Adult Education, Spirit and the 'New Age': Sir George Trevelyan and the Shropshire Adult Education College (SAEC) at Attingham 1948-76

Image of painting by Brian Trotter - life drawing class in the walled garden – Arts Summer School – exact year unknown, between 1965 and 1971

Adult Education, Spirit and the 'New Age': Sir George Trevelyan and the Shropshire Adult Education College (SAEC) at Attingham 1948-76

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham. For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Adult Education)

April 2017

By

Sharon Clancy

BA Hons. Eng. Lit./MA (Cantab); BSc Hons. Psych.(OU); MA Higher Ed.(University of Nottingham)

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is the product of my own work, which has not, whether in the same or different form, been presented to this or any other university in support of an application of any degree other than that for which I am now a candidate.

Signed:

Sharon Clancy

April 2017

Abstract

This thesis presents an interdisciplinary study of post-Second World War short-term residential adult education, through an investigation of the Shropshire Adult Education College (SAEC), 1948-1976. This was located at Attingham Park, Atcham, Shropshire, now a National Trust property. George Lowthian Trevelyan, its Warden until 1971, was both an educational pioneer and a charismatic New Age leader.

The study, conducted with support from the National Trust, examines the importance of memory, place and space and utilises oral history and archival materials to uncover and re-present the story of one college as a lens on a form of adult education which has enduring relevance. The investigation is informed by class-based, political and cultural perspectives.

Since the College's demise little had been done to evaluate this important experimental period of adult education. This study involved a slow uncovering process, akin to restoration. Although some more robust infrastructural 'markers' of the College, such as student-made stained glass windows and some mosaics, remain in situ, others, like the ceiling paintings of night sky constellations, have been erased or removed. For many of the former staff, students and academic tutors interviewed, this 'painting over' is a metaphorical deletion of a period of history important to them as individuals, and – as the closing down of a space of post-war reconstruction, creative thinking and renewal – socially significant.

Many students and staff found their experiences transformational. Early courses, reflecting Trevelyan's view of citizenship within a "classless" post-war democracy, embraced an eclectic and diverse range of largely local students. He was, however, an innovator and experimenter: along with literature, music and crafts, architecture and conservation, the curriculum evolved, reflecting and articulating his particular vision of cosmological, spiritual and ecological unity. This utopian thinking spoke of the dangers of rampant materialism and destruction of the earth, but was intertwined with a romantic desire to conserve a British way of life overseen by the hereditary aristocracy. An anthroposophical message, based on Rudolf Steiner's arcane and esoteric teachings, was central.

As the 'New Age' became Trevelyan's focus, divisions emerged between his acolytes and those hostile to the changes – including residential and area-based tutors responsible for mainstream courses, governors and students. Students and tutors on 'esoteric' courses were increasingly people with privileged backgrounds, drawn from Trevelyan's own national

network. This led to charges of elitism. Ultimately, though arguably a post-hoc rationalisation, this has been seen as key to the decision to close the College.

Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements:

This thesis is for my father, John Brian Clancy, 1937- 2014, who was able to tell me, shortly before he died, that he was proud of me. His journey into adult education has been a source of inspiration to me.

This piece of research would not have been possible without the unstinting support, academic guidance and intellectual stimulus of my supervisor Professor John Holford whose belief in me, and the content of this thesis, has helped me throughout this long and sometimes intense journey. I would also like to thank Professor Sarah Speight for her many kindnesses, such as sharing her oral history transcription framework with me, as well as for her erudite and salutary comments when I was giving in to over-effusiveness.

A huge thankyou goes to my mother, Pauline Clancy, who in her own period of grief following the death of my father, continued her support to me, always there from childhood, and encouraged me to continue. Steve Rawlinson has helped me in innumerable ways – practically, with charts and tables, intellectually, by alerting me to the Kibbo Kift and emotionally, as I talked endlessly about issues of class and culture and my own confidence crises. I would like to thank Laurence Platt for his insightful comments on the labour movement and army education, for introducing me to George Ewart Evans and for being there for me in the early stages of the thesis. Derek Tatton, Kevin Walker and Joseph Boughey, from the Raymond Williams Foundation, all deserve a particular mention, having read and commented on draft chapters at different points. I would also like to thank Professor Alan Booth for his insightful support and guidance on the history of spirituality and spiritual education. Peter Francis, a volunteer at Attingham, has painstakingly proofed earlier versions of the thesis and my friend, Joe Revill, has examined my bibliography at various points.

As part of my research, I talked extensively with Frances Farrer, who wrote *Sir George Trevelyan and the new Spiritual Awakening* in 2002, a book which has been an incomparable resource to me. Sadly, Frances died unexpectedly in August 2015 and I would like to express here my gratitude for her support and insights. I would also like to thank Sian Griffiths, Sally Stote, Barrie Trinder and Roger Orgill for the hours of time and commitment they gave to the research project. Finally, a special thank you to Saraid Jones and Sarah Kay at Attingham Park

who made me feel welcome, gave me a place to stay, and welcomed me to the National Trust team.

We are in the depths of a materialistic age, but at the same time through it is running this thread of light and fire, inspiring people with the vision that the Cosmos is, indeed, alive, that the earth on which we tread is, in fact, a living organism of which we are part (Trevelyan, 1964, p.4).

Art, science, technology and human work in general are divided up in specialities, each considered to be separate in essence from the others. Becoming dissatisfied with this state of affairs, men have set up further interdisciplinary subjects which were intended to unite these specialities, but, the new subjects have ultimately served mainly to add further separate fragments (Bohm, 1980, p. 1).

A little folk-dancing, some social economy, and Fabianism for the miners and their wives. We felt quite sick from the nonsense of it all. At a time when this country is supposed to be bankrupt they spend (our) money on semi-education of the lower classes who will merely learn from it to be dissatisfied. The house looked very forlorn and down at heel which worried me a good deal (Lees-Milne, Quoted in Wright, The Guardian, August 1st, 1987).

Introduction

This thesis examines the political and philosophical tensions inherent in a form of adult education which was arguably both pioneering and elitist, using the crucible of literature and language in order to examine these tensions. It does this through the lens of one short-term residential adult education college, the Shropshire Adult Education College (SAEC), 1948 to 1976, at Attingham Park, in Atcham, Shropshire.

Short-term residential adult education was an experimental, sometimes pioneering post-Second World War innovation which met the cry for life-wide learning at a time of great social upheaval. The range and variety of courses offered was unprecedented, representing a sustained and profound philosophical and pedagogical energy, and the setting could be transformative. The SAEC was one of around thirty such colleges, many in stately homes, created during and immediately after the Second World War, mostly between 1944 and 1950. Such short-term colleges were significant. They were part of a period when there was a general increase in adult education. Few attempts to provide residential adult education in a stately home environment had been tried before[1] and the impulse was one of democratising education by providing liberal arts-based education, of different kinds, for people from all backgrounds, in an environment normally associated with the landed gentry. The colleges were part of the drive towards moral, intellectual and philosophical reconstruction, aimed at restoring a spirit of community and shared citizenship, in a country emerging from the trauma of war.

The SAEC was typical of all of the colleges in the sense that it was based on a concept of education developed within the Danish Folk High School movement, which I discuss in detail in Chapters Four and Five. This broad-based and communitarian concept of education allowed for considerable variation in how the colleges defined their central educative purpose. Some

[1] Earlier precedents include Fircroft College, which was founded in 1909 by George Cadbury Jr, grandson of Cadbury's co-founder John. It is based in his former family home. It was originally created to provide educational opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged and excluded members of society and it remains committed to its social justice mission.
Coleg Harlech was established in 1927, in Harlech, Gwynedd. In February this year (2017) it was announced that the college would be closing as an adult education site at the end of the academic year. Newbattle Abbey College, in Dalkeith, Scotland, opened its doors to its first student intake in January 1937.

of the colleges[2] focused on providing education within a particular religious or ethical framework; others focused on providing education for specific audiences, such as trade unions, and others offered a defined course content, such as pre-retirement courses or management training. Some acted as the residential arm of their local university, with whom they were generally in partnership. Yet others, like the SAEC, aimed for a combined approach. The majority of the short-term residential colleges were provided through Local Education Authority (LEA) funding – again, like the SAEC – made possible by the LEAs' increased powers following the 1944 Education Act. Other colleges belonged to a particular university or were funded through private sponsorship or charitable activity. Most were small in size and could accommodate around thirty to forty students on a residential basis. As the Russell Report outlined, the most popular courses tended to be at mid-week and weekend and in 1969/70, 73% of students attended courses of less than four days' duration[3]. None of the colleges was 'typical' in terms of course delivery and offer, as the interest, skills and background of the Warden had an enormous influence on the way the college courses evolved. This fluidity in terms of the education on offer allowed for genuine experimentation. The Russell Report addressed this point, stating that what might appear like ephemerality was part of the appeal of the colleges, enabling them to attract students who would not normally attend adult education courses. The importance of residence was stressed: "the element common to this work is the exploitation of the appeal of and the advantages arising from a short period of residence, chiefly the concentration of effort and the opportunity for informal group discussion" (Russell et al, 1973, p.45).

The SAEC was also different in significant ways. It offered the largest stately home, a Georgian mansion designed by George Steuart, and the family seat of the Berwick family since 1785. It could accommodate up to 70 students at its height in the mid-to late-1960s and is estimated to have invited 40,000 students through its doors during the 24 year tenure of the first Warden[4]. It had a similar core staffing complement to the other colleges, comprising a Warden, Domestic Bursar (Housekeeper), residential tutor, a Head Cook and assistants,

[2] A general overview of the colleges was offered in the 1973 Russell Report on Adult Education, which described the colleges and their development since the Second World War, p. 45.
[3] Russell Report, 1973, p. 223.
[4] Testimony from Dr Lawson Stote – on Sir George Trevelyan's retirement, July 1971

domestic staff working in the kitchen and laundry, a caretaker and Head Gardener. It was also supported by various volunteers, such as students from local schools who helped with domestic duties, often in the summer periods. Unusually, however, the SAEC had a Deputy Warden from 1954 and a Secretary (from the start).

The SAEC from its inception routinely attracted a majority of students from the professional and middle classes. Its courses, particularly in the arts, were culturally 'highbrow' and Trevelyan stated that, unlike many of the other short-term colleges, "we were not so concerned with current affairs, sociology and economics"; the emphasis being on restoring the "sense of meaning" to life (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p.45). One of the central points of focus for this study has been to unpick whether this was due to its increasingly spiritual course content, from 1960 onwards, or due to more general trends in adult education.

Figure 1.1 Attingham Park – circa 1949/50 – Trevelyan with students

Figure 1.2 Attingham Hall and park now

The SAEC is of particular interest as a subject for historical analysis as it was led from its inception up until five years before its closure by a highly idiosyncratic Warden, Sir George Lowthian Trevelyan[5]. Trevelyan was the only Warden to move beyond the religious, the ethical and the liberal arts and into the world of the occult and esoteric. Trevelyan called for a movement away from the utilitarian, the materialistic and the humdrum into a new astrological age, the Aquarian Age, from as early as the late-1940s onwards.

Trevelyan was a founding father of what is now known as the New Age movement, winning the Right Livelihood Award, its 'Alternative Nobel prize', in 1982. In the *Daily Telegraph* obituary for Trevelyan, his apparent discomfort with being cast in the role of elder statesman for the New Age is reported:

> As the years passed he found himself reluctantly cast in the role of elder statesman of the 'New Age' movement, which he thought was dominated by Californian charlatans and scruffy caravan-dwellers…His own beliefs were aristocratic and eclectic, encompassing Arthurian legend, Christian mysticism, and a dualist concept of a Lord of the Cosmic Intelligence battling with the Dragon of Materialist Thinking (Daily Telegraph, 9th February, 1996).

[5] 5th November 1906 – 7th February 1996. Trevelyan became 4th Baronet on 24th January 1958 upon the death of his father, Sir Charles Philips Trevelyan. Charles passed Wallington Hall, the family home in Northumberland, which he had inherited in 1928, to the National Trust in 1941. It was the first stately home to be owned by the Trust. This effectively disinherited George Trevelyan.

