local community in having its gifted young people attend a grammar school was that so many of them went on to university or into *good* jobs and did not return to live in Ferryhill and Chilton. In effect there was a brain drain, and ten years after the catchment area of the school had been reduced following comprehensivization there were very few children attending the school whose parents had been to the Grammar School. Clearly, when the young talent of a community is lured away its future is much less assured.

In line with County policy the Grammar School, as at Broom Cottages and Chilton Modern, was organized on a house basis,⁵⁶ and even though the pupils who attended the school had been selected at the age of eleven, they were then streamed. The most academic group became the Express Stream. These gifted pupils were expected to sit their G.C.E. Ordinary examinations after only four years. So whilst the Grammar School represented the elite in terms of all the secondary school cohort, within that school there were further sub-divisions. A former Grammar School pupil clearly remembers these distinctions: "Even though this was a supposedly elite grammar school, there was a definite underclass - people who were not really on the same level, academically, as everyone else. This put them in a different social sphere - it was not done consciously, I think, but people of similar ability did seem to gravitate towards one another, to the exclusion of those of

⁵⁶ Stephenson (red), Bede (blue), Surtees (yellow) and Browning (green).

greater or lesser achievement.” Interestingly, this same pupil reported that these distinctions disappeared in the sixth form.

However, being in the Express Stream was not always a social advantage. In addition to the fear of being demoted if you did not quite come up to standard there were other problems, as a former member of the *x* form wrote: “We soon discovered a most unpleasant flip-side to high achievement in exams: good results in the first year meant being pushed, willy-nilly, into the Express Stream, which became a class of reluctant egg-heads grafted on to the next year up. This meant rejection by our contemporaries, who naturally felt slighted, and utter contempt from the year we were meant to join, who themselves were Express rejects. The effect on many of us was to simply abandon all academic effort as we struggled to find an acceptable social position among our peers.”

The traditional labelling of pupils by their fellows remained universal. Pupils at Chilton, Broom Cottages and the Comprehensive would have understood the phraseology, though perhaps less the sentiment: “One point that really sticks in my mind is that even in the Grammar School there were those labelled “thick”, “trouble”, etc.”

The Grammar School lasted only ten years before being swallowed by comprehensivization. In that period it did not really have time to establish any real traditions, though it did have a reputation for two things: academic excellence and the quality of its dramatic productions. There was perhaps a third; it had a flourishing Sixth Form Club. There was no honours board, but there was an annual

prize-giving at which the deserving received public recognition for their achievements. The school had a relatively young staff, over three-quarters of whom were graduates, and a very hard-working and demanding head master, Mr. J.L. Bowman. In many ways, the character of the head master determined the character of the school. The school preached the nineteenth-century virtues of hard-work and self-help. Even in ten years, over twenty-five members of staff left the school to gain promotion elsewhere.

The staff room had its male and female halves. Former members of staff remember that it had quite an intellectual atmosphere and contrasted this with the staff room after comprehensivization. As in the other schools, there was no formal induction programme for new teachers. "You learned at the feet of the masters," said a distinguished former member of staff. "The head of department would have overall responsibility for your welfare and you were visited in your first year by an inspector who would judge your competence in the classroom. I can't remember anyone failing their probationary year."

The main staff room had a small room off to the right; this contained the snooker table. The room was clearly a male preserve and the tradition of playing snooker on a Friday night, initially as part of the Sixth Form Club programme, continued, and indeed flourished, when the three schools came together. Lunch times were long, over an hour, and this was when many extra-curricular activities took place and clubs prospered; for example, the chess, debating and stamp clubs. The Grammar

School was also the only school in the area to have its own swimming pool,⁵⁷ a fact which was not lost on the pupils from the two secondary moderns. The swimming pool was perhaps the only thing the pupils from Broom and Chilton looked forward to when comprehensivization took place.

With regard to the school's academic success, all staff and pupils were proud of the school's achievements. As well they might, having creamed off the academic elite from a catchment area of approximately fifteen square miles. Certainly, the exhortations of the head master, Mr. Bowman, made a lasting impression on his pupils, "There were lots of references to it being an academic school. I remember the Head comparing school results with the national average - it was a favourable comparison! The academic expectations were signalled early. For example, in the third year our careers lessons consisted of learning how to fill in an U.C.C.A. form.⁵⁸ Polytechnics were infra dig and teacher training was ... well ... for the intellectually incapacitated. As seen through the eyes of a third year grammar school boy and pure snobbery. This academic snobbery was carefully cultivated."

In his head master's report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit's Governors and Managers in September 1969, Mr. Bowman was justifiably proud of his school's academic achievements. The Advanced Level results were described as excellent,

⁵⁷ The availability of a swimming pool might have helped one twelve-year old Grammar School pupil, Julie Warburton, rescue a fellow holiday-maker from drowning in Spain. For her efforts in the summer of 1969, Julie received a letter of commendation from the Royal Humane Society.

⁵⁸ Universities Central Council on Admissions, set up in 1961 to co-ordinate university applications. Its polytechnic equivalent was P.C.A.S. - the Polytechnics Central Admissions System.

with thirteen pupils gaining three out of three passes.⁵⁹ This was only the second time pupils from the school had sat A-Levels. However, the Ordinary results were truly outstanding. The pass rate of 72.2 per cent was 20 per cent higher than the national average. Over 100 pupils achieved seven or more passes; a further 36 achieved five or six passes. In a typical phase Mr. Bowman announced that 136 out of 159 pupils had received "a worthwhile certificate."⁶⁰ The Express Stream was singled out for the highest praise.

With such results it is hardly surprising that staff and pupils alike had high expectations, though praise seems to have been scant and academic success was seen as its own reward. Teaching was generally quite didactic and staff were often seen, until the sixth form, as remote figures. There was an expectation that pupils would succeed and the school was geared towards exam success. Examinations took place twice a year and the teaching was highly focused. As one pupil recalled, "For some teachers, getting us through the exams somehow was all that seemed to matter and this took precedence over any attempt to ensure we had a thorough understanding of the subject. Everything that happened to us was as a result of our

⁵⁹ As well as the 13 with 3 passes out of 3, there were 8 with 2 out of 3; 3 with 1 out of 3; 6 with 2 out of 2; 1 with 1 out of 2; and 1 with 1 out of 1.

Ferryhill Grammar School Head Teachers Report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' and Managers' Committee, September 1967.

⁶⁰ Ferryhill Grammar School Head Teachers Report to the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit Governors' and Managers' Committee, September 1967.

The breakdown of passes is equally impressive: 119 passes at Grade 1; 110 at Grade 2; 337 at Grade 3; 203 at Grade 4; 206 at Grade 5; and 153 at Grade 6.

With such results, the diminution in academic ability, for lots of reasons, following comprehensivization was considerable and a great blow for many staff.

performance in exams, and that was how we ourselves measured our success. I liked exams and felt that they helped to concentrate effort, but because of the emphasis on them, most of us felt able to cruise for the rest of the year. We never felt our week-by-week performance was being monitored, and consequently poor marks for work submitted was not usually seen as a problem.”

The pupils had a lot of homework which they were expected to do or else they would face the consequences, which from some teachers might mean extra work or for prolonged failure to comply with the rules it might even mean the cane. As in all schools where homework was set, it was done with greater enthusiasm for some teachers than for others. Certainly, it was done with more enthusiasm if it was seen as relevant, for example if it involved developing a theme to be worked on later in class or was gone through by the teacher. One pupil complained, “There was so much homework to do that pupils who were slower than others had very little time for leisure activities - even during holidays.”

The school uniform was compulsory, even for the sixth form, though in the case of the latter there was some degree of toleration. Failure to comply with the regulations could mean being sent home to change. Not uncommonly in these circumstances, it was the girls who tested the rules to their limit. “The rules were only broken in embellishments such as nail varnish, makeup and jewellery, all of which were guaranteed to incur the wrath of certain female members of staff. Usually a public tongue-lashing would be administered in the corridor, but the determinedly sophisticated miscreant would be only briefly deterred. We adapted our uniforms to suit the fashions of the day. Ties were always knotted very near the

wide end so that there was a very thick knot and a long thin tail. Cardigans and blazers were worn with only the top button fastened. Decorated haversacks were *de rigueur*, carried on one long strap, made out of two buckled together. Skirts should be no more than 1" longer than the blazer or cardigan, and this effect would be achieved by hoisting up the skirt at the waist and turning it over several times. The chunkier the bulge around the midriff, the wonkier the hemline, the better one's image. Doubtless these adaptations did cause the teachers much disquiet, but so long as we did wear our uniform, there was little to be said."

If the academic reputation the school enjoyed was well-earned, so too was its tradition, for even in ten years this is what it clearly was, in drama. Its musical productions can only be described as semi-professional. Indeed, so impressive were these productions that a coach brought people from Harrogate to see *The King and I*. The school was fortunate enough to possess a fine stage with a good lighting system, but most of all several very talented members of staff, particularly the Director⁶¹ and the Musical Director, both of whom later staged successful productions at the Theatre Royal in Newcastle. The effort that went into these productions was colossal; sometimes rehearsals did not finish until nearly midnight. There were six performances in the week, with a matinee on Saturday. One former thespian remembered: "The annual musical was a very important part of the school calendar. It was a real team-effort, noted for its professionalism, and involving staff and pupils alike in the performance and behind-the-scenes work. Even for older and

⁶¹ When the Director, who also happened to be the head of the history department, staged a production of *Oliver* at Durham Johnston School it was the first time the musical had been seen outside the West End.

more cynical pupils, the school musical remained something to be proud of and a symbol of the school's standing in the locality. There were occasional plays too, but they did not have such an impact on the school. I do remember once, towards the end of my time there, the whole school being treated to a revue starring the "staff" as we had never seen them before."

As implied earlier, once in the sixth form pupils enjoyed improved relationships with the staff. "Before the Sixth Form all staff were remote and rather unapproachable," said one pupil. Others talked of successful teachers who had "natural" authority and inspired the pupils with respect for their subject, whilst maintaining a respectful distance from the pupils. As pupils everywhere point out, teachers who were thought of as weak were exploited. However, in the Grammar School weaknesses could be seen in academic terms as well as in demonstrating a lack of classroom control. "We did not respect teachers whom we suspected of not being academically up-to-scratch." Then as now, the rôle of the teacher was all-important. For example, pupils in the Express Stream were almost universally under-performing in one particular subject until a new teacher arrived. "The new man quietly commanded our attention, without openly having to exert his authority: we were all immediately aware that the time for playing around was passed, and together we applied ourselves seriously to the task before us. It worked: we were all guided step by step to success at O-Level, but, more importantly, we all understood and appreciated the subject."

However, once in the sixth form there was a clear change in the relationship between pupils and staff. This was most obviously exemplified by the Sixth Form

Club, held every Friday night for staff and pupils. This was hugely popular and successful; there were sporting, social and cultural events organised by a Sixth Form Committee. What this did to staff-student relationships cannot be over-estimated. As one sixth former said, "Once we were in the Sixth Form an alarming change came over some of the teachers. They began to treat us like adult human beings - quite an unnerving experience at first. For the first time we seemed to be treated as individuals."

Only members of the sixth form were allowed to be prefects, a fact of particular significance in 1974 when the school became comprehensive. In Broom Cottages and Chilton Modern it was the fifth form who had this responsibility: when the Comprehensive School was opened the fifth formers from the Broom and Chilton were denied this privilege. For sixth formers the dress code was slightly more liberal, they could use different entrances and could automatically go to the front of the lunch queue.

With regard to lunch time arrangements one pupil recalls that, "At first we were only allowed to have school dinners, we had to fight to be allowed to take a packed lunch." One pupil remembers sneaking down to *the village*, "lured by the prospect of a Cornish pastie and a can of Coke." This was not allowed and occasionally threats would be issued in assembly. "But there seemed little anyone could do to stop us - there were rumours that the school attempted to coerce the bakers into refusing to serve us, but obviously, Mammon prevailed." A third pupil goes into greater detail about the different arrangements in the dining hall, identifying three different systems before revealing an interesting attitude towards some of his

teachers. "Initially, we all trooped to the hatch, collected our plate of gruel and repaired to the nearest table, which were laid out in rows. Then a group system was introduced; tables were formed into groups of two or four pushed together. The food was already in place at each table, and a pre-appointed monitor would serve it out and it was passed round the table. This meant the downtrodden were always in danger of finding their mash accompanied by custard, though indeed there was little enough to choose between them. The system, intended as progressive and enlightened, proved so open to abuse and violence, that eventually each table had to have a teacher in attendance, who would eat with the mob. It was generally understood that these teachers were induced to dine with us by the offer of free meals. They were therefore regarded as having no pride or moral standards. In our twisted way, we had far more respect for those teachers who were prepared to pay to sit as far away from us as possible." Another pupil remembered that "the table was headed by a senior pupil who seemed to consume most of the food. It was all very hierarchical."

Careers guidance was strictly limited and seems to have centred for the Express Stream on how to apply to a university. One member of the Express Stream believed that: "The system epitomized the very worst aspects of British culture: it was very much anti-industry. We used to mock those who intended to get a job at 16 or 18. Intelligent children go to university. I left university in 1975 with no idea of what to do. I spent one year working in industry at Spennymoor and then decided to go into teaching." Others remember having talks from visiting speakers on a career in banking, the law or an aspect of the medical profession. Boys and girls were given separate careers lessons with different speakers.

There was one cause célèbre concerning guest speakers which was hotly debated in both County Hall and the local press. In April 1965 the Secondary Education Sub-Committee was asked to approved a resolution of the West Central Divisional Executive allowing a series of lecture to take place at Ferryhill Grammar Technical School.⁶² The lectures, on *social behaviour*, were to be delivered by the National Marriage Guidance Council to pupils in the fourth, fifth and sixth forms. In the end, after several meetings, the Authority refused to give permission for the lectures to take place. For several weeks in June and July the matter was aired extensively in the pages of *The Northern Echo*. The debate was centred around whether it was more appropriate that the teachers teach the subject or whether it was best left to outside experts.⁶³

As in the other two schools, several pupils complained that there was no such thing as equal opportunities. "Some subjects were only for girls and some only for boys; which we thought very unfair at the time. As far as I know, domestic science and needlework for the rest of the school were confined to the girls, while only boys did metalwork and woodwork. I would say that the science and the technical science subjects were dominated by the boys. When it came to making our choices for the fourth year and onwards we had to choose between an arts course, a science course or a language course; there was no overlapping - and if you took one of this type of

⁶² Secondary Education Sub-Committee, 14 April 1965; Minute No. 77. Further discussion took place at the Committee's meeting on 9 June 1965. See Minute No. 145 for details.

⁶³ See articles in The Northern Echo dated: 2 June 1965, 8 July 1965, 13 July 1965, 16 July 1965 and 21 July 1965.

subject you couldn't do any subjects from the other choices." It also appears that there was very little time given over to discussion of the various subject choices and of the implications this could have in later life. As now, this decision was made at the age of thirteen, but in the case of the Express Stream, even earlier.

"We were given a form to take home after our first year exam results came out. We were told to decide overnight which direction we wanted to take for the next three years, up to O-Level - either sciences or languages. We had been given no prior warning that we would be called upon to make such a choice, nor had our parents. We were twelve years old. Some subjects on the form we had had the chance to study for a year, others were completely new to us. Practical subjects, apart from art, were eliminated from the equation. My first year performance in domestic science had left no one in any doubt about my innate culinary skills, but my natural aptitude in technical drawing and my vision of becoming an architect were quietly wiped out in that one evening. Our parents were hardly directly involved in this major decision, they got to see the forms, but essentially most people decided on the strength of what their friends were doing. No one thought to challenge what was being offered."

Such decisions made an impression on more than one pupil in the Express Stream:

"At the end of the first year, we were given a form to take home one night and told to return it the next day to decide whether we were going into the languages or the science tracks. I opted for languages and took German and French and something called "general science". I never did woodwork, metalwork or technical drawing again (even though I did quite well at tech. drawing in the first year). As a result I

remain a bookworm to this day and my wife still complains about my non-practical nature.”

It is easy to see the three schools were in many respects very different from each other. The Grammar Technical School, out of place in the community and with an outstanding academic record and a mainly graduate staff; Chilton Modern, in many ways at the other end of the academic spectrum, proud of being a neighbourhood school which tailored its courses to meet the needs and wishes of its pupils; and Broom Cottages lying somewhere in between - the oldest and most well-established school with a proud sporting and academic tradition of its own amongst modern schools and, like Chilton, with a strong sense of community. However, there were similarities. All were streamed, all had pupils divided into houses, all were housed in similar buildings. As part of the questionnaire, pupils were also asked to comment on the learning opportunities they had and the teaching methodologies to which they were exposed. From this survey even more similarities and differences emerged.

Appendices Fifteen and Sixteen show in graph form the results of the questions about the former pupils' teaching and learning experiences. The pupils were asked ten questions which were then analysed according to the school they attended and dates they were pupils.⁶⁴ Thus they were asked whether they copied from books or from the blackboard; did they work in groups; how often did they engage in practical work, such as working with apparatus or making things; did they research

⁶⁴ See Appendix Fourteen.

topics; use the school library or present their work to the rest of the class; did they use duplicated notes or prepare essays; were there discussions led by the teacher or did they have notes dictated to them in class? The pupils were given three possible responses to the questions: never or almost never, occasionally or frequently. All the students responded to every question, even though they were given the option to miss out any they felt they could not answer. When the final results were tabulated, each response was given a value: never or almost never, 1 point; occasionally, 2 points and frequently, 3 points. The final results were averaged out in Appendix Fifteen in accordance with the year group each student attended. Thus, the maximum average score for any question was 3, with the minimum score being 1.

Although the trends which emerged from these questions are worthy of comment, it must be stressed that the responses could have been affected by many variables. The questions took no account of different subjects, nor of the different academic streams the students might have been in: it is possible they may have been coloured by the lessons the students best remembered. The analysis in Appendix Fifteen also took no account of the type of school each student attended: thus they range from the un-reorganized all-age school through to the secondary modern and grammar technical.

From the graph in Appendix Fifteen it can be seen that the one activity scoring the highest aggregate total was question one. All students, irrespective of year groupings, copied a great deal from the blackboard or from books; the 1941-56 age group giving this the maximum total. When an analysis was undertaken comparing

the grammar technical school and the modern schools (Appendix Sixteen) the secondary modern school scored higher - though not significantly.

Group work, question two, scored low overall; the lowest score being recorded by the 1941-56 age group, though no group registered particularly high. When the grammar/modern comparison was done, the modern school students appeared to do slightly more group work than the grammar technical school pupils.

There seems to have been a growth in practical work for the 1950-66 and 1962-73 groups, and there was quite a noticeable difference in favour of the grammar school pupils over the modern school. Overall, practical work scored the third highest aggregate total behind essay writing and copying from the blackboard or books.

Researching a topic showed a steady growth over the years. It was almost never done between 1941-56, but by 1962-73 it had increased quite markedly - especially when one looks at Appendix Sixteen where the grammar school students claimed it was done frequently.

The use of the school library was very disappointing for all year groups and shows no differences between grammar and modern school pupils.

Presenting work in front of the class and the use of duplicated notes both scored low marks in all year groups. This latter feature is in stark contrast to the essay preparation question. All groups scored this very highly, and surprisingly it appears that the 1941-56 year group comes out on top. However, on closer analysis it can

be seen from Appendix Sixteen that the grammar school pupils gave this the highest priority.

A class discussion led by a teacher was a feature of every age group. Again, it was given a slightly higher priority in the grammar school. Dictated notes seem to have been on the increase as the years progressed so that, by 1962-73, it had crept into the frequently bracket.

From Appendix Fifteen, it emerges that there is a surprisingly high correlation between the three age groups on many of the questions. Copying from the blackboard or books, essay preparation and practical work all seem to be given a relatively high priority. In comparison, using duplicated notes gets the lowest mark.

Appendix Seventeen compares Ferryhill Grammar Technical School with neighbouring Spennymoor Grammar School. Hardly surprisingly it shows a close link between many of the teaching and learning styles in the two schools. The Spennymoor sample was very small, just five students, thus any real conclusions are virtually impossible to draw. However, the priorities seem to be almost identical in both schools.

Viewed in isolation the results of the questionnaire reveal very little that can be said to be totally reliable. However, when one adds the information from Appendix Fifteen and Sixteen to the oral evidence of the former students, a much clearer picture emerges.

2. THREE SCHOOLS AS ONE

Ferryhill Grammar Technical School's head master, Mr. J.L. Bowman, who became the head master at the Comprehensive School, wrote to the new Director of Education, Douglas Curry, giving his view on the problems associated with the move to comprehensivization. Whilst he praised the Authority for its support, he was nevertheless critical of some aspects of reorganization, particularly the lack of suitable accommodation. The problems Mr. Bowman faced, though by no means unique, were enormous. He had to see the transformation of a five-form entry grammar school and two modern schools into a split-site comprehensive school, the two sites being one-and-a-half miles apart, and in the process assimilate three different teaching staffs and three sets of pupils. To prepare for the changeover, Mr. Bowman attended two courses planned by the County on "The All Ability Fifth" and "The Organisation and Curriculum of the Comprehensive School". The former involved visits to comprehensive schools in London and Yorkshire. Mr. Bowman then prepared a series of papers on what he saw as the main challenges facing the staff: "The Philosophy of Comprehensive Education", "Grouping in Schools", "Pastoral Care", and "Continuous Assessment". A copy was given to each member of staff and anyone who had visited a comprehensive school was asked to write a report of their experiences. Each topic was discussed at special after-school staff meetings, most of which lasted for at least two hours. Mr. Bowman saw this process of consultation as crucial to win over reluctant staff and gain their support. Subject departments from the three schools met for over a year to prepare schemes of work, devise new courses and decide on the equipment they

needed. The first meetings were very difficult, for no one knew who was to be the future head of department.

On five evenings during January and February 1974, parents were invited to meetings: one at Chilton, two at Broom Cottages and two in the Grammar School. At these two-hour meetings the principles of comprehensive education were explained, the curriculum and organization given in detail and parents were invited to ask questions. As a result of this consultation process staff, parents and pupils were aware of the policies which were to be implemented. Mr. Bowman was pleased to say that, "staff and parental co-operation was excellent. Indeed, few of the teachers on the staffs of the amalgamating schools have left or sought transfers, due, I believe, to their active participation in the organisation."⁶⁵

For eleven days Mr. Bowman interviewed staff in all three schools before they were asked to apply for posts of responsibility within the new school. During this period he was working a sixty-hour week and confessed that running a large school and organizing a larger one was physically and mentally exhausting. As a result of this workload, Mr. Bowman recommended to the Director that in future a "head designate is given a period of secondment to enable him to devote all his attention and energies to the work ahead and that he should be appointed at least a year before re-organisation."⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Notes of a letter to the Director of Education sent by Mr. J.L. Bowman in the first few weeks of the new Comprehensive School, 1974. The letter forms part of a privately held collection of Notes on Comprehensive Reorganization.

⁶⁶ Notes of a letter to the Director of Education sent by Mr. J.L. Bowman in the first few weeks of the new Comprehensive School, 1974.

Mr. Bowman went on to complain of the shortcomings in accommodation, staffing and money. The accommodation problem primarily involved the need for new demountable⁶⁷ buildings to be used as classrooms, and for year heads to have their own offices.⁶⁸ In addition, with a split-site school there was a need for staff to commute between the two buildings. Apart from the inconvenience this caused to the staff involved, it also made timetabling very difficult. Each year Mr. Bowman issued department heads with their "Clusters". This was a document whereby heads of department could allocate individual classes to specific teachers within their department. Some chose to spread the ability groups out evenly amongst their staff, others preferred to allocate the more academically able groups to former Grammar School staff. As one can imagine, at times this caused some resentment.

Another organizational problem was caused by the need to continue with existing courses. Pupils from the Broom and Chilton needed to continue with the C.S.E. courses they had begun in the fourth form: this sometimes produced very small teaching groups and led in the first year to other members of staff taking larger

⁶⁷ The so-called demountables were temporary classrooms built out of wood and set on raised platforms. Like many temporary buildings, they were still being used for teaching in the mid-1990s.

⁶⁸ Four pastoral heads had to share the same room, which was also used for medical inspections. On top of this, alongside form tutors, the year heads were responsible for the pupils' "morale, success, attendance, involvement, enthusiasm, discipline and examination performance"!