He understood the coming of the Aquarian Age, defined as the age of water and group consciousness (Bailey), as an epoch in which humankind needed to look both inwards and outwards to engage in a great "cleansing of the planet" to counter the "folly, greed and ignorance" (Armstrong, Ed., 2008, Trevelyan, New Pilgrimage lecture, n.d) of the modern age, of which planetary pollution, climate change and "faulty thinking" were the primary results. He believed earnestly in a holistic approach, breaking down the distinctions between mind, body and spirit and fostering a lifestyle keenly in touch with the natural world and engendering better stewardship of the earth. He also considered, along with Alice Bailey, the writer and theosophist (1880 -1949), that this is a shared responsibility – "it is by more intelligent living that you and I can save the world" (Bailey, 1927, p.145). As Peter Dawkins wrote in his obituary for Trevelyan, "his 'New Age' did not involve the ephemera of cult and fad, but a non-sectarian, holistic outlook, scientific as well as mystical, and a compassionate, global humanitarianism" (Dawkins, 1996 – Obituary for Sir George Trevelyan).

As Dawkins suggested, Trevelyan was fascinated by medievalism, heraldry and the mythology surrounding his own ancestry. He conceived himself as a Knight and looked to Arthurian legend as his personal touchstone, and to concepts of chivalric living. Dawkins described this preoccupation thus, showing a distinct lack of critical distance from the subject of Trevelyan's aristocratic fancy:

> The Trevelyans trace their ancestry to Celtic Cornwall, and in particular to Lyonesse, the legendary land lost beneath the sea off the coast of Cornwall – a land that once existed when Britain was part of Atlantis. Sir George was proud of this ancestry which linked him to Sir Trevillian, one of King Arthur's knights, who swam ashore on horseback when Lyonesse finally sank. Legend says that Sir Trevillian emerged with a mighty effort from the waves and landed safely on the dry land of Cornwall. Sir George saw this as symbolic of the work he wished to do and to inspire others with: whilst mounted on the Pegasus of the higher mind, to leap from the wild and stormy seas of tempestuous life into a sun-filled land of harmony, beauty and joy (ibid).

Certainly, Trevelyan's ambition was to create a "University of the Spirit, the continuation of the medieval concept of university" (Farrer, 2000, pp. 126, 127), a point which I will return to in Chapter Three. He acknowledged himself that he was not totally free to do this at Attingham because "it was always closely watched" (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p. 42) — and only achieved this ambition post-Attingham with the development of the Wrekin Trust, which he set up to in order to pursue the development of spiritual education upon retiring from the

SAEC. Nevertheless, his work on the esoteric and on 'education for the spirit' increasingly influenced the curriculum at the SAEC. By the 1960s, at the height of the esoteric course programme, the SAEC's audience was no longer drawn mainly from the county but from across the UK and beyond, to the concern of the Local Education Authority. Assertions in the local press - such as the Shropshire Star - about 'rich hippies', who were characterised as disconnected from social and economic realities, fuelled the charges of elitism.

Like Alice Bailey, and many of the earlier exponents of occult philosophies such as theosophy and anthroposophy (Bailey, 1927), which require discipline, devotion and time, Trevelyan was from an aristocratic family. Both theosophy and anthroposophy are philosophical systems which are essentially hierarchical. The founder of theosophy, Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), the occultist and spirit medium, postulated the existence of an objective, intellectually comprehensible spiritual world accessible to direct experience through inner development, based on a reconciliation of ancient eastern wisdom with modern science. Her book, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), provided access for the cognoscenti to inner knowledge about the genesis of the Aryan (or Nordic) race as the pre-eminent race and the conveyor of enlightened consciousness and cultural evolution. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian philosopher, scientist, architect and esotericist conceived his philosophical system of anthroposophy as a development and extension of theosophy, seeking to bring the acuity of Western philosophical thinking to bear on spiritual issues, and leading to more practical offshoots which were designed to promote anthroposophical thought. This led to interests in the arts – particularly drama and movement (*eurythmy*) – architecture, education and, importantly for this thesis, biodynamic agriculture, which has many similarities with organic farming methods but incorporates esoteric and spiritual practices, such as astrological sowing and planting. He also founded anthroposophical medicine, which as well as using massage, counselling and a form of homeopathy, argues that illness can be influenced by a person's past lives and that the course of an illness is subject to karmic destiny. Steiner believed that though a melding of thought and spiritual consciousness that the constraints of earthly existence could be transcended. Like Blavatsky, he saw a special place in this process for the Aryan race: "at the present time it is the task of the Aryans to develop the faculty of thought and all that belongs to it" (Steiner, 1987/1904, p. 46).

Both systems argued that higher consciousness is attained through an "understanding of soul and spirit" (Steiner, 1999/1904, p.11) and that knowledge of God is achieved though individual effort: "Mystics….are educated in silence, peace and seclusion" (p.11) They use practices to develop higher levels of consciousness, such as meditation, spiritual ecstasy, direct intuition, or individual relations with the divine – techniques which are the result of arcane and specialist knowledge. Steiner's dictum was that the aspirant must live their life as if they believed in reincarnation - "What you think today you will be tomorrow" - and karma, "the great law of just compensation" (p. 13). That way, through self-mastery, willpower and control of one's own thoughts and inclinations, old ways can be reshaped and give birth to positive new ones, when "all thoughts that link us to the finite and transitory must fall silent" (ibid, p.16).

Frances Farrer, the writer and journalist commissioned by the Wrekin Trust to write a biography of Trevelyan, argued that his moneyed background conferred tremendous freedom on him. Alongside a real independence of mind, it released him from the plebeian concerns of how to make a living, as well as the time constraints for thought and reflection placed on those from a less privileged background. "It was his good fortune to possess intellectual independence. His mental freedom from conventional doctrine was matched by his aristocratic freedom from conventional material concerns, the compulsions of those with money to make and status to maintain" (Farrer, 2000, p.127).

Trevelyan saw literature and the arts as engaging directly with the imagination, bringing the mind and spirit together and creating meaning, as a means of bypassing the "the cerebral, emotional and mechanical apparatus" to reach into "that aspect of himself of which man as yet knows so little, but which makes him what he is" (Bailey, 1927, p.145). His was a powerful and transformative presence.

Bailey argued that esotericism concerns the whole of humanity, as it "touches the hidden roots of every man's being; it concerns the side of humanity which we term the immortal, and the eternal" (Bailey, 1927, p.146). There is a sense, however, as I am arguing here, in which it has always been the playground of the wealthy and the middle class. As Michael Dower, Trevelyan's nephew commented, the Trevelyans "were brought up to think we were special.

The intellectual aristocracy" (Michael Dower, quoted in Farrer, 2000, p. 24). I will consider this issue further in Chapter Four.

In order to examine the tensions inherent in a form of adult education which tethered the pioneering with the elitist, I have looked for inspiration, in particular, to the work of Raymond Williams, the cultural theorist and adult educator, who spent so much of his own life writing and reflecting on education as a means of emancipation. His seminal work, *Keywords* (1976), provides a conceptual framework for examining attributes ascribed to the short-term residential college ethos, such as their democratic orientation, eschewal of class concerns and their adoption of a noble and elevated conception of high culture. For Williams, language is never neutral but is ideological and political and literature is about political and social transformation, a consciousness raising tool central to adult education.

Methodologically, the thesis utilises an oral history approach, with narrative analysis of key themes emanating from interviews with former College staff, students and tutors. This approach has created an important intellectual and emotional archive, as stated above, which testifies to the powerful impact the College had on individual lives, professionally, personally and culturally, creating an intense sense of community, away from the day to day world. Many students were influenced in their choice of career and education by their time at the SAEC. The SAEC, and particularly the space it created for new directions of thought, continues to be a marker for experimental education, even though it ultimately failed in its objectives of being an adult education college for everyone.

The Colleges developed at a time of great social and economic change, in a scarred and battle-weary country where the 'old order' was being challenged on a number of fronts. Their creation reflected the fervent drive during this period for social reform and a revitalised sense of citizenship. Education was vital to this process, as evidenced in the establishment of universal secondary school education by the 1944 Education Act and the inception of the wider support structures of the Welfare State. Peter Housden, who was Director General for Schools in the Department for Education and Skills from 2001 to 2005, wrote warmly of his own experience of attending the Grove Comprehensive School in Market Drayton, Shropshire, a new comprehensive at the time which was established in the face of a struggle to maintain

the Market Drayton Grammar School. The title of his book expresses his own position on this, *So the New Could be born…The Passing of a Country Grammar School*:

> It took the Second World War to provide real impetus for advance. There was a recognition in Churchill's War Cabinet of the pressing need to improve social conditions. The war had exposed the full extent of deprivation, particularly through the large-scale evacuation of children and mothers, a process which brought 20,000 children from the cities and industrial towns of the North West to Shropshire, swelling its school population by two-thirds. As the war began to draw to a close, the general desire in the political class to 'bring the nation together' led to the Butler Education Act of 1944, and in parallel to the implementation of the Beveridge Report, and the establishment of the National Health Service and wider welfare state (Housden, 2015, p.18).

At this time Local Education Authorities, in a powerful partnership with voluntary organisations such as the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and the Women's Institute (W.I.), charitable trusts, such as the Carnegie Trust, and universities, were given powers, and the financial means, to establish imaginative responses to educating adults. This followed in the wake of *The 1919 Report: The Final and Interim Reports of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, 1918-1919* (HMSO, 1919) and the *White Paper on Educational Reconstruction*, 1943 (Board of Education, 1943). The latter represents the only time a government White Paper has recommended establishing residential colleges for adults. The White Paper was influenced by the long-established adult education work of bodies like the WEA, as well as extra-mural tutorial classes, and extension courses and lectures, provided by universities. It also reflected the perceived success of previous efforts at short-term residential education, such as in Army education, which had clearly excited some in the Board of Education, as much for its capacity to bring disparate people together as citizens as for its wider educational value. The Ministry of Education, established in 1944, continued this enthusiasm, recognising both the potential role of adult education in post-war reconstruction, as long as it was "practical as well as theoretical", and the importance of the residential experience itself, with its capacity to "engender an enthusiasm for learning that is possible in no other way" (Ministry of Education, 1947, p.60). The war and the immediate post-war period saw the economic decline of some of the landed estates. The Country Houses Scheme and the National Land Fund enabled the National Trust to take on 168 new properties between 1949 and 1954. The colleges – and the Local Authority funding they attracted –

enabled stately homes to be preserved from the bulldozer in a number of instances. This included Attingham Park, Knuston Hall in Northamptonshire and Barlaston Hall, Stoke on Trent. In the case of Attingham, the aristocratic family remained in the house whilst the college ran its courses and its finances kept the building afloat. A number of other country houses, such as Braziers Park, Oxfordshire and Madingley Hall, Cambridge also played host to adult education facilities. Thus the colleges acted as a means of conserving as well as challenging the fabric of the old order.

The mood of wider societal change is visible at the SAEC throughout its 28 year span in the development and evolution of its courses. It is particularly interesting in that it appears to have spawned – or at least supported at their inception – a whole series of new movements related to ecology and environmental issues, industrial archaeology, musical analysis, creative arts as well as the New Age, or 'education of the spirit'. By extension, the College and its curriculum reflect some of the 'grand narratives' of the twentieth century, conflicts between materialism, idealism, individualism and collectivism. As Trevelyan himself expressed it, he saw his task as being one of supporting a spiritual reawakening at a time of darkness and conflict, countering the rigidly scientific and rational with a sense of wonder and hope:

> It is our loss if we choose to confine our thinking and interpretation solely to the provable and ponderable mundane - or the pedantic intellectual. So much more exists and calls to us. This is indeed an age of mystery, wonder and hope (Trevelyan, 1977/2012, p.130).

Trevelyan was deeply influenced by the anthroposophical teachings of Rudolf Steiner and, ultimately, many of the courses presented at the SAEC were shot through with this thinking. This can be summarised in the following quote: "We are in the depths of a materialistic age, but at the same time through it is running this thread of light and fire, inspiring people with the vision that the Cosmos is, indeed, alive, that the earth on which we tread is, in fact, a living organism of which we are part" (Trevelyan, 1964, p.4). For Trevelyan, the short course – by which he meant courses of a week or two weeks' length at the most and, primarily, weekend courses – was the ideal space for fostering change and transformation, for spiritual awakening and for ideas on the move: "The revolutions in our society, political, religious, sociological, artistic, are in the nature of ideas which strike and permeate through people from one mind to another and can transform our thinking" (Trevelyan, 1964, p.3).