Taken from the draft notes of the address delivered to parents in December 1973 and January 1974. The letter forms part of a privately held collection: Notes on Comprehensive Reorganization.

classes. In addition, some teachers were unable to continue with their classes because they were permanently based at the Lower School.

Mr. Bowman was convinced that the secret for success lay in "adequate preparation in consultation with staff and, indeed, parents... success can be achieved providing their is support and co-operation from teaching staff. [However], my immediate problem is to prevent differentiation between academic and pastoral staff - this had always appeared to me to be the weakness of the comprehensive system."⁶⁹

In addition to his views on the problems of reorganization sent to County Hall, Mr. Bowman also shared his views with parents at a series of public meetings held just before and just after Christmas 1974. Although he did not disguise his concerns, his tone was understandably much more overtly optimistic.

Included in his address were a great deal of organizational details, including the division into Upper and Lower School and the pastoral system based on years, which replaced the house system common to all three schools. He also announced that mixed ability grouping was to be introduced for first year pupils. However, following this diagnostic year, pupils were then to be streamed. Mr. Bowman also presented his views on education and his hopes for the future of the new school.

He began by reiterating the beliefs of the authors of Circular 10/65, who viewed the tripartite system as socially divisive and having produced an educational system

⁶⁹ Notes of a letter to the Director of Education sent by Mr. J.L. Bowman in the first few weeks of the new Comprehensive School, 1974.

incapable of utilising to the full the talents of all pupils - the pool of latent ability as described in the Newsom Report. He reminded parents that, as a consequence of Circular 10/65, Durham had accepted the principle of *all-through* 11-18 schools. Interestingly, he went on to say that the split-site solution for Ferryhill and Chilton was only temporary. "For county policy has determined the erection of a ten-form entry purpose-built school. A further eight acres have been purchased on the Ferryhill Grammar School site, but when building will commence, I do not know. In fact, no plans have been drawn up at this stage and, in view of the recent governmental cut back in building, many years are likely to elapse before the school becomes purpose built."⁷⁰

Mr. Bowman's vision of the future would have been well-understood by staff and pupils in the Grammar School: "We want all children to cultivate their talents, to develop their individualities, to become good men and women, to care for their neighbours, to use their leisure time sensibly, to work hard and be adaptable.

The 1944 Education Act introduced the idea of equality of opportunity, but such concepts deceive children. We cannot give it to them - has a child from a broken home, has a child suffering from a physical handicap, has a retarded child the same opportunity as a normal child? The dynamic of the comprehensive school must be the equality of value - that each child matters as an individual - that pupils cannot be

⁷⁰ Taken from the draft notes of an address delivered to parents in December 1973 and January 1974.

The new school was never built. With falling school rolls it was seen as unnecessary. Indeed, the Upper and Lower Schools are now housed on the former Grammar School site.

expected to over achieve - that we cannot expect more from them than they can give. This is a radical, a revolutionary approach.

It is our job as teachers to ascertain the potential of each child and to ensure that each attains this potential. Pupils *must not* be allowed to under achieve! Nothing succeeds like success, but we as teachers must accept and convince our pupils that success is relative - relative to ability.”⁷¹

In addition to such exhortations, parents were reminded of the failures of the 11-plus examination before being told that, whilst experience had shown a close correlation between the primary school recommendations, which replaced the examination, and Ordinary Level results, there was an even closer correlation between first year results in the secondary school and O-Level. Thus, parents and pupils alike were left in no doubt of the importance of the diagnostic first year.

There was to be a common curriculum for the first three years and a generous option system in the fourth and fifth years.⁷² One of the great benefits of the Comprehensive School was the attempt to timetable G.C.E. groups parallel to C.S.E. groups. The aim was to make the transfer of pupils in either direction easier. In reality, as in the Multilateral Unit, such transfers were relatively rare.

⁷¹ Taken from the draft notes of an address delivered to parents in December 1973 and January 1974.

⁷² In addition to studying English, mathematics and physical education, pupils selected one subject from each of seven option blocks.

Mr. Bowman concluded his address with: "We know what we would like to do, but I must admit that the task facing us is difficult. School is not purpose built. We lack music studios, drama studios, project areas, sports hall and bases for pastoral heads. We shall learn from experience. We have our aims: experience may cause us to amend our methods. Our guiding principle will be equality of value - that each pupil matters as an individual."⁷³

Though long trumpeted, and despite all the planning, when it eventually came comprehensivization was a shock for everyone. Staff and pupils alike had to make huge adjustments. Without exception, all the staff preferred teaching in Broom Cottages Secondary Modern, Chilton Secondary Modern or Ferryhill Grammar Secondary to Ferryhill Comprehensive School. The reasons for this differed with one noticeable unifying factor - size. In September 1974 when the Comprehensive School opened there were over 90 members of staff, including seven probationary teachers and two for whom this was a new appointment, and 1,500 pupils housed on two sites. The sheer size of the new structure was daunting for all concerned. The Grammar School had nearly 1000 pupils and 38 staff, Broom Cottages nearly 600 pupils and 24 staff, whilst Chilton Secondary Modern was even smaller with a little over 200 pupils and 14 staff. It was the vastness of the new school which attracted most criticism. Staff who had felt comfortable under the old system now felt as if they were having to re-establish themselves. All the Chilton staff had to cope with a completely new environment, whereas only those members of staff from Broom Cottages who taught exclusively in the new Lower School felt at home.

⁷³ Taken from the draft notes of an address delivered to parents in December 1973 and January 1974.

Similarly, the Grammar School staff whose teaching was confined to the Upper School were at least in a familiar environment. Over sixty per cent of the staff had to get used to teaching in a new place of work.

Long established members of staff had to re-assert their authority with, in many cases, an almost entirely new pupil cohort. It is also important to remember that the raising of the school leaving age to 16 had only occurred the year before, thus there were seven classes of fifth form pupils who entered an entirely new environment, having come from Broom Cottages or Chilton Secondary, who not only had to remain at school for an extra year but who also could not enjoy the benefits that they might have felt their due as the school's senior pupils. In September 1974 there were 120 former Grammar School pupils in the sixth form. Such a situation created undoubted problems during the first year of comprehensivization. Yet such difficulties were not entirely unexpected and such problems that did arise were generally of a minor nature and dealt with by the pastoral system. Nor were staff faced with the predicted mass confrontations between sixth form and fifth form, Grammar School and secondary modern school, Ferryhill and Chilton.

Certainly teaching staff had to get used to working with new colleagues and sorting out the sheer logistical chaos that closing down three schools and re-creating them as a two-unit school was bound to cause. However, comprehensivization did not occur overnight; there was little sense of returning after a summer holiday on 9 September 1974 to face a completely new situation. Working parties had been established prior to comprehensivization and this had helped to build up inter-staff links. Whilst there would still have been some inter-disciplinary connections to be

made, everyone would have known the members within their own department, though it must be emphasized that working in the considerably enlarged departments brought its own problems. The history department in Chilton prior to 1974 had consisted of one specialist historian, in Broom Cottages it was the same, whereas in the Grammar School there were three; in September 1974 the new school opened with a staff of five historians. Getting used to new work practices, forming new relationships and coping with resources all contributed to the challenge of comprehensivization.

Yet, despite the obvious potential drawbacks of comprehensivization, there were undoubted benefits. Whilst having to work in much bigger departmental units and develop new work practices brought problems, it also had its attractions. On a personal level new friendships were made⁷⁴ and there was a real excitement of working together to cope with the traumas that 1974 brought. In addition, sharing ideas, building on good practice, and the genuine belief that this was a new beginning were some of the most positive outcomes of 1974.

However, it would be both naïve and unrealistic to record universal rejoicing. For some, and not only in the Grammar School, there was a feeling that 1974 was verging on a disaster. Whilst welcoming the equality of opportunity implicit in comprehensivization, there was a pessimism that it might throw away all that was good about the old system - that, for example, the proud academic and sporting traditions nurtured at Broom Cottages might be lost in a school of over one and a

⁷⁴ There were efforts to bring the staffs of the three schools together socially. However, with the exception of the staff football team, such efforts were largely unsuccessful.

half thousand pupils and where the Broom Cottages site was designated as the *Lower School*. Similarly, that the friendly and caring atmosphere in which Chilton Secondary was able to meet the academic needs of its pupils in such a relatively small, essentially rural, school would be lost in such a huge new conglomerate - and Chilton did not even have the benefit of retaining its buildings. The case for some of the negative attitudes amongst the Grammar School's staff are more clearly representative of the national opposition to comprehensivization: quite simply it would lead to a diminution of academic standards. That Ferryhill Grammar Technical School enjoyed a very high reputation, and not only in terms of its academic successes, was beyond doubt in the eyes of the opponents of 1974. What these members of staff feared was that this reputation would be under threat. For example, speech nights, where the staff would process onto the stage in full academic dress, were considered potentially divisive and therefore abandoned.⁷⁵ Furthermore, staff at Ferryhill Grammar were by no means unique in feeling a little apprehensive at the prospect of teaching secondary modern school pupils. An additional bone of contention was that all the head of department jobs were given to the Grammar School staff, who thus had their status confirmed.

⁷⁵ In fairness, this was also on financial grounds as well. Prizes were expensive and the money could be spent more wisely on books and equipment for the benefit of all. This position was taken in many new comprehensive schools, or even earlier in some cases. For example, *The Northern Echo* reported on West Hartlepool Education Committee's decision to replace prize-givings in its junior and secondary modern schools with open days. "Members felt that it was educationally undesirable to make flesh of one and fowl of another child through prize awards ...and it is often very difficult to make a choice between children who have done well."

The Northern Echo, 10 March 1965.

Most schools suffer to a greater or lesser degree from parochialism, even inner city ones, and the misgivings of teaching pupils from a different school environment was not confined to Grammar School staff. Tradition has it that selective school staff were concerned about their real or imagined potential discipline problems when confronted with "secondary modern school types". What is less well-understood, or less admitted to, is the apprehension of some secondary school staff, used to teaching classes who were not expected to cope with the rigours of a final public examination, being faced with the possibility of teaching G.C.E. Ordinary Level groups, or even in some cases Advanced Level classes. In the egalitarianism, implicit for staff as well as pupils in the comprehensive Utopia, staff who faced academic pressures of a different kind teaching non-examined classes, were suddenly confronted with pupils whose thirst for knowledge was a little more accentuated; and certainly for knowledge at a much higher level. That all the staff who began their comprehensive school careers in 1974 faced these challenges is without doubt. How, and with what success they faced the new age lies, perhaps wisely, outside this thesis.

The pupils who transferred to the new Comprehensive School in 1974 viewed the process with some trepidation. The former Grammar School pupils felt that their privileged position was under threat and they would gain very little, if anything at all, from comprehensivization. The new second year pupils in particular resented having to leave the Grammar School and attend Broom Cottages which was designated the Comprehensive Lower School for first and second year pupils. Similarly, for the majority of the Broom Cottages pupils and all the Chilton pupils the geography of the changeover presented problems. The Comprehensive Upper

School was housed in the old Grammar School and that was on the periphery of Ferryhill. Situated on the main road connecting Ferryhill with Kirk Merrington, the Upper School was by any standards in an isolated spot. Whilst the majority of pupils were bussed in from the outlying parts of the catchment area, many others, who did not fall within Durham County Council's designated one mile radius and who were therefore illegible for a bus pass, had to walk to school. They could, of course, use private transport or rely on the infrequent bus service. However, the majority who were not provided with a bus pass walked to school. For those who would have attended Broom Cottages this was a further reason to view the changeover with misgivings. Lunch time was also a problem; students who in the pre-comprehensive days would have returned home for lunch now had to stay for school dinners, or provide their own packed lunch. For Chilton pupils this was particularly galling.

It was the pupils from Chilton Secondary Modern School who undoubtedly had to make the greatest adjustments. There had always been a rivalry between Ferryhill and Chilton. At times the rivalry manifested itself positively in healthy competition, as between the production output of neighbouring coal mines. Alas, on other occasions the rivalry would spill over into genuine animosity and a form of parochial gang warfare. In 1974 there was a genuine concern that there would be problems when the Chilton pupils were forced to attend a school in the rival settlement. It is to the great credit of the school, and to the self-restraint of the pupils, that the predicted "battle" did not take place. As one former Grammar School pupil who moved into the sixth form in September 1974, and who in previous years could have expected to have enjoyed relative calm, confessed: "We were perfect snobs at the

time and convinced of our own superiority. My friends and I were displeased at the prospect of the school going “downhill”. I think we were also a bit scared at the prospect of the “rough kids” coming to the school in droves. At around the same time, the school uniform, universally hated until then, was scrapped and immediately found defenders in our ranks; all alarmed at the perceived loss of image.