Was the SAEC the only short-term residential college that broke new ground? Given their potential for ground-breaking work, short-term residential colleges do not feature as prominently as might be anticipated in the major works on the origin and evolution of adult education which have been my chief source of information on the subject. These include Thomas Kelly's *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, Roger Fieldhouse's *A History of Modern British Adult Education* and J.F.C. Harrison's *Learning and Living 1790–1960: A Study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement.*

There are a number of potential reasons for this, all of which I shall explore further in Chapter Three. Walter Drews, former Principal of Wansfell College - a short-term residential adult education college which existed at the same time as Attingham - suggested that this omission related to the colleges' lack of "impact on the political scene". Drews viewed this as associated with a failure at governmental level to recognise the importance of "liberal adult education, and in particular the residential mode" for its vital contribution to a "nation's culture" (Drews, 1995, p.v). This lack of scrutiny of, or political interest in, the colleges mirrored the marginality – and freedom – of adult education in general (Steele, 1997, p.50). It also conferred on the colleges a particular freedom to experiment. In this thesis I argue that the advent, and development, of the SAEC and other colleges reflects a period of optimism and growth based on an understanding that when the state deploys its resources progressively significant social advances can be made, for example, in the overall expansion of education and the development of the Welfare State. The colleges also represent examples of innovative financial partnerships between the State, private philanthropists and Trust Fund organisations.

Conversely, the reasons for the decline of the short-term colleges are the product of a very different political and economic project. The SAEC was one of the earlier casualties, but most subsequently closed.

The Short-term colleges – Origins and Survival

At the height of the short-term colleges, in the late 1960s, a booklet produced by NIAE (the National Institute of Adult Education) outlining the courses available at the time, showed a list of 25 generalist adult education colleges, many of which were based in stately homes or buildings of historic interest. By this stage there were also several long-term residential colleges, such as Ruskin College in Oxford and Coleg Harlech in Harlech, Gwynedd. Others which might have been included on the NIAE list, such as Denman College, Wortley Hall and Hawkwood College, were being seen even at this stage as serving a more targeted audience.

Now, in 2017, the Institutes for Adult Learning (IAL) campaigning and support network brings together the nine remaining short and long-term colleges of a generalist adult education, community-orientated and (some, though not all) residential nature. Under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, when colleges of Further Education were taken out of local authority control and set up as freestanding public bodies, each of this small group of colleges was registered as a 'specialist designated institution' (SDI). What distinguishes the nine colleges from other colleges of Further Education is that they are independently constituted charities, regulated by their own trust deeds. They all also receive public funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), though this remains a highly contested area, with ongoing arguments about the nature of adult education and what public funding should support. The long-term and short-term nature of the courses, which used to differentiate the colleges, has now largely become irrelevant, with a number offering a mixture of both types of courses.

The IAL comprises nine institutions. These are Fircroft College, in Selly Oak, Birmingham and Hillcroft[6] College, in Surbiton, both of a short-term nature, and Ruskin and Northern College[7]

[6] Hillcroft College was founded in 1920, as a Residential Working Women's College, in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. It was initially based in a large house in Buckinghamshire but in 1926 it moved to its current location in Surbiton and this was also the point at which the college became known as Hillcroft College.

[7] Northern College was founded in 1978 and is an adult residential college based at Wentworth Castle in Barnsley, South Yorkshire. Its explicit objective remains to provide transformational residential and community education for the empowerment of people without formal qualifications who are seeking to return to learning, as well as training for those who are active in community and voluntary groups and in trade unions.

which still provide long-term residential adult education, as well as the four colleges in London which are part of the network – namely Morley[8] College, which covers Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, City Lit[9] in Covent Garden, covering all of London, WMC – the Working Men's College (WMC)[10], now branded as The Camden College, the Mary Ward Centre[11], serving Kings Cross and Holborn, and the WEA, which is now also recognised as an SDI.

A handful of the other short-term residential colleges on the 1967 NIAE list managed to survive until recent years, such as Wedgwood Memorial College[12] in Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, which finally closed its doors in 2012. Some are boarded up, others are in the hands of the National Trust though some, often those with particular audiences, remain. Denman College, for instance, at Marcham Park in Oxfordshire, opened as a College for the Women's Institute in September 1948[13] and remains a W.I educational institution today, though its future at Marcham Park is currently under scrutiny as the building requires continual maintenance and is very expensive to run. Denman was sometimes included in the list of short-term colleges in some accounts of their evolution, such as Drews' account (1995), but is not included in the 1967 booklet.

Wortley Hall, a stately home near Barnsley and the seat of the Earls of Wharncliffe until the Second World War, was taken on in 1950 by a group of local Trade Union activists who identified the hall as a possible educational and holiday centre, and established a co-operative which succeeded in purchasing the hall for those purposes. It is still used by Trade Unions and

---

[8] Morley College was opened in 1889, and is one of the country's oldest and largest specialist providers of adult education, with a particular focus on providing adult education in arts, culture and applied sciences to the communities of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham.

[9] City Lit opened in 1919. It began as part of London's literary institute movement, which came into being after the First World War, and of which City Lit is the sole survivor out of the 16 that had operated in London over the years. City Lit is now Europe's largest provider of short courses for adults.

[10] The WMC was founded in 1854 and was associated with the Cooperative Movement and the Christian Socialists. The Working Women's College, founded 10 years later in 1864, finally merged with WMC in 1967.

[11] Mary Ward Centre was originally a Settlement House. Mary Ward campaigned vigorously for the construction of a new Settlement in the St Pancras/Holborn area. In 1897 the settlement moved in to the new purpose built Arts and Crafts building in Tavistock Place, and then to Queen Square in 1982. It remains a settlement organisation with an ongoing objective to "promote public education and social service for the benefit of the community".

[12] The College opened in February 1945 in Barlaston Hall, a country house in Staffordshire. It is widely understood to be the first of the short-term residential colleges specifically for the purpose of short-term residential education to open. The college was owned and operated by Stoke-on-Trent City Council until it was closed in March 2012.

[13] On Friday 24th September Sir Richard Livingstone performed the opening ceremony. Marcham Park, in the village of Marcham near Abingdon, had been de-requisitioned from the Air Ministry. It was apparently in a sorry state – "the grounds and garden had been sadly neglected" (Miss Farrer to J. Wilkie, Carnegie UK Trust, 10th Oct. 1947, NFWI archives, quoted in *Rooms Off the Corridor – Education in the WI and 50 years of Denman College, 1948 – 1998*, Stamper, (1998), London: WI Books, p.90).

by the Raymond Williams Foundation. It is also achieving financial viability as a wedding/social venue. It was also not included in the 1967 booklet.

Hawkwood College, a former stately home in Gloucestershire and seen by Trevelyan as something of a 'daughter' college to the SAEC, was bought by followers of Rudolf Steiner in 1947, the Whincops family. From 1971 it was managed by Bernard Nesfield-Cookson – a close friend of Trevelyan, who taught at the SAEC – and his second wife, Eileen. It remains a centre for short courses on the theme of creative exploration in personal and spiritual development, arts and crafts, music, health and well-being, as well as the natural world, ecology and sustainability. Bretton Hall in West Yorkshire, centred on the mansion house, was an important centre for arts and education training and was highly influential until it closed its doors as a college in 2007. It remains significant as the site of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, established in 1977, whose educational programme enables thousands of people to engage in participatory workshops and events every year. The mansion house and associated buildings are currently being converted into a luxury hotel[14].

The colleges were not all conceived after the Second World War. Some grew out of existing establishments but became accepted as part of the post-war generation of short-term residential colleges. Others began life as generalist short-term colleges but became increasingly specialised. They all, however, represented a spirited response to the growing need for adult education at a community level, either with or without offering a residential component. Amongst those that remain in 2017, all are struggling to maintain their viability. My argument is that the decline of the colleges signalled the start of a radically changing conception of adult education, and education as a whole. Some would argue that universal secondary school education made adult education less important; others, that it highlighted the importance of 'second chance' education even more, for those for whom the system failed during their school years or who blossomed later in their lives. Certainly after the Second World War there was an intense interest in adult education as a spiritual or moral tool

[14] It is not my intention here to offer a detailed analysis of the other residential colleges. Walter Drews, former Principal of Wansfell College, a short-term residential adult education college which existed at the same time as Attingham, has done this already in his PhD thesis, as above, in which he gives detail of each of the colleges, such as what subjects they taught, the nature of the student body and their period of operation.

- terms often used interchangeably - both to bolster the existing societal order and to challenge it. The sheer range and scale of adult education provision evidences this, as will be explored in Chapters Three and Four, as do the pioneers prepared to support genuinely innovative opportunities for life-long learning, both from the State sector and private philanthropists.

By the late 1970s, however, experimental education for adults came into conflict with a very different ideology which focused on a reducing state, restricted public funding, free market economics, privatisation and tax cuts, and employment which focused on skills for industry and the workplace. This ran counter to the social democratic project exemplified by the creation of the Welfare State, which had been in the ascendancy post-War. The push towards vocationalism was not confined to the Conservative party. It was a bipartisan move, an area of striking consensus between the two major parties. On October 18th 1976, James Callaghan, the then Labour Prime Minister, spoke at Ruskin College in Oxford[15]. This speech is regarded as an important milestone in 'the Great Debate' about the purpose and nature of public education. He referred to a university sector with high numbers of students studying in Humanities subjects, whilst science subjects were neglected. He advocated for "higher standards" in the workplace and the importance of training in response to new "legislation on health and safety at work, employment protection and industrial change". Whilst lamenting a lack of work-readiness in "new recruits from the schools", he applauded schools for their efforts in raising basic literacy skills. He registered deep unease at the "new informal methods of teaching which seem to produce excellent results when they are in well-qualified hands but are much more dubious when they are not". This signalled a decisive break from the humanist and humanities-based education espoused by colleges like the SAEC and also a strong drive towards a more standardised education, with less space for debate and experimentation, particularly in pedagogical approaches.

---

[15] The Great Debate 1976 - the speech, given by Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan in Ruskin College Oxford on 18th October 1976, http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html, Education in England – the History of Our Schools. The Ruskin College speech was prepared for the web by Derek Gillard and uploaded on 31 March 2010.

According to one of my interviewees, Tony Vettise (Interview – Tony Vettise, 4th March, 2015), this was the start of an era of "clerks and technicians" instead of the open-minded, flexible educationalists of the post-war period. This shift placed increasing emphasis on notions of 'choice', on people paying for what they wanted and on measuring economic value and impact. It heralded a period of education as a means of expanding productivity or improving economic efficiency, through entrepreneurialism and an increased focus on the individual. This changed ideology was no longer concerned with the extension of democracy or of fostering citizenship in the ways manifested in the earnest post-war desire to deepen the quality of active participation in society and the spirit of community. It focused, instead, on a very different understanding of democracy, social engagement and citizenship, in which the individual was fitted for work and for playing a role in the economic machine. As Callaghan expressed it:

> There is no virtue in producing socially well-adjusted members of society who are unemployed because they do not have the skills. Nor at the other extreme must they be technically efficient robots. Both of the basic purposes of education require the same essential tools. These are basic literacy, basic numeracy, the understanding of how to live and work together, respect for others, respect for the individual (Callaghan, 1976).

An "understanding of how to live and work together" was also an important element of the education offered by the SAEC. It took notions of citizenship and community seriously. However, it was also exploratory and, at times, highly unorthodox and challenging, in both subject matter and teaching methods. These could be bohemian and dilettantish, in instances such as nude life painting in the gardens at Attingham, with the gardeners continuing their work during the sessions. However, on many other occasions, they were directly pioneering, with courses examining emerging social, political and demographic issues such as *Home Care for the Elderly*, in autumn 1957, and a later course (1965) on preparing for retirement, entitled 'Positive attitudes to the third phase of life'. Women with children were supported to attend the courses through the development of crèche facilities as early as the late 1940s, and early courses covered areas such as child development and juvenile delinquency. Debate about the nature of the society best fitted to human flourishing and the social, economic, technological and ecological environment necessary to post-war reconstruction were central in the early days of the SAEC. In this way the SAEC, and the other short-term residential colleges, was

profoundly political and represented a crucible for the great debate on education and its purpose, which continues today.

Therefore, the central question for the thesis hinges on the extent to which the education on offer at the SAEC was representative of a brief period of innovation and experiment, how far the SAEC offered a place for personal and professional transformation and for whom. It considers these issues within the wider social, political and philosophical trends in adult education and the history of ideas out of which adult education grew and evolved. It explores how far any innovation was due to the nature of the short-term college approach *per se* or to the influence of George Trevelyan himself, as Warden, or to wider societal trends.

The thesis also examines how far this kind of liberal adult education can be perceived as a 'civilising influence', with 'liberal' here connoting an elevation above utilitarian concerns, as a cultural counter to 'the trifling, ignoble and base' interests and predilections of mass culture (Livingstone, 1943, p.5). It also considers what evidence there is for the short-term residential college serving a democratising purpose, as was, in part, its express intent, creating an enlightened curriculum and space for discourse across a broad cross-section of 'human life'.

The College illustrates the shifts in the debate about the purpose and approach of adult education over the last half of the twentieth century and into the current century, and offers us a longer lens back on the past, to the vicissitudes and changes of the last century and beyond, perhaps reminding us that the current educational status quo is relatively recent and therefore not unchangeable. Creating a record of the College also acts as a reminder of a world which has all but disappeared, and that it is important to capture memories and recollections of the complex and challenging world of this period of adult education before they are gone.

This study is particularly valuable in terms of the collaborative partnership it represents, as an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project which brings together the University of Nottingham's School of Education and the National Trust. The National Trust at Attingham Park are committed to finding ways of representing the almost thirty year period when the mansion was given over to the life of the College and John Holford, Robert Peers Professor of

Adult Education at the University of Nottingham, has been instrumental in creating the impetus for this development.

The research questions, along with the review of the literature which animates all my thinking in the thesis, run throughout each chapter. In Chapter One I consider the nature of my own position in relation to the research and outline the emergence of the key themes which inform my approach to it. Chapter Two explores the methodology I utilised to undertake the research, the materials I had access to and the interview process and ethical considerations. My particular focus is on the importance of oral history and the distinctions between life story and life history. Chapter Three considers the nature of adult education and offers a theoretical and literary framework for exploring conceptions of culture and class which are central to the evolution of the SAEC. Chapter Four examines the experience and background of Sir George Trevelyan within the social, political, philosophical and cultural context of the inter-war and war years, drawing out the elements which shaped his pedagogic thinking. Chapter Five focuses down on the College, examining its establishment, how it was staffed and promoted, and how this shifted and changed over the 24 years that Trevelyan was Warden. It also presents findings on the nature of the student body, and considers whether it was genuinely democratic, an experience "open to all comers" (Trevelyan, year unknown, p.1). Chapter Six explores the importance of the residential experience for staff and students at the College. I consider whether the Attingham environment – a stately home in beautiful surroundings – acted as an incentive for attendance or a barrier, particularly in terms of the social and geographical background of the students. I also examine whether the residential experience in such an environment accelerated the experience of transformation, away from the 'workaday world', and what its impact was on people's lives longer-term. Chapter Seven focuses in detail on the course programmes and their development. Given the Warden's key leadership role within all the colleges, and the impact of individual character, I consider Trevelyan's specific contribution and influence – on the student experience, the learning environment and the course development. My final question relates to the impact of the spiritual and esoteric developments at the College and whether this excluded or engaged people. I also examine whether such developments were inimical to the College's long-term survival or simply a smokescreen for closure. In the final chapter, Chapter Eight, I consider the

overall impact of the College and bring the analysis up to date in the context of adult education now.

Chapter One – Adult Education and Life-wide learning: A Personal Perspective

> The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
> Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
> Through living roots awaken in my head.
> But I've no spade to follow men like them.
>
> Between my finger and my thumb
> The squat pen rests.
> I'll dig with it.
>
> (Heaney, from 'Digging', *Death of a Naturalist*, 1966)

Any doctoral thesis is a long process of discovery. In my mind I have likened my own to an archaeological excavation which examines the connection between time and history and the non-linear, cyclical nature of the two, digging deeper each time and finding new layers of understanding and new ways of interpreting the past to inform the present. Seamus Heaney's poem, 'Digging', provides a way in to this approach. Heaney places himself in the poem, as he struggles with his own identity and the sense of loss, of ties severed with the visceral physicality, the skill and tradition of the work undertaken by his father and grandfather as turf cutters. He remembers them reverently, cutting into the earth and feeling it on their fingers as they hold the cool potatoes in their hands. Ultimately, he concludes that his pen must act as his spade, his means of continuing this labour, respecting both his family history and his personal continuity with this past in a new process of digging – digging for meaning and understanding. This is what I have chosen to do.

Like Heaney, I have reflected on the role of my father and grandfather, both coal miners and both beneficiaries of adult education. Therefore, this introductory chapter explores the reasons for my undertaking this research and the means by which I have done so. It felt important at this point to be clear about my own stance in relation to the research, to lay bare my place, and my agenda, in relationship to the study and those I interviewed, as an "interpretative and epistemological necessity" (West, 2016, p.36). I wanted to explore what the resonance was for me, to my personal, emotional and professional life, of examining a

little-known corner of adult education, the short-term residential adult education colleges in stately homes, and, specifically, the Shropshire Adult Education College (SAEC) at Attingham Park. I also wanted to reflect on the cultural and class-based encumbrances I bring to the research, exposing them to critical appraisal. I explore here the importance of narrative and identity, in terms of my own place in this research and my choice of methodology, which I will outline in more detail in Chapter Two. Narrative here is conceived not as a linear process through time but as "being both lived and understood forwards and backwards in a 'spiral movement' of constant interpretation and reinterpretation" (Lawler, 2008, p.19).

In this section, I am examining my own reactions to the kind of recreational, liberal arts, emancipatory and esoteric education on offer at the SAEC and how this fits with my own conceptions of adult education. I am considering how best to represent the lives of those who lived and studied there and who were gracious enough to share their stories with me, knowing my interviewees were sometimes leaving behind difficult lives, or at least the quotidian and conventional, to come into – at the College's best – a community of thought, a bohemian enclave, "a social ecology of friendship, stimulation and fraternity" (West, 2016, p.55).

The Complexities of Position and Researcher Reflexivity

The research I have undertaken, and my approach to it, has informed the key themes which have emerged. My own specific stance is that I entered this research with a strong sense of the historical and the political context of my life, informed by an interest in the spiritual and the political as tools for learning, as well as the individual and the collective, and how these worlds interact. I believe that the space to think, to challenge, to question the taken-for-granted is of vital importance to our personal and social resilience, particularly at times of intense social change, and I have seen the power of adult learning in the form of education of an "informal, life-wide kind" (West 2016, p.13) in helping my family achieve that, and have also been its beneficiary.

I am also exploring very particular internal tensions. Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, in an interview and discussion with Terry Eagleton in the *New Left Review* in 1992, expounded the difficulties that someone like him experienced in breaking the mould, as a "first-generation intellectual" (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 117). He described his own attempt to bring together two very different parts of his life: the world of "the common life" (p.117), as Eagleton expressed it, representing his childhood in a non-intellectual community, and the world of academia, a place, as Bourdieu commented, "where I don't belong"(p.117). As he suggested, people use different means to deal with this internal dissonance. Some "find a solution in political action, in some kind of social rationalization" (p.116); others, like Bourdieu himself, seek to understand what has happened to themselves intellectually. In order to do this, he described his focus on understanding "what it means to have an academic mind—how such is created—and at the same time what was lost in acquiring it". He acknowledges that this makes his work "a sort of auto-biography", one written for "people who have the same sort of trajectory, and the same need to understand" (p.116). This strikingly honest insight into the liminality of identity created by education encapsulates my own experience of coming from a school and a community in which there was a strong strand of anti-intellectualism, whilst living within the enclave of a family which sought to understand the world, read widely and debated issues passionately. The sense of being between two worlds, of exclusion from "the common life", has been a feature of both my personal and professional lives.

Much of my working life can be characterised by Bourdieu's description of seeking to "find a solution in political action, in some kind of social rationalization". I have worked in the voluntary and charity sector in a number of roles connected with social inequality and disability issues, in Higher Education as a lecturer in social justice and community matters and as a public engagement specialist, attempting to recreate at university level some of the relationships based on community knowledge, trust and intimacy I associate with adult education at its best. I have based much of my work on the concept of praxis, and in particular, Paulo Freire's concept of informed action (Freire, 1972) – or "political action", as Bourdieu described it (1992) – which assumes a bringing together of theory and action, the process by which a theory is enacted, embodied, or realised. From Freire I understood that education is by nature political and should be a process of developing or harnessing political consciousness

– or conscientisation (Freire, 1970, p.55) – but within the specific context in which it is taught. In other words, it is not sufficient to think or teach critically without reflection on contextual societal structures and particularly "the inarticulate values that reproduce inequalities" (McLean, 2006, p.97). Conscientisation in Freire's description is a process of developing consciousness, that is, becoming aware of the material circumstances, constraints and limitations placed on the individual self by the world in which we live and seeking to know them and move beyond them, a consciousness that seeks to transform individuals from being objects of educational processes to subjects in their own autonomy and emancipation, in order to challenge the *status quo*. The implication is that the individual learns within a social world and, therefore, that learning can best be achieved through collective action, through sharing this knowledge and understanding with others in order to effect change as a united voice.

Outside my public career, I trained with the British Wheel of Yoga as a yoga teacher, a profound, introspective experience spanning four years' of initial training, ongoing development in subsequent years and over 10 years of teaching, which has acted as a challenging learning experience for me and has forged a different understanding of teaching others. From my yoga learning I began to consider a very different kind of consciousness, which has a strong consonance with the work and philosophy of George Trevelyan who understood adult education as a form of spiritual consciousness-raising, providing access to higher spiritual truths. His was a metaphysical understanding of education which suggested that we must transcend the material and the physical world, which thwarts spiritual evolution, and look to the incorporeal and the supernatural, in accordance with his belief in the central tenets of anthroposophy, developed by Rudolf Steiner. Steiner's philosophical system focuses on the primacy of seeking a higher consciousness, by which Steiner was referring to reaching out to the spiritual world by a process of self-discipline at a cognitive and sensory level, with practices designed to enable a connection with the natural world and the universe as a whole and to foster ethical and moral mastery. Trevelyan described this ability to accept the challenges we are faced with, to respond with equanimity to tests which target the weaknesses in our character, as an internal battle: "the soul battle is solely against ourselves. The supposed insult thrown at us can be seen as a challenge to control our own reactions" (Trevelyan, 1968, p.2).

I was attracted to yoga philosophy as a means of looking beyond the kind of life spent in pursuit of the day to day materiality and banality of rampant consumerism, which I felt focused on the individual at the expense of other people and, ultimately, of the planet. As Bauwens described it, in his analysis of the New Age: “New Age thinking was an attempt both to heal the self and to re-enchant the collective through connections with the natural world and the world of spiritual experience” (Bauwens, 2013, no pagination).

There is a huge appeal for me in looking beyond the material and lifting one’s gaze towards the drama and pathos of life, its dangers, beauty and wonder and seeking the prospect of deeper human communion and co-operation. The shared rituals and observances of yoga, as well as providing physical and emotional health benefits, enable one to be part of a wider community of aspirants, many seeking to be selfless and non-judgemental, to eschew separation and to seek oneness with others. Trevelyan described this as a recognition that “we are particles of a stupendous whole and that no life, human or natural, exists of itself” (Trevelyan, 1968, p.1). He also suggested that death enables us to leave behind the material plane and to merge consciousness with others. Even on the earthly plane “the selfless and unpossessive love characteristic of the new age”, acts to “bind individuals into the new groups” (ibid).

However, some part of me has always been uncomfortable with the kind of mysticism I associate with aspects of gnostic and occult thinking. It assumes an arcane knowledge which arguably only an inner cognoscenti can access, and can thus be conceived as hierarchical and spiritually elitist, allowing those with the time and economic comfort and security to pursue it, those for whom economic and social pressures are not an impediment to spiritual progress. It can also lead, in my experience, to a disconnection from the political and economic social structures which surround us and a deep conservatism. As Bauwens argued, inner journeying can convince us of our autonomy and our individual freedom and we cease to see that our autonomy “always exists in the context of corporate hierarchies” (Bauwens, 2013, no pagination).

Worse, without the kind of training which Steiner recommends in anthroposophy, and which is also part of yoga beliefs, there is an assertion that we will be held on a karmic wheel which we cannot escape and that we will be reincarnated until our souls evolve. “We return again and again to the plane of earth in order to undergo soul trials until a step into inner freedom can be made” (Trevelyan, 1968, p. 2). More than this, there is an implicit and even explicit acceptance that this is predestined. As Trevelyan wrote, “know that all that happens has plan and meaning and that we are all moving in an intricate dance and drama. Plunge with joy into the ‘refining fire’ of that dance” (p. 3).