However, after the change had finally taken place we found that things weren't as bad as we had feared. I particularly remember one teacher who came from one of the secondary schools along with some of his pupils, who was immediately popular because he spoke in the same local dialect as us, rather than in the educated tones of most of our teachers. There were also some new subjects introduced, such as shorthand and typing, which we welcomed as refreshingly practical. And the rough kids turned out to be no different from ourselves, even though some of them were there on the strength of something strange called “CSEs” rather than our O-Levels. Actually, in the long run, I don't think it did me any harm.”

Indeed, one of the greatest achievements of the Comprehensive School was that it brought the two communities closer together: Ferryhill and Chilton, the academically gifted pupils and academically weak pupils, the grammar school staff and the modern school staff. However, the last word should go to the former Grammar School pupil who talked about academic elitism. His written statement, which began by talking about the constant references to the examination results and the careful cultivation of academic snobbery, concluded: “Fortunately my views mellowed with the study of Sociology; I am now a socialist and a supporter of

comprehensive schools! Now, I teach in a comprehensive and feel that the selective system was educationally wasteful and unjust.”

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

1. POWER, POLICY AND PRESTIGE

An analysis of secondary education in County Durham for the thirty years following the Second World War using official records, newspaper reports and taking account of oral evidence reveals numerous interesting features. Not only does it demonstrate the importance of the 1944 Education Act but also the often piecemeal and slow rate of educational change. This thesis begins with a brief introduction to two County Durham communities, Ferryhill and Chilton, maintaining that in many respects, socially, economically and politically, they appear commonplace.

Paradoxically, like all communities they are unique. This is a contradiction that is particularly true of their educational provision.

Even taking into account the fact that for a variety of reasons, largely centred on economic problems, Durham County Council did not give education a high priority both before and after the Second World War. The local authority was more concerned with alleviating the stress of unemployment and coping with housing

shortages than in building schools. Thus, the provision of schools in Ferryhill and Chilton was both disparate and inadequate. By 1949 there were six different types of school, none of which were for the exclusive use of secondary school pupils.¹ Despite plans for secondary education stretching back before the war, the first true secondary school was not opened until 1963. Ironically, having waited so long for such a school, three secondary schools were opened in a little over twelve months.

The three schools were very different in character. Chilton Modern might realistically be described as the sort of school the architects of the Newsom Report were keen to influence: an essentially parochial school determined to give its pupils a good education with a vocational bias. The new Ferryhill Grammar Technical School, whose inauguration was needed to complete the reorganization of secondary education into multilateral units, soon developed an envious academic and cultural reputation under the firm guidance of its head master Mr. J.L. Bowman. Finally, sandwiched between the two, was Broom Cottages. Established in 1951 and sharing accommodation with an infants' school until 1965, it was clearly a very successful modern school, of the type envisaged by the 1944 Act, with strong academic and sporting traditions. Sadly, in many ways the schools stand testimony to educational underdevelopment which, alas, was not confined to the North-East. Significantly staff, parents and pupils of all three schools were less than enthusiastic about the move to comprehensivization in 1974.

The development of comprehensivization, both nationally and regionally, was a

¹ See Chapter Three p. 142.

tortuous affair. Indeed, the very idea of a *comprehensive* school was the subject of fierce debate with the philosophical arguments and practical implications vying for centre stage. Nowhere was this issue more hotly disputed than in the ranks of the Labour Party. How was it possible to reconcile the social inequalities of selective education with Gaitskell's battle cry of a "grammar school education for all?" This thesis considers the national debate and charts the almost universal triumph of the comprehensive lobby. Undoubtedly the arguments for and against comprehensivization were complex. For a long time few members of the Labour Party wanted to impose a comprehensive system on to reluctant local education authorities. Thus, the attitude of Ellen Wilkinson and George Tomlinson, both Labour Ministers of Education in the period immediately after the war, towards comprehensivization can at best be described as lukewarm. Indeed, in the case of the latter, opponents within the Labour Party might have considered Tomlinson's views almost obstructive at times. It was only during the ministry of Ted Short that the Labour Party was truly determined to force through plans for comprehensivization.

The national debate over the form secondary education should take after the Second World War was no less complex at local than it was at national level. Whilst it would be wrong to take the case to extremes, it can be argued that nationally the Labour and Conservative parties adopted divergent educational policies in part as a result of political rather than educational arguments. Ironically there was no need for this in County Durham. The Labour Party had such a stranglehold over local politics that the Conservative opposition was all but emasculated. Indeed, it is reasonable to conclude that during this period the Labour Party was so dominant

that, possibly through complacency or even inclination, County Durham was essentially a *conservative* county. The Conservative Party's opposition in town hall and county hall was so weak that the need for an alternative to Conservative education policy was less strong than might have been expected. Hence there was less need to pursue radical policies. On top of this was the power of three successive Directors of Education, Thomas Tilley, Anthony Denholm and George Metcalfe: all champions of Durham's bipartite system based on multilateral units.

Taking an overview of the changes that took place in secondary education between 1944 and 1974 it is clear that the power wielded by the Director of Education within the County's administrative structure was quite considerable. Certainly, Tilley, Denholm and Metcalfe dominated the decision-making in Shire Hall and County Hall. It is interesting that Tilley's attitude to the 1944 Education Act seems to be shaped as much by his concern about power as about education reform. Particularly in his Second Interim Report of 1944, Tilley betrays a deep anxiety about the growing strength of the Ministry of Education. In addition, he was positively outraged by the loss of control in Shire Hall with the emergence of the excepted districts. Nor was he enamoured with the potential for rebellion when the district committees he was used to were to be replaced by divisional executives. In some respects, Tilley was revealing an attitude of mind, not confined to the North-East, which resists political interference from London.

At local level, when Tilley's proposals for educational reform finally emerged they brought a strong protest from the vast majority of divisional executives, but there is no evidence that these protests had any effect. Indeed, Tilley's Draft Development

Plan was so cleverly crafted as to provide no real alternative to his proposals, despite the official Alternative Scheme contained in the document itself. Tilley's policies were continued by his successor Anthony Denholm. Thus at the meeting of the Primary Education Sub-Committee in November 1946, despite a reaffirmation from seven divisional executives that they were against Tilley's plan, the views of the opposition were politely but firmly disregarded by the new Director.² Denholm dealt with the National Union of Teachers in the same manner. When members of the Education Committee met with Union representatives, whose delegates were pushing for comprehensivization, they were reminded of where the real decision-making power lay.³

In a similar fashion, the third holder of the directorship, George Metcalfe, dominated policy making in County Hall. During his period of office there appears very little criticism of his policies in the local press. Just as during the time of Tilley and Denholm, Metcalfe's policies were reported faithfully and almost always with approval. The criticism of the bipartite system tended to be centred not on the existence of the grammar schools but on the unevenness of their distribution. Even when the Billingham Campus experiment proved less than successful there was no overt criticism of the Director's policy, only approval that he had decided to replace the campus experiment with a true comprehensive alternative. Admittedly there are occasional reports and letters which indicate that there might be an alternative policy, but the strongest hint at criticism occurs over the selection of pupils at

² See Chapter Three p. 133.

³ See Chapter Three p. 130.

eleven.⁴

Why the directors should have dominated the period is difficult to discover.

Although the evidence is largely anecdotal, it seems that any political in-fighting took place in smoke-filled rooms and was kept well away from the prying eyes of the press and the public. In matters of education, the local press appears to have been supporters of the Party line and were reluctant to criticize the directors' policies. Furthermore, all three directors appear to have been strong characters who felt themselves politically secure. There are no records of the director's being called before the County Council to face criticism or votes of censure as happened in other parts of the country, Manchester for instance. Mr. Bowman's headmastership was in the tradition of Thomas Tilley and George Metcalfe: what he said he meant. Even today there is an air of authority about the man. Though now nearing eighty, at a recent social gathering of past members of staff there was a slight stiffening amongst his former colleagues as he approached: one suspects that Tilley and Metcalfe would have approved.

Whist Metcalfe might have seen the potential problems of the 11-plus examination, later replacing it with head teachers' recommendations, nonetheless, he, like Tilley and Denholm, was in favour of grammar schools. This was a way out of the pit and a life of drudgery and danger. This was not to denigrate the labours of the working man and woman, but the benefits of a grammar school education were clear for all to see. It was for this that the election of 1945 had been fought and won.

⁴ See Chapter Four.

Furthermore, it was from the grammar school that the future leaders of the local Labour Party were expected to emerge. Nor must this be seen as a belittling of the modern school. Metcalfe in particular was rightly proud of the successes of many modern school pupils. His proof, if it was needed, was in the response he received to his 1961 enquiries about the academic success of those pupils who had *failed* the 11-plus.⁵ Here was overwhelming evidence of the type of success modern school pupils could achieve. Metcalfe was also pleased to boast about the rich variety of educational opportunities provided throughout the County in schools of every type.⁶ However, the most important innovation during the period after the Second World War was the rise of the multilateral unit.

The multilateral unit was a truly ingenious compromise to the dilemma facing the Labour Party. The County could not afford to abandon the number of comparatively small schools, many built in the 1930s, in favour of large multilateral schools. Thus utilizing existing schools was a relatively cheap alternative to building huge impersonal multilaterals. Those who wanted grammar schools would be satisfied, as too would be those who believed in the tripartism of the 1944 Act, for at the centre of each unit would be a grammar technical school. Whilst, on the other hand, those who were concerned about equal opportunities could be reassured by the fact that the opportunities for transfer between the schools in the unit would be frequent and uncomplicated. Indeed, using the Labour Party's broad definition of a comprehensive school, as outlined in its 1958 policy document *Learning to*

⁵ See Chapter Three pp. 201-202.

⁶ See Chapter Three pp. 192-193.

Live, it was arguable than the multilateral units were a form of comprehensive experiment.

In fact it is very clear that the units were not comprehensive schools by another name. The idea of transfer so important in the comprehensive ideal and mentioned in the Hadow, Spens and Norwood reports was merely paid lip service. Although it must be remembered that in many comprehensive schools, after the initial diagnostic year, there was very little transfer between streams and even within mixed ability groups there was often setting, particularly for English and mathematics. Certainly, the level of collaboration between the schools who made up the multilateral units envisaged in the scheme was, in the case of the Ferryhill Multilateral Unit, not particularly great. Yet, here too it is easy to dismiss such co-operation as insignificant. There was a degree of integration and the head teachers' panel was a useful forum for sharing ideas and for co-ordinating approaches on such matters as curriculum planning. It was more than a means of arranging sporting fixtures.

It would be easy to look at the development of secondary education in County Durham in the thirty years following the Second World War with a cynical eye. Such a view would be wrong. Despite what critics like Robin Pedley said, there was a great deal that was innovative and progressive. It is important to remember that the experiments at Wolsingham and Billingham Campus were genuine attempts to find out what was the best form of secondary education in the post-war era. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that alongside Wolsingham, Billingham Campus and the multilateral units there were also comprehensive schools within the County long before the reorganization of 1974. Indeed, the provision for secondary

education within County Durham was as diverse as anywhere in the country.

Evolution not revolution was the byword. However, in the case of Ferryhill and Chilton what is very difficult to come to terms with is that even as the first pupils were entering the doors of the grammar school its fate was sealed.

This thesis still leaves many questions unanswered. In part this is because of the unavailability of what is considered sensitive material. Similarly, so many of the debates were never reported on, nor were they meant to be; and what emerges from the oral evidence is often highly selective and impossible to verify. When more records become available, the research begun by this study needs to be augmented by a closer analysis of the relationship between the Labour Party, at local and national level, and between the Directors of Education and the Divisional Executives. With the regard to the latter, it would be illuminating to compare the relationships between the County Treasurer, Architect and Director of Social Services with their equivalent divisional organizations. However, the impetus which drove this research was a desire to investigate the development of secondary education in Ferryhill and Chilton. Clearly the needs of the two communities, in educational terms at least, had been sadly neglected for so long. In fact the heyday of educational provision lasted a mere ten years.

When Ferryhill Comprehensive School was opened in September 1974 the whole was not as strong as the sum of its parts. For a number of reasons the split-site comprehensive was never a real success. There were just too many pupils and staff, a fact which was ironic when one considers what followed. The huge catchment area from which the Grammar School drew its pupils was decimated. The

Comprehensive School served the communities of Ferryhill and Chilton, with one or two peripheral villages sending some of their children to the school.⁷ To this forced reduction in its intake was added the natural problem of falling rolls as a decline in the birth rate began to have an impact on the numbers attending the school. In 1986 the Lower School was closed and all the children were moved onto the former Grammar School site. In many ways this was an improvement, there was now no dichotomy between Upper and Lower School, and the burden of commuting between the two sites was removed. The move to one site and the falling school roll coincided with the education revolution presided over by Margaret Thatcher, culminating in the 1988 Education Act.

One main question emerges out of this study which will never be fully answered. Was the move to comprehensivization better for the children of Ferryhill and Chilton than the multilateral system it replaced? Of course, it all depends against which criteria the two systems are judged: academic, sporting, social, cultural, to name but four.

The Comprehensive School could not compete in academic terms with the Grammar School. On the other hand, the pupils who would normally have attended Chilton Modern School probably gained academically. In sporting terms, the new school was much larger than the old single schools; consequently the pool of sporting talent was much larger. Then too, so were most of the other schools against which Ferryhill's sporting teams were competing. Socially the Comprehensive School

⁷ For example, children from the village of Kirk Merrington went to schools in Ferryhill or Spennymoor. Similarly, children living to the east of Ferryhill could attend the

brought together two potentially rival communities. Furthermore, there was no longer the problem of children from the same street, or family, going to different schools. However, the size of the Comprehensive School, even on two sites, had the power to overwhelm some staff and pupils. In terms of the overall ethos of the new school: pupils who had known no other form of secondary education clearly had nothing with which to compare it. On the other hand, pupils and staff who had served under both systems, almost without exception, preferred the old to the new. In the final analysis the question is impossible to answer. Perhaps it is better that way.

APPENDIX ONE

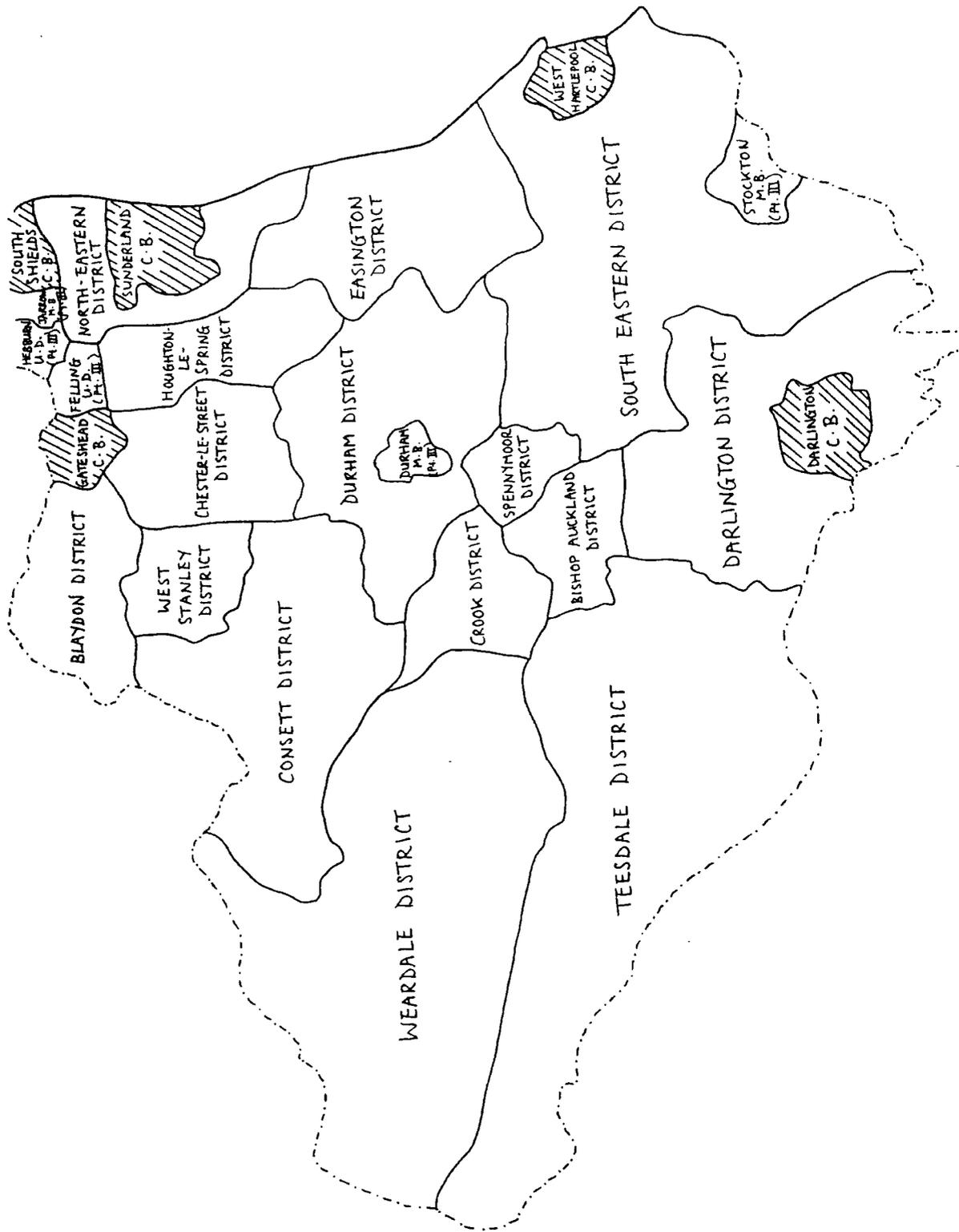
DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS PRIOR TO THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT

DISTRICT	AREA
North Eastern	Boldon U.D., Seaham U.D. and Sunderland R.D.
Houghton-le-Spring	Washington, Houghton and Hebburn U.Ds.
Chester-le-Street	Chester-le-Street U.D. and R.D.
Blaydon	Ryton, Whickham and Blaydon U.D.
West Stanley	Stanley U.D.
Consett	Consett U.D. and Lanchester R.D.
Crook	Crook and Willington U.D. and Tow Law U.D.
Weardale	Weardale R.D.
Spennymoor	Spennymoor U.D.
Bishop Auckland	Bishop Auckland and Shildon U.Ds.
Durham	Durham R.D. and Brandon and Byshottles U.D.
Easington	Easington R.D.
Darlington	Darlington R.D.
Teesdale	Barnard Castle U.D. and R.D.
South Eastern	Sedgefield and Stockton R.Ds.

U.D. = Urban District

R.D. = Rural District

Chart based on County of Durham Education Committee, Education Act, 1944. Report of the Director of Education, and T. Hodgson, Divisional Administration in Education in County Durham, p. 2.



**SKETCH MAP BASED ON THE DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONS PRIOR TO
THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT**

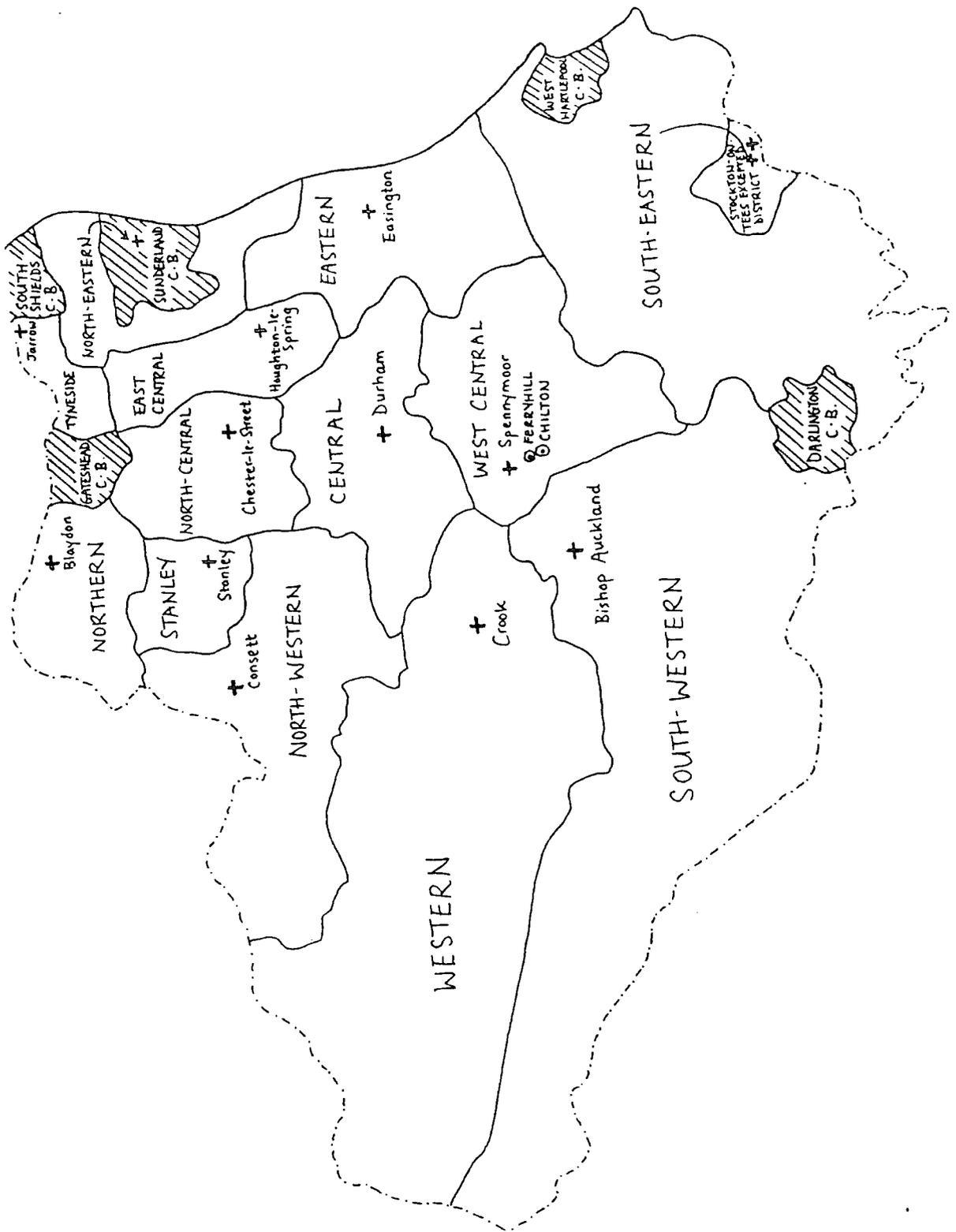
Based on T. Hodgson, Divisional Administration in Education in County Durham.

APPENDIX TWO

DIVISIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOLLOWING THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT

DISTRICT	AREA
Northern	Blaydon Hookergate
North Central	Chester-le-Street Birtley and Pelton
North Eastern	Boldon, Whitburn and Castletown Seaham Ryhope and Silksworth
North Western	Consett Lanchester
South Eastern	Part of Darlington Rural District Part of Stockton Rural District Billingham Hartlepool
South Western	Bishop Auckland and Shildon Barnard Castle
Eastern	Easington Horden Shotton and Wingate
East Central	Houghton-le-Spring, Hetton and Easington Lane Newbottle, Herrington and Washington
Western	Crook Weardale
West Central	Spennymoor Ferryhill Coxhoe
Central	Durham
Stanley	Stanley
Tyneside	Jarrow Hebburn Felling

The chart, which excludes the Excepted District of Stockton-on-Tees, is based on County Council of Durham Education Committee, Preliminary Draft Development Plan, 1946.



**SKETCH MAP BASED ON THE DIVISIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
FOLLOWING THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT**

Based on T. Hodgson, Divisional Administration in Education in County Durham.