Trevelyan was a man of deep conviction. He was described by Frances Farrer, in my interviews with her, as having a “manic, preacherly light in his eye – compelling and magnetic” (telephone interview with Frances Farrer - 28th July, 2014) which could be used for great positive effect. His love of literature, art, music, poetry and his ability to convey his deep love for his subject was part of his charisma and his capacity to engender enthusiasm and excitement in those to whom he spoke or lectured. His must have been an intoxicating presence. It is also clear that Trevelyan completely believed that plunging into the intricate dance of the spiritual life was a positive and emancipatory experience, leading to both inner tranquillity and absolute control, and creating preparedness for guidance by “the world of spirit” (ibid, p.4) into a change in consciousness. Malcolm Lazarus, a colleague and friend of Trevelyan, who was co-director of the Wrekin Trust in its early days, averred that “George Trevelyan was fond of saying that political change only scraped the surface and that the only change of real value was an inner willed change in consciousness” (Farrer, 2000, p.154). This chimes with Steiner’s dictum that social change in the anthroposophical philosophy can only be the result of spiritual transformation at an individual level.

In terms of my own yoga journey, entering the “world of spirit” always struck me as a lonely and isolated path and I became increasingly certain that I had to seek a balance between political and spiritual urges in myself. I met many seekers of spiritual growth who seemed oddly decoupled from the complexities and inequalities of modern life, encased in a privileged spiritual bubble. I considered that if we become too immersed in an individual journey of self-discovery, we are in danger of disconnecting from the world around us.

For me this balance came through activism, through my own efforts, and those I have worked with, to promote or direct social, political, economic, and environmental reform with the desire to work towards increased equality. This work was powered by the conviction that working communally, as a group or community, associated through the place we live or a shared interest or concern, was the most powerful means of creating social change. This has included, for instance, older people coming together to fight pension changes or people with disabilities challenging state responses to disability support systems. It has been about civil society.

Civil society is a phrase much-used to describe voluntary action and the networks and spaces we inhabit and within which we meet outside the state and the marketplace. Michael Edwards (2014), writer and activist and a leading writer on the subject, defined civil society in three ways. Firstly, he described it as associational life – which includes community organisations, charities, faith groups, mutual aid and informal learning networks, and unions; secondly, the good society, a space in which important social issues, such as those connected with poverty and inequality, sit at the heart of debate about what a better society might look like and thirdly, the public sphere, after Jürgen Habermas's definition – the space which takes us into the realm of politics, where important questions are asked by those who are not in positions of power about the nature of social and political change. Civil society is not a reified, fixed ideal, nor a form of "idealised unity out of the actual diversity and real contradictions of English social life" (Steele, 1997, p.59). It is a complex, shifting and uncompromising space, in which we question what we want a sense of community and shared citizenship to mean. A truly 'civil society' may even be largely unattainable. Williams (1958) argued that it is a bourgeois concept which leaves behind active fellowship, companionship or "common culture" in favour of a rational, necessarily progressive commercialised conceit of society. This concept of a civilised society does not, as Bourdieu commented (1992), recognise that most communication and societal interaction is competitive and that "the undistorted communication referred to by Habermas is always an exception. We can achieve this undistorted communication only by a special effort when extraordinary conditions are fulfilled" (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1992, p. 116). I will return to issues of community and citizenship in Chapter Three.

Finally, it is only latterly that my own personal experience of deep introspection for the writing of this thesis has given me sufficient pause to consider "what it means to have an academic mind—how such is created" and what one loses in acquiring it, or attempting to do so. It has enabled me to consider the necessity of challenging an intellectualised conception of the working class, which either deifies or despises working people, and of maintaining a watchful eye on easy assertions on class and culture, particularly in relation to adult education. As Bourdieu expressed it in the conversation with Terry Eagleton:

> intellectuals hate and despise the workers, or they admire them too much—which is a manner of despising them. It is very important to know all these things; and so, for that reason, the process of self-criticism, which one can practice by studying the intellectual, academic mind, is vital—it is, as it were, a necessary personal condition for any kind of communication on ideology (Bourdieu, 1992, p.118).

This bringing together of the individual, the social and the civic is vital in this thesis. Adult education has long been, in my view, the space where these ideological tensions play out and for that reason the SAEC provides more than an interesting historical diversion from the progress of neo-liberalism, but acts as a microcosm of the crisis facing education today. An examination of the SAEC offered me the potential to both support and challenge the thinking of those involved in the diverse, and unique, range of organisations who have come together to support this project. Primarily, my concern has been with the role of education (and educators) in the coming together of the spiritual and material aspects of life/humanness, the personal and political and the individual and communal.

A Personal Reflection on adult education

> [A] dream of social flying, a desperate effort to defy the gravity of the social field (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 370).

Adult education has been significant in my own background and it is to this particular culture and heritage I turn now. In approaching this research I have reflected at length on adult education and what it has meant in my life. Newman highlighted the crucial difference between adult and school education, in that adults are "free agents and under no statutory or professional pressure to attend" (Newman, 1979, p. 28). It is this that makes adult education most powerful, in that engagement with it is a voluntary act. It is also often based on "tacit knowledge…embedded in people's activities and relationships" (Field, 2005, p.4),

rather than formal and accredited knowledge. I have witnessed it as a form of 'second chance' emancipatory education, making good the deficits of primary and secondary schooling. I have also understood it within the frame of reference of Raymond Williams' "structure of feeling" in which "social actors and activists draw not only on history but also a 'structure of feeling', the lived experience and culture of a particular historical moment within which they work" (Grayson, 2016, p.113), connected with the labour movement and the workplace. I have also experienced it as a means to "cultivate the mind…concerned with the development and transmission of knowledge and culture" (Holmwood, 2011, p.7), through my own engagement in the teaching of adults, most recently teaching yoga, and through benefitting from participating in arts-based classes myself.

I come from a mining community in Bolsover, in the North East Midlands, which has a long tradition of associational life and independent learning connected with the pits. As Grayson has described, until the 1980s, places like Bolsover and other towns which were dominated by large-scale industry, were almost entirely state-run and had developed their own "distinctive 'proletarian' culture" (Grayson, 2016, p.114):

> The national state owned the main industries of the region (steel and coal), all the utilities (water, energy, telecommunications, railways, and bus services)…The local state owned around fifty percent of housing across the region and more than eighty percent in some coalfield villages and towns (p. 114).

By the end of the Miner's Strike of 1984-5, Bolsover had lost its *raison d'être* and had been stripped of its mining and manufacturing base and the work, social networks and local institutions this represented. As such, it is a place now largely set adrift from its old continuities and sense of collectivism "by the profound economic, political and social changes of the 1980s and earlier" (West, 2016, p. xiv). What markers remain of the mining industry have largely become heritage sites, and the textile industry, in which many of the women of the area worked, has gone almost completely unremarked. It is also a place of duality, with an alternative heritage, represented by the old town, with its 17th century castle, William Cavendish's aristocratic retreat, at the top of the hill which I walked past every day on my way to school, and the fine Norman church of St Mary and St Laurence, where the Cavendish family remains lie. The panoramic hill top views take in the remains of the Coalite plant and the industrial units which have replaced the pits in the valley, with Sutton Hall and Peveril

Castle visible on a clear day. The town is close to Hardwick Hall, a place my family visited regularly when I was a child. Its imaginative place in my mind comes from both aspects of its heritage and their curious juxtaposition.

In my childhood in the 1970s, my father was a collier, one of generations of miners in my family, and my mother was a dinner lady, to fit in with school for my brother and myself. Previously she had held a position in a textile mill, as a quality controller – a prestigious role which she left behind for marriage, a common experience for women in the area. Both were highly intelligent people (as were many of their peer group) who, through dint of poor or truncated school education and external social and economic pressures, had not achieved academic success whilst of school age. My father was born in 1937 and my mother in 1942. Therefore, both had been at school after the watershed 1944 Education Act which created an education system which was free for all children and raised the school leaving age to 15. Despite this, both of my parents left school at 14.

According to Bourdieu's theory of field, in *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* in 1984, it is not especially surprising that my parents left school so early and without particular academic success. Bourdieu defined field as the complex cultural and social interplay between the various social and institutional arenas in which people express and reproduce their predispositions and their cultural learning. This includes the sphere of education, where the social, cultural, economic and individual intersect. In his definition each field operates with its own set of rules of access**.** It **i**s a battleground, a highly competitive market where the resources we have are invested in order to secure certain advantages.

My mother and father were not endowed with economic or social resources which may have enabled them to secure certain advantages, such as passing the Eleven Plus and entering grammar school. Their circumstances, post-war, were not auspicious. Both, as the children of miners, grew up in poor social housing. My grandfather was a self-taught, intellectually-gifted Welsh miner who had come to North East Derbyshire for work. He engaged in learning through a deep love of literature, through reading groups in South Wales and the Left Book Club. Consequently, my father was encouraged to read widely and my grandfather had

collected a diverse library. Nevertheless, my father followed my grandfather down the pit at 15.

The North East Midlands coalfields was an area where the trade unions were strong and day release provision offered by the National Union of Mineworkers, in conjunction with the University of Sheffield (and the Universities of Nottingham and Leeds), enabled engaged and intelligent men to seek to further their education. The day release scheme was initiated in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire in 1953 (Grayson) by Bert Wynn[1], the Trade Unionist, Communist, and later Labour Party politician who was Secretary for the Derbyshire Area of the National Union of Mineworkers from the late-1940s up to his death in 1966. My father's 'second chance' came as a result of adult education, when he was in his early 30s. Through the day release scheme, he won a two-year scholarship to study to become a Social Worker at Ruskin College, Oxford.

By the 1960s it had become clear that, despite the important changes brought about by the 1944 Education Act and whilst there were now more educational opportunities for the working class than there had been in 1945, there were still many talented individuals branded second-rate and left behind. Escaping one's field, and experiencing 'social flying', remained stubbornly out of reach for many people. Many, like Raymond Williams and contemporaries such as Richard Hoggart, who had worked in adult education for ten to twenty years, were becoming disillusioned by adult education bound by class contingencies by the early 1960s. What they had perceived post-war in adult education – as offering a radical space and a challenge to the orthodox educational system which focused on the individual – was beginning to seem inadequate to the task of social change and was emerging as part of a wider orthodoxy. In *The Long Revolution*, Williams gave voice to some of these frustrations, arguing that insufficient attention was being paid to the needs of members of "an educated and participating democracy" (Williams, 1961, p. 178). It is worth quoting in full:

[1] Bert Wynn, 1901 – 22 February 1966, was a British trade unionist and politician who, unhappy with Ramsay MacDonald's polices, left the Labour Party in 1929 and joined the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). He chaired the CPGB's Chesterfield area and East Midlands district until he became disillusioned with the CPGB in 1956, following the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and rejoined the Labour Party. He won election to the Derbyshire Miner's Association (DMA) executive in 1942, and in 1947 he became general secretary of the re-formed Derbyshire Area of the National Union of Mineworkers.

> We can only change this way if we get rid of conscious or unconscious class thinking and begin thinking of educational organisation in terms of keeping the learning process going for as long as possible in every life. Instead of the sorting and grading process, natural to a class society, we should regard human learning in a genuinely open way, as the most valuable real resource we have, and therefore as something which we should have to produce a special argument to limit rather than a special argument to extend (Williams, 1961, pp.177-178).

Williams was arguing for ongoing human learning in every life, as the most valuable resource available to us. For my father a day release programme from the mine proved life-changing. When he attended Ruskin (1973-1975) he became part of a period when reclaiming history 'from below', giving voice to the non-elite and the marginalised, was at the forefront of educational thinking, with the growth of the oral history movement, Community History groups and political activism, such as the Women's Liberation Movement. Amongst others, my father was taught by the Marxist historian Raphael Samuel who began the History Workshops in the 1960s with the express intention of democratising history.

Ruskin College itself was founded in 1899, with a view to providing educational opportunities for working class men; as the Oxford and Working Class Education Report (1908) reported, "to give working men, and especially those likely to take a leading part in the Working-class Movement, an education which will help them in acquiring the knowledge essential to intelligent citizenship" (University Joint Committee, 1908, p.8).