APPENDIX THREE

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN AGE GROUPS 1946-1955

AGES	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
2 - 5	1,000	1,000	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500
5 - 6	13,004	12,943	13,265	14,386	14,938	13,977	13,268	13,089	12,976	12,933
6 - 7	13,749	13,624	13,560	13,895	15,073	15,641	14,644	13,899	13,706	13,594
7 - 8	13,455	13,317	13,196	13,133	13,458	14,597	15,157	14,183	13,461	13,282
8 - 9	13,246	13,024	12,890	12,772	12,713	13,029	14,129	14,672	13,729	13,030
9 - 10	12,860	12,679	12,464	12,337	12,225	12,167	12,469	13,524	14,042	13,140
10 - 11	12,861	12,565	12,386	12,178	12,053	11,944	11,888	12,182	13,213	13,719
11 - 12	12,441	12,137	11,857	11,689	11,493	11,375	11,272	11,219	11,496	12,470
12 - 13	11,012	10,834	10,570	10,327	10,180	10,009	9,906	9,816	9,771	10,013
13 - 14	11,385	10,850	10,675	10,415	10,175	10,030	9,862	9,761	9,672	9,627
14 - 15	3,500	3,500	10,833	10,659	10,399	10,159	10,015	9,847	9,738	9,558
15 - 16	250	250	11,349	10,815	10,641	10,381	10,141	9,998	9,830	9,729
16+	75	75	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
TOTAL	118,838	116,798	152,795	152,356	153,098	153,059	152,501	151,940	151,384	150,945

N.B. The school population in the County had shown a considerable decline in the 16 years preceding the above figures. In 1929 the school population of the County area, excluding the Part III areas, was 134,363: by 1945 it had fallen to 106,264.

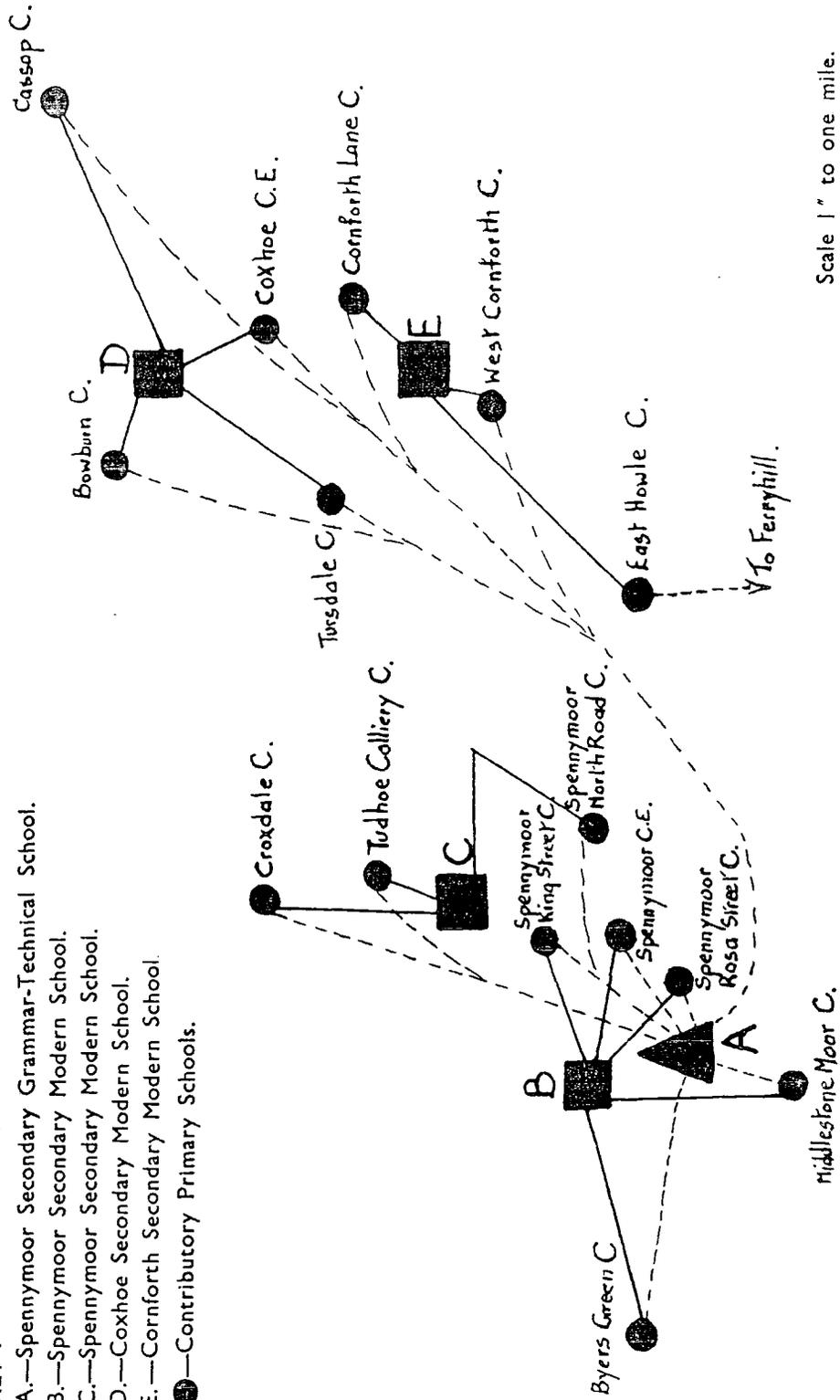
Figures taken from Durham County Council Education Committee, Draft Development Plan, 1946, p. 5.

APPENDIX FOUR

WEST CENTRAL DIVISION. Reorganisation Area No. 1.

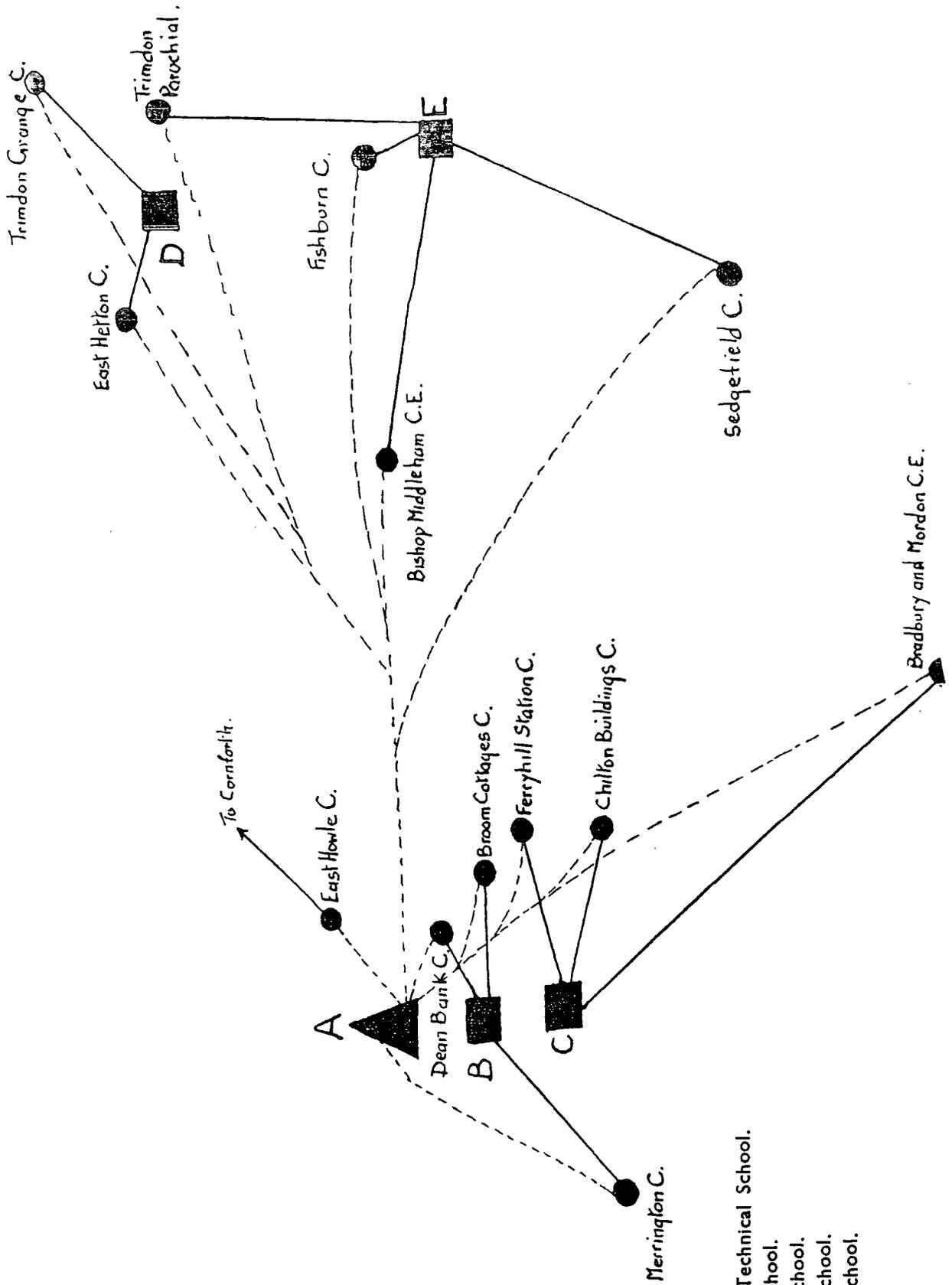
KEY :

- A.—Spennymoor Secondary Grammar-Technical School.
- B.—Spennymoor Secondary Modern School.
- C.—Spennymoor Secondary Modern School.
- D.—Coxhoe Secondary Modern School.
- E.—Cornforth Secondary Modern School.
- Contributory Primary Schools.



Scale 1" to one mile.

WEST CENTRAL DIVISION.
Reorganisation Area No. 2.



- KEY :**
- A.—Ferryhill Secondary Grammar-Technical School.
 - B.—Ferryhill Secondary Modern School.
 - C.—Ferryhill Secondary Modern School.
 - D.—Trimdon Secondary Modern School.
 - E.—Fishburn Secondary Modern School.
 - Contributory Primary Schools.

Scale 1" to one mile.

APPENDIX FIVE

WEST CENTRAL DIVISION SPENNYSMOOR AREA

SECONDARY SCHOOL PROPOSALS

Proposed Contributory Primary Schools	Estimated No. of Secondary Pupils	MODERN SCHOOLS			GRAMMAR SCHOOLS		
		Total No. of pupils 75%	Present Accommodation	Recommendations	Total No. of pupils 75%	Present Accommodation	Recommendations
Byers Green C.	150	112	None.	New.	38	Spennymoor Grammar.	To become Modern M. 3 Form.
Spennymoor King Street C.B.	145	109		Modern M. 4 Form.	36		New.
Spennymoor King Street C.G.	140	105			35		Grammar-Technical M. 4 Form.
Spennymoor C.E.	55	41		Spennymoor Grammar to become Modern M. 3 Form.	14		See Secondary Schools proposals for Coxhoe area.
Spennymoor North Road C.B.	195	146			49		
Spennymoor North Road C.G.	195	146			49		
Spennymoor Rosa Street C.M.	225	169			56		
Middlestone Moor C.	110	82			28		
Tudhoe Colliery C.	130	98			32		
Croxdale C.	55	41			13		
Total		1049			351		

1946 DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**ALTERNATIVE SCHEME OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PROPOSALS
SPENNYSMOOR AREA**

Proposed Contributory Primary Schools	Year Group	Estimated No. of Secondary Pupils	Existing Modern and Grammar Accommodation	Proposed use of existing Modern and Grammar Schools	Recommendations
Byers Green C.	30	150			
Spennysmoor King St. C.	57	285			
Spennysmoor C.E.	11	55			
Spennysmoor North Road C.	78	390			
Spennysmoor Rosa Street C.	45	225			
Middlestone Moor C.	22	110			
Tudhoe Colliery C.	26	130			
Croxdale C.	11	55			
Total	280	1400	Spennysmoor Grammar School	To become a County College.	A multilateral school for 1,400 pupils i.e. 9 Form entry to be built in the Spennysmoor Area.