Samuel wrote some time later, in the 1980s, about the intensity and tensions inherent within the Ruskin experience, in a letter to the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*. He highlighted the passions it evoked in its students, the turmoil of students leaving their homes and the certainties of family, friends and long-held personal attitudes, to live communally and to be faced with constant scrutiny and challenge to their beliefs. He highlighted, in particular, the individualising tendencies of "liberal educational-values" coming into contact with "matters of basic belief":

> Ruskin, as befits the College of Jude the Obscure – the title given to it by Thomas Hardy in the 1912 Preface to his novel – is a place where passions run deep... Ruskin is a small college and a residential one, an artificial community in which the individual is peculiarly exposed to others. It abstracts its students from the cocoon of domesticity. It sets up strains within the family; it propels its students

> into an intensely communal life... The pedagogic principles of the college – those of a liberal education – also exposes the students to strain...ideologically, the students often feel under attack. They are told to be 'objective' on matters of basic belief. They are asked to see 'all sides of the question' where they were used to taking a stand. Ruskin, in short, changes people, and gives them a new, if precarious, individuality. It is college belief that the experience is a growing one, and that the tensions between liberal educational-values and labour loyalties is creative...(Samuel, 24th October, 1986).

My father's experience at Ruskin was, in the ways Samuel described, transformational – in the sense of encouraging profound personal change at the level of the self, for the self. It not only represented vocational learning for a new workplace but forced reflection on all matters of "basic belief". His acceptance at Ruskin was both a deep source of pride and conferred on him a sense of being an impostor in both worlds. Returning to his home, friends and family as a changed man, and with a new career and a wealth of new experiences and insights, was akin to the deep learning, the liminality and even cognitive dissonance that occurs after the shock of a major life event such as bereavement, divorce, ill health, or unexpected job changes. It helped both define a new sense of identity and a limbo state which those who have left their former lives behind only to return to them later can experience, a sense of belonging neither to one's original group or community nor to the academic community which one was part of for a period.

Jack Mezirow (1997), a sociologist and adult educator, acknowledged as the founder of the theory of transformative learning, described this kind of learning as a sudden recalibration of the individual's 'meaning perspectives', or overall worldview – a paradigm shift in thinking – which can be seismic in its impact, creating much more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, as it impacts on all the learner's subsequent experiences. Central to Mezirow's theory is the role of critical reflection. In this, as with the central argument in Raymond Williams' work, *Keywords* (1976) and Bourdieu's idea of doxa, which he described as the "many things people accept without knowing it" (Bourdieu, 1992, p.118), it is a means by which we can challenge the unstated, taken-for-granted assumptions or 'common sense' behind the distinctions we make. Doxa happens when we accept the limits placed on us by society, and its unequal divisions, and allow our wings to be clipped by the received societal order that has given rise to unequal divisions in society: it is, according to Bourdieu, "an

adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471).

This ability to recognise the world around us is what creates deep learning's emancipatory dimension, which suggests that everyone possesses the potential to break free from their personal situation and to transform their own life. To be truly emancipatory, this process requires an increased awareness of one's current life conditions and what limits one's opportunities, as well as offering a challenge to self-limiting beliefs. Education may miss the mark the first time around. The 'second chance' may occur when we are ready for it, when we can look around us with clarity and awareness, feeling both safe to explore and stimulated enough to act, at a world not obscured by the twin shadows of poor confidence and a sense of social, cultural or economic unworthiness.

Michael Newman asserted that transformational learning, at any age, is both "an intellectual and an affective phenomenon" (Newman, 2006, AAACE Conference[2]). He went on to say that it is intellectual in the sense of a sudden realisation or a "falling into place of things" but that insight is also an affective experience. He described it as "a sudden elation, flowing into satisfaction, or a sudden horror flowing into resignation or resistance…It is a moment when we speak with the gods" (ibid). He argued that, whilst insight and transformation cannot be taught, we can create the right conditions that might encourage it. He suggested:

> We can use literature….. We can use metaphor analysis…and the other tools of the transformative educator. We can use dialogic forms of enquiry…We can use games and role-play… All of these create 'climates' in which people may experience insight, in which they may suddenly understand some significant element of their world intuitively, spontaneously, even mystically (ibid).

Crucially, his point is that we can help people to learn to reason and understand, to challenge and critique their world on three levels, using the tools of adult education:

> in our objective world made up of tangible and physical phenomena, our social world made up of relationships, organisations and collective experience, and our subjective world made up of values, assumptions, prejudices, predilections and ideologies (ibid).

[2] Based on an address to the Commission of Professors of Adult Education, AAACE Conference, Milwaukee, November 2006. The article is a commentary on his 2006 book, *Teaching Defiance: Stories and Strategies for Activist Educators*, San Francisco; Jossey-Bass

By so doing we can learn to act on the world and through critical thinking we can question the effects of our actions and also their inherent morality. For Newman, storytelling is the best way of achieving this: "by telling stories we can build up a stock of experience, both personal and vicarious, upon which we and our learners can draw when confronted by moral challenges in the future". Stories allow space for strong emotions. They do not seek academic balance and objectivity but stir and challenge us.

My parents were unstinting in their support for my own academic development. They wanted me to excel at school and gave me time to read, to think and to question. I also had the support, stimulus and example of my grandfather, who conferred his love of literature on me. Both my father and my paternal grandfather represented a world of possibility to me, a melting pot of ideas, concepts and alternative ways of being, both lived and imagined. They became part of my own story. My father 'escaped' the pit on his entry to Ruskin College, but he carried a sense of the strength conferred on him by his own background, passing on to me a passion for lifelong learning and an optimistic belief in my own capacity to be what I wanted to be, through the power of education. This point about my own background as offering strength and a source of pride is an important one, which I will consider in more depth in relation to culture in Chapter Three.

Here, however, it feels important to state that if we accept one of Bourdieu's central tenets, that working class culture is necessarily less legitimated than middle class culture, in which peoples' "tastes, knowledges and dispositions are coded as *inherently* 'tasteful', *inherently* knowledgeable, *inherently* 'right'" (Lawler, 2008, p. 128), then my father's experience makes little sense. Bourdieu argued that the possession of "highbrow" culture is "unequally distributed according to social class and education" (Tzanakis, 2011, p.77), conferring distinction and privilege on those who possess and deploy it and that "along with economic, social and human capitals, such cultural capital actively reproduces social inequalities" (as above). Bourdieu was not arguing that working class culture is in itself less valid but that it does not translate to symbolic capital – expressed by Lawler as "the prestige or recognition which various capitals acquire by virtue of *being* recognised" (Lawler, 2011, p.128). I am arguing against this position, which assumes that all working class culture is deficient in the eyes of a dominant culture and that calling class out is a means of exposing the "hidden

injuries"[3] (quoted in Lawler, 2008, p.128, Sennett and Cobb, 1977) it imposes. As John Field has described it, Bourdieu's position suggested that "the poor and working class are defined by their lack of capital, whether social or of some other kind" (Field, 2005, p.21). The working class culture from which my father emerged, the associations of family and of work, of community, of shared reading, of music, of a love of the countryside, beauty and art, transcended such a class-bound, deficit understanding of capital. Raymond Williams expressed this feeling in reaction to going to Cambridge University. Instead of being afraid of it, he found himself proud of the "knowable community" from which he came. As Stuart Hall described Williams' perspective on Cambridge and his own origins:

> Though subordinated to and displaced in its peripheral relationship to the dominant English culture, and with the culture of the educated, metropolitan, upper middle classes, this other 'knowable community' provided him with certain cultural resources, which enabled him to live and feel, and later to write and think, according to a different grain from that of 'Cambridge' (Hall, 1993, p.350).

Williams was unimpressed with the symbols of taste he saw around him and the loud proclamations of "sensibility" in those from ostensibly higher classes, which he saw as markers of a kind of coarseness and not as a source of envy. He described it thus:

> The class which has dominated Cambridge is given to describing itself as well-mannered and polite, sensitive. It continually contrasts itself favourably with the rougher and coarser others. When it turns to the arts it congratulates itself overtly on its taste and its sensibility; speaks of its poise and tone. If I then say that what I found was an extraordinarily coarse, pushing, name-ridden group, I shall be told I am showing class-feeling, class envy, class resentment. That I showed class feeling is not in any doubt. All I would insist on is that nobody fortunate enough to grow up in a good home in a genuinely well-mannered and sensitive community, could for a moment envy these loud, competitive, deprived people (Williams, 1989, p.6).

Education for Williams was a lifelong learning process, for everyone, and, returning to his quotation cited earlier, a riposte to the restrictions and hierarchies of a class-bound society, which should be extended as a right, rather than delimited.

My own open and stimulating background, the literature to which I was exposed and the continued academic support I received within the family enabled me to gain a place at Cambridge University to study English Literature, the first person from my school to be

accepted there. The example of my parents and grandparents was at least as important in my achieving a place as my formal schooling. My father's acceptance at Ruskin, in particular, and then his decision to come back to his own community a transformed individual, was a source of inspiration. It became part of my own story.

The working class emancipatory routes into adult education which my father experienced no longer exist in the area in which I grew up. The limited adult education classes available locally – usually for arts and crafts-based activities – cost £11 a session and, consequently, become the domain of comfortably-retired people and those not living on a limited budget. This does not go without comment and many people from my home town who I have spoken to about my research have lamented the loss of affordable adult education in a whole range of subjects. We are seeing a return to the "sorting and grading process, natural to a class society" (Williams, 1961, pp.177, 178) which Williams derided, as participation in life-long learning is now largely commercially-driven and culturally freighted. My home town is now a community of two halves and an increasing gentrification has seen people with scant historical connection relocating there. A consequence is that those who are financially comfortable engage in the arts-based classes, become part of the parish council, volunteer for the church or the castle, join the Rotary club or golf club and become part of the newly-established social order. In this sense, Field has described how social capital – the networks, communities and ties that locate and bind us – can become "a positional asset that people can use to pursue their own advantage and consolidate their own position" (Field, 2005, p.28).

I believe that this shift in the balance of the adult education offer in my home town is a microcosm of the impact at national level of sustained ideological and policy-based change, coupled with an ageing demographic. What we have witnessed over the past 30 years is the breakup of social and educational traditions, particularly in working class areas like Bolsover, as a result of seismic economic change. This change has brought with it a receding state and a focus of attention on the individual which runs counter to the rich associational life and culture of the working class, of which emancipatory adult education – at its most challenging best – was such an important part.

I am minded of a quote from a Report into Adult Education in the early part of the twentieth century, *The Guildhouse: A Co-operative Centre for Adult Education* (1924), laying out the

terms for co-operative centres for adult education across the UK, which identified that, for some, adult education is bound up with personal motives but "in perhaps the greater majority of cases the dynamic character of adult education is due to its social motive" (British Institute of Adult Education, 1924, p.28). Adult education, the report argued, made good deficiencies in elementary education, particularly after the Industrial Revolution, and was a "particular movement with a history and ideals of its own" (p.31). The report suggested that adult education emanated from "the spontaneous initiative of ordinary men and women" (p.11), stimulating in them "the desire and the power to help in changing the order of things" (p.15). By contrast, the approach to adult education adopted by Callaghan's Labour government of the mid 1970's, Thatcher's and Major's Conservative administrations after 1979 and subsequent Labour, Coalition and Conservative governments, has focused on individualism and a business – rather than a social – ethic. Weiner explored the Conservative approach in an article in 1997, articulating the emphasis on "entitlement" as a skewed version of social justice, the focus on the agency and "aspirations" of the individual, with failure or success attributable to the individual alone.

> The Conservative government retained its own particular interpretation of concepts of equality of opportunity and social justice; which were recast as 'entitlement' and promoted rhetorically through support for individualism and entrepreneurism. Thus, the capacity to survive and succeed in the turbulence of the market and the aspirations of the individual were superimposed over post-war welfarism and equality initiatives systematically targeted at identifiable social groups and communities (Weiner, 1997, accessed 5/8/16).

In exploring where I stand in relation to my research, or my position, I openly acknowledge the potential strengths and weaknesses I bring to the project. I recognise that my own background has created a particular interest in class issues, how some cultures are perceived as being more important than others and also a deep and abiding belief in economic and political social justice achieved through education. I also, however, share with George Trevelyan a conviction that literature and language are vital tools in bringing together the spirit, the mind and the body, as a means of learning from others' stories and creating our own. The next chapter, on methodology, explores the importance of oral history as a means of accessing those stories in the context of the staff, students and tutors from the Shropshire Adult Education College and of their contribution to our collective understanding of the power of education.