1946 DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPENDIX SIX

WEST CENTRAL DIVISION FERRYHILL AREA

SECONDARY SCHOOL PROPOSALS

Proposed Contributory Primary Schools	Estimated No. of Secondary Pupils	MODERN SCHOOLS			GRAMMAR SCHOOLS		
		Total No. of pupils 75%	Present Accommodation	Recommendations	Total No. of pupils 75%	Present Accommodation	Recommendations
Merrington C.	60	45		New. Modern M. 4 Form near Ferryhill.	15	Spennymoor Grammar M.	See Spennymoor Proposals.
Broom Cottages	265	199			66		
Dean Bank C.	475	356			119		
Total		600					
Ferryhill Station C.	165	124		New. Modern M. 3 Form near Chilton Buildings.	41		New. Grammar-Technical M. 4 Form to be built near Ferryhill.
Chilton Buildings C.	315	236			79		
Rushlyford C.	20	15			5		
East Howle C.	110	82			28		
Bradbury & Morden C.E.	20	15			5		
Total		472					
East Hetton C.	170	127		New Modern M. 3 Form in Trimdon area.	43		
Fishburn C.	200	150			50		
Trimdon Grange C.	215	161			54		
Trimdon Parochial	60	45			15		
Total		483			520		

1946 DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**ALTERNATIVE SCHEME OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PROPOSALS
FERRYHILL AREA**

Proposed Contributory Primary Schools	Year Group	Estimated No. of Secondary Pupils	Existing Modern and Grammar Accommodation	Proposed use of existing Modern and Grammar Schools	Recommendations
Merrington C.	12	60			A multilateral school for 2,075 pupils i.e. 14 Form entry to be built in the Ferryhill area.
Broom Cottages	53	265			
Dean Bank C.	95	475			
Ferryhill Station C.	33	165			
Chilton Buildings C.	63	315			
Rushyford C.	4	20			
East Howle C.	22	110			
Bradbury & Morden C.E.	4	20			
East Hetton C.	34	170			
Fishburn C.	40	200			
Trimdon Grange C.	43	215			
Trimdon Parochial	12	60			
Total	415	2075			

1946 DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPENDIX SEVEN

WEST CENTRAL DIVISION COXHOE AREA

SECONDARY SCHOOL PROPOSALS

Proposed Contributory Primary Schools	Estimated No. of Secondary Pupils	MODERN SCHOOLS			GRAMMAR SCHOOLS		
		Total No. of pupils 75%	Present Accommodation	Recommendations	Total No. of pupils 75%	Present Accommodation	Recommendations
Bowburn C.	175	131	None.	New.	44	Spennymoor Grammar.	See Secondary school proposals for Spennymoor.
Coxhoe C.E.	65	49		Modern Mixed	16		
Cassop C.	175	131		3 Form.	44		
Tursdale C.	15	11			4		
Total		322					
Cornforth Lane C.	240	180	None.	New.	60	Spennymoor Grammar.	See Secondary school proposals for Spennymoor.
West Cornforth C.	315	236		Modern Mixed	79		
Bishop Middleham C.E.	80	60		3 Form.	20		
Total		476			267		

1946 DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**ALTERNATIVE SCHEME OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PROPOSALS
COXHOE**

Proposed Contributory Primary Schools	Year Group	Estimated No. of Secondary Pupils	Existing Modern and Grammar Accommodation	Proposed use of existing Modern and Grammar Schools	Recommendations
Bowburn C.	35	175			
Coxhoe C.E	13	65			
Cassop C.	35	175			
Tursdale C.	3	15			
Cornforth Lane C.	48	240			
West Cornforth C.	63	315			
Bishop Middleham C.E.	16	80			
Total	213	1065			A multilateral school for 1.120 pupils i.e. 7 Form entry to be built in the Coxhoe area.

1946 DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPENDIX EIGHT

PROPOSED NEW PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE AUTHORITY

Provisional name of School.	Sex	Age range	Proposed type	Nature of education to be provided	Proposed size		Estimated capital cost		Financial year(s) in which capital cost will be incurred.
					Pupils	Classes	Site £	Buildings £	
Trimdon Village C.	M	5-7	C	P	174	5 Class	400	33,715	C
Bowburn C.	M	7-11	C	P	320	2. F.E.	1,150	57,385	C
Bowburn C.	M	5-7	C	P	240	2. F.E.	400	36,905	C
Coxhoe Modern	M	11-16	C	S. Mod.	450	3. F.E.	3,400	156,200	B
Cornforth Modern	M	11-16	C	S. Mod.	600	4. F.E.	5,500	187,175	C
Ferryhill Modern (1)	M	11-16	C	S. Mod.	600	4. F.E.	4,000	187,175	B
Ferryhill Modern (2)	M	11-16	C	S. Mod.	450	3. F.E.	4,250	156,200	C
Trimdon Modern	M	11-16	C	S. Mod.	300	2. F.E.	2,200	115,300	C
Ferryhill Grammar-Technical	M	11-18	C	S. Gr. T.	600	4. F.E.	5,500	197,550	B
Spennymoor Modern	M	11-16	C	S. Mod.	600	4. F.E.	5,500	187,175	A
Spennymoor Grammar-Technical	M	11-18	C	S. Gr. T.	600	4. F.E.	5,500	197,550	A
Fishburn Modern	M	11-16	C	S. Mod.	450	3. F.E.	3,400	156,200	B
Spennymoor Tudhoe R.C. Modern	M	11-16	V	S. Mod.	300	2. F.E.	2,750	112,550	C

A = 1949-1954

B = 1954-1959

C = 1959-1964

1949 COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPENDIX NINE

ESTIMATED COST OF THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1950-1972

The first period of the Plan (1950-1957)

Development	COST £
Housing	38,650,500
Roads, sewers and services to new housing	2,863,000
Housing repairs and maintenance	21,803,292
Schools	14,867,805
Colleges of Further Education and Technical Colleges	1,043,650
Community centres and village halls	523,816
Health centres	60,000
Major road works	4,666,000
Industry	6,140,379
Total	£90,618,442

The second period of the Plan (1957-1972)

Development	COST £
Housing	73,494,000
Roads, sewers and services to new housing	5,444,000
Housing repairs and maintenance	46,721,340
Schools	30,957,707
Colleges of Further Education and Technical Colleges	7,021,350
Community centres and village halls	2,411,790
Health centres	2,250,000
Major road works	15,334,000
Industry	49,085,621
Total	£232,719,808

The authors of the Plan pointed out that if the proposed developments were to be carried out then, "greater amounts of capital must be made available from national sources than has been provided in the last few years."

Figures taken from County Council of Durham, County Development Plan, 1951, p.209.

APPENDIX TEN

Type of School	1965		1966		1967		1968	
	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils						
Comprehensive ¹	262	239,619	387	312,281	508	408,056	748	606,326
Middle (deemed secondary)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Grammar	1,285	718,705	1,273	712,968	1,236	694,898	1,155	655,702
Modern	3,727	1,555,132	3,642	1,524,382	3,494	1,459,377	3,200	1,367,367
Technical	172	84,587	150	73,644	141	69,704	121	62,021
Other Secondary	417	221,011	346	193,518	350	200,816	352	203,935
	5,863	2,819,054	5,798	2,816,793	5,729	2,832,851	5,576	2,895,387

Type of School	1969		1970		1971		1972	
	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils						
Comprehensive ¹	962	772,612	1,145	937,152	1,373	1,128,417	1,591	1,337,242
Middle (deemed secondary)	14	4,470	105	36,549	147	55,286	186	74,932
Grammar	1,098	631,948	1,038	604,916	970	573,646	893	540,049
Modern	2,954	1,303,751	2,691	1,226,619	2,464	1,163,442	2,218	1,085,850
Technical	109	56,627	82	43,700	67	37,525	58	33,271
Other Secondary	331	194,723	324	197,038	274	185,563	266	180,082
	5,468	2,964,131	5,385	3,045,974	5,295	3,143,879	5,212	3,251,426

Type of School	1973		1974		1975		1976 (Provisional)	
	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils	No. of Schools	No. of Pupils
Comprehensive ¹	1,853	1,580,406	2,273	2,136,958	2,596	2,459,648	2,878	2,753,327
Middle (deemed secondary)	302	123,265	404	173,145	473	207,344	509	223,081
Grammar	819	496,766	675	411,195	566	343,658	477	295,162
Modern	1,915	965,753	1,509	856,749	1,216	679,850	1,002	589,286
Technical	43	25,321	35	21,144	29	18,049	23	15,002
Other Secondary	245	171,043	183	124,552	155	100,097	93	59,642
	5,159	3,362,554	5,079	3,723,742	5,053	3,826,646	4,982	3,935,500

COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS 1965-1976 (ENGLAND AND WALES)

Figures taken from Department of Education and Science, Report on Education, No. 87, March 1977

¹ Including sixth form colleges from 1967.

APPENDIX ELEVEN

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS IN THE NORTHERN REGION AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

YEAR	NORTH	SOUTH-EAST	ENGLAND AND WALES
1966	2.4	5.8	6.7
1967	7.7	7.0	8.8
1968	10.2	12.9	13.4
1969	17.5	18.8	17.6
1970	22.9	22.6	21.7
1971	28.2	26.5	26.7
1972	32.4	34.2	31.7
1973	39.2	39.7	37.8
1974	54.2	50.0	48.6

Figures taken from Department of Education and Science, Statistics on Education, Vol. I, Schools, 1966-1974. Shown in S. Robinson, Regional Underdevelopment and Education: the Case for the North-East, p. 76.

APPENDIX TWELVE

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS: GENERAL LINES OF DEVELOPMENT

“In certain Divisions and in parts of other Divisions where the Authority’s scheme provides for the continuation of existing Multilateral Units, no particular problems of development occur other than those associated with the replacement of some schools by new buildings. This will be the position at the following places:”

<u>Division</u>	<u>Multilateral Unit</u>
North Eastern	Seaham
East Central	Houghton
Northern	Hookergate
Stanley	Stanley
	Annfield Plain
North Western	Consett
West Central	Spennymoor
	Ferryhill
South Western	Barnard Castle
Central	Durham Johnston
Tyneside	Jarrow

“In most of the other Divisions the proposals outlined in the Report envisage the replacement of each existing Multilateral Unit by a number of Comprehensive Schools each catering for part of the catchment area of the present Grammar or Grammar Technical School.”

<u>Division</u>	<u>Existing Multilateral Unit</u>	<u>Proposed Comprehensive School</u>	
North Eastern	Ryhope	Ryhope	- 7 F.E.
		Silksworth	- 7 F.E.
		Whitburn	- 9 F.E.
		Boldon	- 9 F.E.
East Central	Washington	Washington A.	- 9 F.E.
		Washington B.	- 9 F.E.

		Washington C.	- 9 F.E.
		Washington D.	- 9 F.E.
		Washington E.	- 9 F.E.
	Houghton	Hetton	- 8 F.E.
North Central	Chester-le-Street	Birtley	- 9 F.E.
		Chester-le-Street A	- 7 F.E.
		Chester-le-Street B	- 7 F.E.
		Pelton Roseberry	- 7 F.E.
Northern	Blaydon	Blaydon	- 8 F.E.
		Dunston Hill	- 9 F.E.
		Whickham	- 9 F.E.
Western	Wolsingham	Wolsingham	
		Crook and Willington	
South Western	Bishop Auckland	Bishop Auckland A.	- 8 F.E.
		Bishop Auckland B.	- 9 F.E.
		Sildon	- 8 F.E.
		Newton Aycliffe A.	- 8 F.E.
		Newton Aycliffe B.	- 8 F.E.
		Newton Aycliffe C.	- 9 F.E.
		Newton Aycliffe D.	- 9 F.E.
Central	Durham	Durham (Gilesgate)	- 9 F.E.
		Belmont	- 8 F.E.
		Framwellgate Moor	- 9 F.E.
South Eastern	Hartlepool	Hartlepool	
Tyneside	Jarrow	Felling (Leam Lane)	- 8 F.E.
		Felling (Heworth)	- 8 F.E.
		Felling (High Felling)	- 8 F.E.
		Hebburn (Clegwell)	- 14 F.E.

“Only at Hartlepool is an existing Multilateral Unit to be replaced by a single Comprehensive School. In all other areas two or more Comprehensive Schools are planned to serve the area of an existing Multilateral Unit, and in many cases the proposals involve the extension of the Grammar Technical School on which the Multilateral Unit is based, to form one of the Comprehensive Schools.” [As in the case at Ferryhill.]