Chapter Two – Methodology - Life Story versus Life History

> Life story individualises and personalises, the life history contextualises and politicizes (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p. 87-88).

My own story and positionality have influenced my research methodology significantly. However, I do not wish to ascribe my interest in narrative to an approach which individualises and psychologises the human story and takes it out of its social and economic context as these elements are all important in a study of an adult education college. As Lawler states, "a focus on narrative challenges the concept of the atomized individual and replaces it with a concept of a person enmeshed in – and produced within – webs of social relations" (Lawler, 2008, p. 19). What I am attempting is to utilise the best of the auto/biographical approach which "acknowledges the presence of the researcher or biographer in chronicling and telling stories of others' lives, of how the biographer draws on others' lives to make sense of his or her own life and vice versa" (West, 2016, p.4). I have sought in my methodology to combine this approach with a focus on thinkers and literature which have helped me to do this.

As the playwright Arthur Miller argued in his analysis of tragedy, *Tragedy and the Common Man* (1949), the human condition should not be conceived either purely psychologically, with an emphasis on the individual, or sociologically – focusing on context and social relations. Miller was talking specifically about tragedy but his broader point, about evincing "the heart and spirit of the average man" (Miller, accessed 26/6/2016) is one that is highly relevant here as that has motivated much of my own research and thinking. My grandfather could have been described as an 'average man', as could my father, but in my life they were anything but, creating pathways to learning for me and important role models.

Raymond Williams takes Miller's point further. In his work, *Modern Tragedy*, Williams argues against a concept of tragedy which was based on Aristotelian principles – which focuses on the heroic individual ('the kings or king'). He argues that it tends to place too great an emphasis on the individual flaw rather than on the social situation, decoupling the individual from the social order and its impact on his/her life and focusing on private fate. Mental or physical illness, for instance, becomes a case in point, where to become ill is suggestive of

personal failing or weakness and is disconnected from the social circumstances which may help create it.

In a broader sense, the individualisation of the human experience and a growing emphasis on smaller-scale life narratives have seen a dramatic rise in the last century and into the 21st century in Western society. Bauwens described this process as a result of post-modernity, which allows on the one hand for a critique of our political and social structures, but, on the other, can leave us fragmented:

> Post-modernity, seen as a critique of neoliberal capitalist structures, sees the individual as increasingly fragmented, and it has developed a strong critique of all the forces that have shown us that we are not nearly as autonomous as we think, including language and power. But this process has also left us stranded as fragmented individuals without much sense of a direction, forever deconstructing realities but rarely reconstructing them with much success (Bauwens, 2013, no pagination).

As Ivor Goodson stated, in *The Rise of the Life Narrative* (2006), our increasing fragmentation marks a shift away from the "grand narratives" which defined the 20th century – those public debates in which large numbers of people were engaged – about religion and science, political ideology, freedom of trade, the nature and possibility of a well-ordered society. The impact of two World Wars, with the deaths and repression of millions of people and the use of technological and material advances to wage warfare and perpetrate mass slaughter, left many people unable to see a meaningful connection between material and scientific progress and a better moral order. As Goodson argued, this prefigured a fall from grace of the grand narratives, causing us to lose "not only scope and aspiration but also our underpinning faith in their general capacity to guide or shape our destiny" (Goodson, 2006, p.8). Goodson argued that this left space for a rise in life story narratives, presaging "the age of small narratives" (p.9), which leaves us less able and therefore, arguably, less willing to tackle the big issues of collective action and focuses on the small-scale, the narrowly-defined and potentially the less expansive and imaginative.

> Into the vortex left after the collapse of the grand narratives we see the emergence of another kind of narrative, infinitely smaller in scope, often individualised - the personal life story. It reflects a dramatic change in the scale of human belief and aspiration. Alongside these small narratives we also see a return to older, more fundamentalist precepts (Goodson, 2006, p.8).

He went on to say: “In our current individualized society, our art, culture and politics increasingly reflect a move to highly-individualized or special-interest narratives, which often draw on the literature of therapy and personal and self-development” (p.9).

Goodson suggested that once the link between individual storylines and collective aspirations for political engagement is broken, we enter the epoch of small narratives, the world of individualised ‘life politics’, of “discourse analysis and deconstruction” (Goodson, 2003, p.7). We become fragmented and easily isolated as the objects of self-help and therapy, experiencing a kind of cultural encirclement and estranged from other interest groups, atomised and rendered responsible for our own subordination, our own potential isolation and loneliness. Once we become socially isolated, decoupled from our collective understanding of ourselves, from our class, from our families, our attitudes, dispositions and tastes can become pathologised and our sense of failure becomes individualised. The sociologist Steph Lawler described this process in terms of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, which is how Bourdieu defined the concept of the socialised norms or tendencies, the lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities that guide our behaviour and thinking. Lawler argued that habitus are profoundly social and hierarchical and “carry the traces of the lines of division and distinction along which the social is organised” (Lawler, 2008, p.131). Lawler suggested that not all habitus are created equal, that they are relational – “some are normalized, while others are pathological” (ibid), meaning that, without a collective identity, the individual can be judged as lacking if they do not possess the ‘right kind’ of habitus. Richard Desjardins and Kjell Rubenson (2009), two contemporary educationalists who have written extensively on adult education and lifelong learning, have developed this concept in the theory of bounded agency. They argue that the broader structural and cultural conditions in which an individual has been raised - specifically the institutional and labour market settings and the social support available - are as important in shaping his/her response to education and future life chances and opportunities as dispositional factors, internalized conceptual frameworks or personal agency. In other words, as Karen Evans has expressed it, bounded agency requires a “re-conceptualisation of agency as a process in which past habits and routines are contextualised and future possibilities envisaged within the contingencies of the present moment” (Evans, 2007, p.86). In this sense their contemporary theory links closely with Bourdieu’s concept of habitus.

In an earlier article, Goodson attributed the loss of collective identity, the atomisation of interests and groups, to the passing of the "egalitarian project" of the post-war years, which he argued provided an "over-arching social movement" (Goodson, 2003, p.7) under the aegis of which those committed to humanistic egalitarianism worked collectively to reconstruct a world in which they wanted to live. Whilst those associated with this movement are still alive, Goodson suggested that that the "collective memory of that struggle still provides resources for hope" (p.7).

"Resources for a Journey of Hope" was Raymond Williams' description of the communal means by which we seek emancipation in the last chapter of *Towards 2000* (1983). Such resources, he argued, offered a potential counter to "Plan X", which was how he described the neoliberal agenda, that theory which proposes that human advancement is best achieved by "liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey, 2007, p.2, quoted in Holford, 2016, p.544). He characterised neoliberalism as indifferent to informed argument and logic, resolutely shallow, and self-perpetuating. He conceived it as a profoundly pessimistic hall of mirrors, a world of appearances, in which Public Relations takes precedence over any substance, describing its acolytes thus:

> 'Plan X' people resemble the hardest kinds of revolutionary, who drive through at any cost to their perceived objectives, but the difference of Plan X from revolution is that no transformed society, no new order, no lasting liberation seriously enters these new calculations, though their rhetoric may be retained (Williams, 1983, p.152).

This latter point is of particular interest in the context of this thesis, which is why close narrative analysis and an exploration of language and rhetoric are central to my methodology.

Linden West, in his recent book, *Distress in the City* (2016), described "the intimately personal" as being "deeply political and potentially democratic" (West, 2016, p.9). He cited the importance of adult education in reconnecting the intimately personal with the social and the genuinely egalitarian, arguing that it is a space for 'resources of hope': "Adult education once offered resources of hope in creating democratic learning and more cosmopolitan psyches, and could again" (West, 2016, p.17).

Goodson chose to emphasise the importance of society and our situated context – socially, culturally and economically, over a celebration of the idiosyncrasies of the individual. He distinguished between *life history* and *life story*, with the researcher and the 'story teller' working "collaboratively to produce the inter-textual and inter-contextual account" (page ref) through life history. He argued that:

> In studying learning, like any social practice, we need to build in an understanding of the context, historical and social, in which that learning takes place (Goodson, 2005, p.19).

Whilst a focus on social history became dominant and important in the 1960s and 1970s, consistent with a growing focus on 'history from below', oral history and a neo-Marxist strand of thinking and interpretation, the growing focus on individual identity, special interest groups and identity plurality in the 1980s and 1990s have encouraged a move away from wider societal narratives, or 'grand themes'. Goodson's approach both critiques and challenges this cultural relativism and allows for a recoupling of the social and the personal. He achieved this through a narrative analysis methodology, which I will explore in the next section, which Goodman referred to as "bathing in data"– a state of complete immersion, without judgement, in the material from which key themes and strands emerge: "I adopt a process of immersion, or what I call 'bathing in the data'. I read and re-read the transcripts noting emergent and then recurrent themes; organising the quotes into clusters" (Goodson, 2008, p.4).

Being a 'Backward Traveller' – Applying the Theory - Research Methodology and Ethics

> One man, alone, singing a song, still feels his emotion stirred by collective images. He is already exhibiting that paradox of art – man withdrawing from his fellows into the world of art, only to enter more closely into communion with humanity (Cauldwell, 1937/1977, p.36).

My research methodology built on my thinking about life history, utilising oral and life history approaches which run counter to the positivist notion that objective knowledge is somehow 'out there', waiting to be discovered, but instead recognised that the act of memory and

storytelling is a process of construction and interpretation**.** It is an act of collectivism**,** recalling memories in solitude, or in one-to-one dialogue, built on communion and community.

This constructivist approach was very important as my interview subjects - former staff, students and tutors of the SAEC - were recollecting experiences from 40 to 60 years ago, which often had a deep emotional resonance for them and represented a significant and transformational time in their lives. Their recollections were also seen through the veil of memory, and this level of complexity also informed my research approach and helped me to establish the key themes I addressed.

> An individual's story is narrated through memory. This means that their recollection of their experiences, and how they give meaning to those experiences, is about more than "accuracy;" it is also a process of *remembering*—as they remember, they filter and interpret (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006, p.156).

As Hesse-Biber and Leavy expressed it, the process of remembering requires us to filter and interpret our experiences – the stories we tell cannot be regarded as simply neutral, 'natural' and unmediated or a kind of simple truth. Our stories are not always liberating in themselves – sometimes they constrain us, bounded as we are by the "powerful discourses of a culture and unconscious processes of wanting to appease or please" (West, 2016, p. 35). This applies too to the role of the researcher. We are constructed as much by our own experience, as researchers, as the people we are interviewing. At best, we work collaboratively and interactively, as interviewer and interviewee, to produce an account, which is shaped by our twin experiences of history and identity:

> The interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by one's personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting (Denzin, and Lincoln, 2005, p.5).

Researcher reflexivity, in the sense of being aware of my own impact on the process and outcomes of the research project, has been key to my approach as an interviewer, alongside a determination to do justice to the complexities of the stories people tell through my own imagination and capacity for empathy and awareness. Bruce Macfarlane (2010) described a process of 'researching with integrity', his focus being on understanding the importance of the character, the 'virtues', of the researcher rather than on pre-defined ethical research systems and processes. His argument is that 'real' research is about the stuff of human life – with all that that entails of hope and disappointment, loyalty and betrayal, triumph and

tragedy – and that it cannot be formulaic, but must be responsive, reflexive and the result of a co-production between the researcher and the interviewee.

> Crucially, virtue theory provides a way of connecting research ethics with one's own lived experience as a researcher. Virtue theory provides no formulas or step-by-step recipes. It brings responsibility down to the level of each individual researcher and demands an authentic, rather than formulaic, consideration of research ethics (Macfarlane, 2010, p.4).

This is pertinent in this thesis, which uses oral history as its principal approach, in which the human story is paramount. George Ewart Evans, the oral historian, who has been a significant influence on my thinking and methodology, described oral history thus:

> A move into the past gets the best start from the sure ground of known and *felt* facts about one's own immediate environment, and the main task, and probably the most difficult one, is to help the 'backward traveller' not so much *know* the past as *feel* it'. ...For history is not the mechanical acquisition of knowledge about the past: it is more than anything else the imaginative reconstruction of it (Evans, 1956, p.16).

Evans explores two means of gaining access to the past – travelling inwardly or *feeling* the past rather than just *knowing* it, from 'one's own immediate environment', and the process of engaging in imaginative or narrative reconstruction. I have also been helped in my thinking in this area by the work of Linden West, who described the ways in which people make, and are not just made by, history and has used narrative as a means of engaging the "psychosocial, historical and educational imagination" (West, 2016, p.37).