Details taken from County Council of Durham Education Department, Report of Director, Comprehensive Schools: General Lines of Development.

APPENDIX THIRTEEN

PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS IN COUNTY DURHAM

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	CURRENT SIZE (form entry)	ULTIMATE SIZE (form entry)
Derwentside	Greencroft	4	8
	Stanley	8	9
	Tanfield	7	9
	Blackfyne	4	9
	Moorside	6	9
Chester-le-Street	Deanery	4	8
	Whitehill	6	8
	Roseberry	9	9
	Sacriston	3	8
Wear Valley	Bishop Barrington	10	10
	King James I	8	8
	Willington	5	8
	Wolsingham	6	8
Durham	Belmont	4	8
	Bowburn	3	8
	Johnston	4	8
	Framwellgate Moor	8	9
	Ushaw Moor	4	8
	Gilesgate	3	8
Easington	Blackhall	3	8
	Easington	2	10
	Dene House	7	8
	Howletch	4	8
	Shotton Hall	8	8
	Northlea	8	8
	Parkside	-	8
	Wingate	4	8
Teesdale	Teesdale	6	8
	Staindrop	3	8
Sedgefield	Ferryhill	4	10
	Sedgefield	7	9
	Spennymoor	4	8
	Tudhoe Grange	3	8
	Greenfield	4	10
	The Avenue	8	8
	Woodham	8	8
	Sunnydale	6	8
Darlington	Branksome	8	8
	Eastbourne	8	8
	Haughton	7	8
	Hummersknott	8	8
	Longfield	6	8
	Hurworth	4	8
	Central	4	To be closed
COUNTY DURHAM		240 (36,000 pupils)	359 (53,850 pupils)

“The Current Size includes buildings programmed to start 1975-76. A form entry = 30 pupils. An 8 form entry schools = 1,200 pupils.” Taken from, Durham County Council, Report of Survey 1976: County Structure Plan.

APPENDIX FOURTEEN

LETTER AND QUESTIONS TO EX-PUPILS

Dear Former Pupil,

As part of a research project I am undertaking at the University of Durham about the history of Ferryhill and Chilton, I am trying to find out as much as possible about secondary education in the two communities from 1944 until 1974. Many of you may not have studied in a separate secondary school building. This does not matter; all I am interested in is the type of education you received from the age of eleven until you left school.

The first thing you are asked to do is fill in your name: if you wish to remain anonymous just miss it out. I know that some of the questions are quite difficult to answer, just select the answer that most represents the conditions as you remember them. If a question is impossible for you to answer, just miss it out.

In anticipation of your co-operation, may I thank you for taking the time to fill in the questionnaire. Please return the document to school via the person who gave it to you.

Yours with thanks,

M.H.Richardson

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN FERRYHILL AND CHILTON 1944-1974

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SCHOOL ATTENDED: _____

DATES ATTENDED: _____

PART ONE

Please tick the appropriate column

How often did you do the following:	Never or almost never	Occasion-ally	Frequently
1. Copy from a book or blackboard?			
2. Work in groups?			
3. Do practical work with apparatus / making things?			
4. Research a topic with books, etc.?			
5. Use the school library?			
6. Present your work to the rest of the class?			
7. Use duplicated notes (handouts)?			
8. Prepare essays?			
9. Have a class discussion led by a teacher?			
10. Have notes dictated to you in class?			

PART TWO

Please delete where appropriate and fill in the blanks.

11. Did you have a choice of subjects? Yes / No

If YES, at which age? _____

12. Were there some subjects you were not allowed to take? Yes / No

If YES, which subject(s)? _____

13. Were you encouraged to do extra-curricular activities, e.g., football, netball, theatre visits, etc.? Yes / No

If YES, give examples

14. Did you have lunch at school? Yes / No
-

15. When someone misbehaved did they receive the following punishments:

Lines / Detention / The cane or slipper / Put on report / Parents contacted?

16. When someone deserved praise did they receive the following:

Verbal praise from the teacher / A certificate / Given a post of responsibility?

If something else, what recognition was there?

17. Where you taught a foreign language? Yes / No
-

If YES, which one(s)?

18. Did you receive any information about a future career or job? Yes / No
-

If YES, indicate from whom: class teacher / careers teacher / another teacher?

19. Overall, do you think the education you received was:

very bad / bad / satisfactory / good / very good?

20. Compared to what you know about the pupils at Ferryhill Comprehensive School today, do you think the education you received was:

better / worse / about the same?

21. Are you prepared to be interviewed (I promise no tape recorders) about your responses or about your schooling in general?
-

22. In the space below please make any other comments you wish about your secondary education.
-

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS TO EX-PUPILS

1. How were you selected for your school?
2. How were you rewarded for good work or good behaviour - either in lessons, for individual pieces of work, or at the end of term? Were you given certificates, prizes, verbal praise in front of others, or were you praised privately? Was there a regular report system? Did your teachers keep your parents informed of the standard of your work and behaviour or was there no recognition of good work or behaviour - were they just expected?
3. How were you sanctioned or punished for bad work and for bad behaviour? Were methods of punishment standardized, i.e., were there laid down punishments for particular misdemeanours, or were they meted out idiosyncratically by individual teachers? Were methods of punishment fair and effective?
4. At the end of a year did you remain in the same form, or were you promoted or relegated depending on exam results? Were classes streamed? If pupils failed to maintain a certain academic standard, would they be sent to other schools?
5. Were there any restrictions on the subjects you were allowed to select, based on your sex or any other factor? At what ages were you required to make subject choices and were you given guidance? Were your parents involved in the process?
6. Did you consider the school well-equipped - in science laboratories, art rooms, sports department, library, teaching resources, etc?
7. Did you and your friends eat school meals? If not, what did you do and where did you do it? Did teachers eat with pupils? What sort of system operated at mealtimes? Was the dining hall used exclusively for lunch?
8. How many Physical Education lessons took place each week? What encouragement was there to take part in sporting activities? How was sporting achievement recognized? Was there a greater emphasis placed on sporting or academic achievement?
9. Was there a personal development programme, either as a specific timetabled lesson or after registration, during which such issues as contraception, smoking, crime, etc., were discussed?
10. What sort of careers guidance did the school offer?

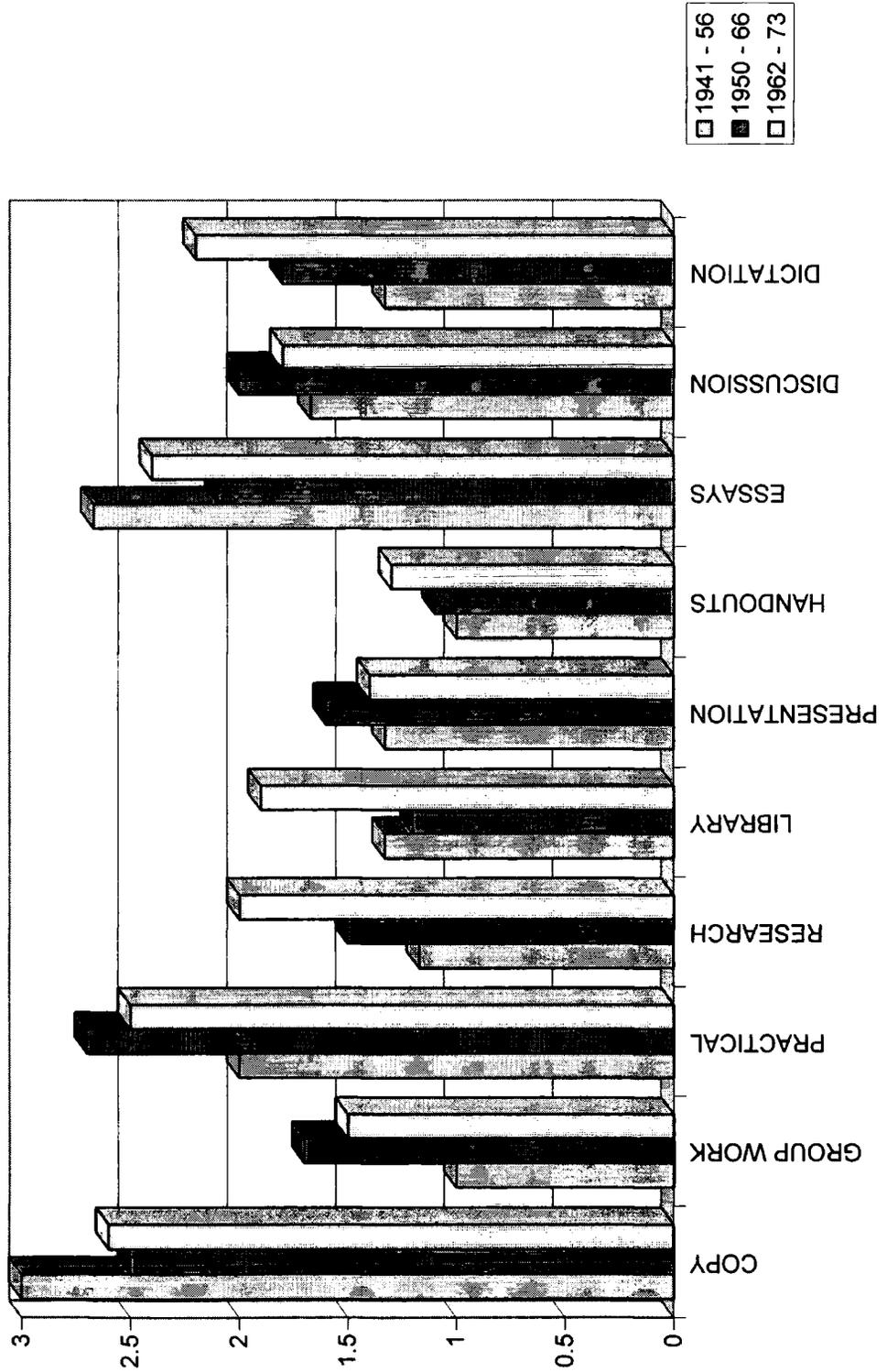
11. How often did school visits or trips abroad take place? What other extra-curricular activities took place?
12. What can you remember about school plays, dances, parties, clubs, etc.?
13. What links did the school have with the community and with other schools in the area? What reputation do you think the school had - with the pupils, staff and wider community?
14. How often did science lessons involve practical work? What form did it take - did you do experiments yourself or did you watch a teacher demonstration?
15. How often did exams or tests take place? What emphasis was placed on success in exams?
16. How were pupils selected to enter the Sixth Form? Were there any minimum requirements for entry? Did you have interviews with staff before joining the Sixth Form? Were your parents involved? Were you advised on the subjects to pursue to help achieve career goals? How did your status as a pupil change on entry into the Sixth Form? Did you have any extra responsibilities or privileges? If you were a prefect, what duties did you have and what powers? What sanctions were you able to administer for misdemeanours, and in what way could you yourself be disciplined?
17. What were staff/pupil relationships like both up to and during the Sixth Form? Were teachers seen as remote figures of authority or as equal partners in the learning process? Were their teaching styles traditional or liberal? Which approach worked best for you and how did others respond to different teaching styles?
18. Try to construct a typical day:

How and at what time would you arrive at school? Where would you go first? Where would you put your coat? Would you register, and if so who would you register with? Would there be an assembly and was attendance compulsory? Who officiated at assembly and what form did it take? At break times where were you allowed to go and what did you do? How many lessons did you have in a day and how long did a lesson last? Did you register in the afternoon? How did you get home?
19. What dress/uniform restrictions were there? How strictly were they enforced and what would happen if you failed to comply with them?
20. Were pupils involved in fund raising activities for the school?
21. Did you get homework to do every night? What would happen if you failed to do it? Did homework prove useful in the learning process?

22. How often did you have parents' evenings? Do you think there was a close relationship between school and home?
23. Do you think your school was a happy school? Was it a "good" school? Do you think it met your needs?

APPENDIX FIFTEEN

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES 1943 - 1973



APPENDIX SIXTEEN

LEARNING AND TEACHING STYLES COMPARISON



APPENDIX SEVENTEEN

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS TEACHING AND LEARNING COMPARISON



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3. ORAL EVIDENCE

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¹ For specific dates, see footnote references in the main body of the thesis.