Narrative is important, Arthur P. Bochner, the communication theorist, suggests, as a counter to a scientific rationalism and abstraction which looks for generalizable laws and a syntax for governing our actions:

> We are not scientists seeking laws that govern our behaviour; we are storytellers seeking meanings that help us cope with our circumstances. Personal narratives are not so much academic as they are existential, reflecting our desire to grasp or seize the possibilities of meaning, which is what gives life its imaginative and poetic qualities (Bochner, 2001 pg. 154).

Bochner argues that narrative connects the Social Sciences to Literature and to History, the process of imagining and reconstructing the past to give meaning to the present - life's "imaginative and poetic qualities" - and to better understand ourselves, individually and

collectively. As stated previously, my own background in Literature has also informed the writing approach for my thesis.

For the reasons identified above, and as a response to the diverse interpretations and theoretical analyses of adult education, I am taking the approach of a *bricoleuse*; that is, I am processing and constructing a position collected from a spectrum of influences, an "interdisciplinary theoretical repertoire" (West, 2016, p.36), from across a range of disciplines and social and cultural sources.
This positioning allows for acknowledgement of the importance of the interior world of the individual and recognizes that research is co-produced, with the researcher and research subject forming a negotiated meaning. It also proposes that research is formulated through the researcher's own particular lens, that reality is socially constructed and multiple in nature, that the researcher is not acting as a neutral external observer commenting on generalizable laws but that theoretical insight is constructed on an emergent, inductive basis, rather than working from an initial hypothesis.

This positioning also reflects my guidance by Raymond Williams' work, my key intellectual stimulus, as one of the originators of Cultural Studies, which argued for inter-disciplinarity between history, art and literature and the social sciences. Adult Education was the important crucible in which this interdisciplinary approach was formed - a subject I will return to in Chapter Three – as a means of "contributing to the process of social change itself" (Steele, 1997, p.15).

Sources and Methods

The experience of working as part of a collaborative studentship under the Arts and Humanities Research Council, a partnership between the University of Nottingham and the National Trust at Attingham Park, has been both rewarding and immersive. It has also required a degree of sensitivity and flexibility in terms of managing time allocation, relationships and expectations. The support from the National Trust team at Attingham throughout the research phase was very generous, allowing for frequent stays at Attingham

Hall and support from a range of staff, including the Project Curator, the Engagement and Conservation Officer and the Volunteer and Community Involvement Manager, who provided access to the Archives, to NT protocols and systems, and to willing volunteers who helped to examine specific elements of the collection. During the course of the research, new partners emerged who had an interest in the project – the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, who lead on University-public relationship building for the UK; the Raymond Williams Foundation – who promote the work of Raymond Williams, and the Wrekin Trust, the organisation set up by Trevelyan to foster interest in spiritual education. Partnership working has been central to the project.

Archive material and data from the College are rich and diverse and part of my initial role was to work through this material and archive it, in conjunction with the National Trust and Shropshire Archives, where it now resides, following careful archiving and analysis. The collection encompassed Curatorial correspondence files (Attingham) which included a 'live' file on the SAEC with all recent correspondence and contact details of people linked to the College or previously involved. It also included written testimonies about the College, both recent and historical. The National Trust at Attingham also holds a library of sound recordings related to the SAEC, dating back to 1986, 1988, 2000 and 2001. An interview had taken place with Sir George Trevelyan, at his home in Hawkesbury, by Geoffrey Beard, circa 1988. Other interviewees included Catriona Tyson (interviewed in 2001 by Sarah Kay and Brenda Hough, who was a volunteer archivist for the College materials at this point), Geoffrey Toms (interviewed by Sarah Kay and Brenda Hough on the 29th June, 2000), Mike Threadgold (interviewed in September 1986 by Edward Payne), Mrs Carole Bowdler, who described herself as a 'jack of all trades', responsible for laundry work and some cooking, who worked at the College in the 1960s (interviewed in 2002 by Brenda Hough and John Ecclestone) and Mrs Veronica Jones, a cook during the 1960s (interviewed in 2002, by Brenda Hough and John Ecclestone). I was able to interview Geoffrey Toms, Catriona Tyson and Mike Threadgold again.

The wider College collection encompasses newspaper articles, photographs and 3 'scrapbooks' which Catriona Tyson donated, and additional albums of programmes and photographs. The scrapbooks - and particularly the earliest scrapbook which covers the start of the College from 1948 to the end of the 1950s - proved to be a remarkable resource,

featuring photographs of students, tutors, speakers, specific activities and courses, newspaper articles and course programmes. They offered an invaluable insight into the early years of the evolution of the college.

Figure 2.1 Scrapbook page – Children's Needs course, 1948

The College collection also features a substantial file of Course programmes (Attingham) which include details of subjects and lecturers in quarterly course programmes from the entire 27 year period of the college, and two Visitors' books covering a 10 year period from 1948-58, which outline the course attenders, their names, addresses and profession, and therefore offer invaluable demographic data, which I have outlined in Chapters Five and Six.

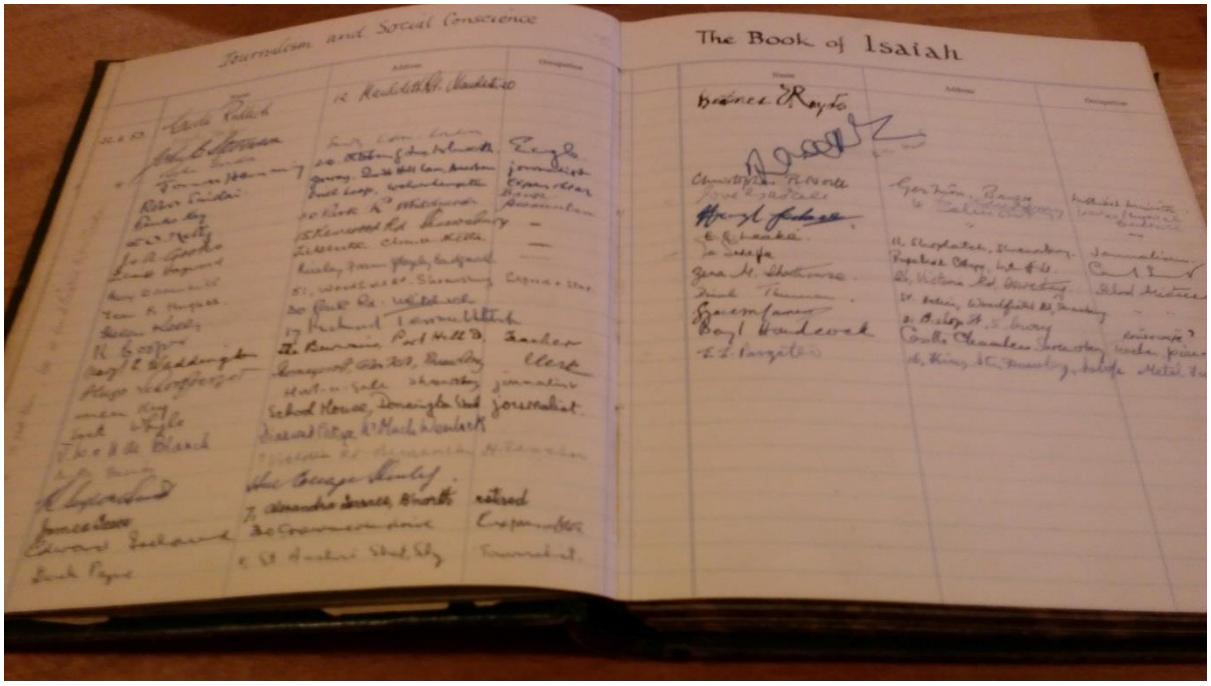


Figure 2.2 Visitors Book – Journalism and Social Conscience/The Book of Isaiah – April 1953

Correspondence files go back to 1950 and cover the College, its administration, relationships between the National Trust and Lady Berwick (the last of the Berwick family to live at Attingham Park), and letters between the 8th Lord Berwick – her husband – his agent, the County Council, Education Authorities and others (covering, for example, Attingham's future, the national crisis of large country houses/estates, and general post-war social and political concerns). The Shropshire Archives hold various post-1920 papers, including a complete set of papers for the College Board of Governors, dating from as early as the 12th August 1944 when the formation of the College was mooted and trustees from the Walker Trust – an important educational grants body in Shropshire – had decided to set up a Provisional Governing Body for the proposed new Adult Education College and Community House. This was to consist of five trustees from the Walker Trust, three Education Committee members and the Birmingham University Extra Mural Department. Minutes for the Board of Governors meetings each feature a report from the Warden. This resource, in particular, has provided an acute insight into the thinking behind the course development, has helped me to understand the tensions and difficulties of managing a college and has created a gateway to exploring the relationships between staff, particularly in connection with the key roles – those of Warden, Deputy Warden, Domestic Bursar and Secretary.

Within the College collection are writings by George Trevelyan, on many subjects, including his views on the College and its intentions, and detailed lecture notes on courses such as *Meditation*. This material has been further complemented by a series of on-line sources, including websites dedicated to him in his capacity as a leading exponent of New Age thinking. More recently, Ruth Nesfield-Cookson loaned me a complete set of course programmes and outlines for the 'esoteric' or spiritual courses, giving insight into their evolution, which I still currently hold.

Research Methodology

The Interviews

I undertook 34 new oral history interviews with former staff, students and tutors on a semi-structured basis. During the interview process, many of the interviewees passed on additional information – letters about the college, course programmes for specific courses (such as music and also photography), photographs and written memoirs. I ensured that this material was logged, catalogued and stored, with the permission of the interviewees. As part of my research process and design, I also sought written testimony, with the support of staff at Attingham Park. As a result of their promotion of the research project, as well as my own efforts in newspaper articles and radio interviews, I received a considerable amount of written testimony from people who had heard about the College project. Some passed on their recollections through the Memories and Connections forms which staff at Attingham Park handed out to all visitors. Others sent in letters or emailed me with their memories. All of these recollections/memories were typed and collated and contributed to the overall thematic analysis.

As stated, my intention in using oral history was to create a guide for a contemporary audience through the relevance of the SAEC to current thinking on adult education by tracing the impact of the College on the lives of the people who experienced it at the time. This involved a process of 'imaginative reconstruction', or 'narrative imagination', which connects with Martha Nussbaum's definition of the process of successfully reading another person's story. Adult education under George Trevelyan was, by all accounts, a deeply transformative

experience, creating a profound and compassionate connection with other people, of all types. This is sensitively articulated by Nussbaum, who has tried to unpick and explore how we best engender the capacity to discriminate and to think critically and empathically across boundaries of distinction and difference, in contemporary society, and at a range of levels. She described this capability as the 'narrative imagination', or 'the ability to be an intelligent reader of another person's story' (Nussbaum, 1997, p.3).

Interviews offer a unique opportunity to look at history from the personal perspectives of the people who lived it as well as placing them in a social context, as with Goodson's life narrative approach, or the forging of life histories. In this sense, there is a political act inherent in oral history making, allowing for wider participation in the production of history and the dissolution of institutional barriers. Oral history, therefore, allows for:

> Shifting the focus and opening new areas of inquiry... by bringing recognition to substantial groups of people who had been ignored…breaking down boundaries between the educational institution and the outside world (Thompson, 2000/1978, p. 8 - 9).

I closely considered three forms of qualitative research methodology in the development of my methodology for interviewing purposes: specifically oral history, life history and thematic narrative analysis, which I will examine in turn, drawing out the lessons for my own research methodology.

Oral history

Oral history has an emphasis on history-congruent subjects, which my study of the SAEC certainly constitutes. Since its inception as a specific approach to recording history in the 1950s and 1960s, oral history has been focused on reclaiming the past , a 'history from below' ethos, giving voice to the dispossessed and oppressed, the historically silent, offering people previously unrecorded a place in history. As stated in the section on Sources, the archive materials from the SAEC span testimony from gardeners, laundry workers, cooks and students experiencing their first taste of educational eclecticism and discovery. At its best, oral history has a political or social critique objective. At its worst, it has not examined interviewer/interviewee positionality and power relations and has relayed collected

testimony as 'natural' and unmediated, with the danger of falling into a Rousseauesque sentimentality which assumes 'ordinary' people are instinctively in possession of the truth. This position fails to acknowledge that "although it may be 'natural', telling and writing stories is invariably situated and strategic, taking place in institutional and cultural contexts" (Riessman, 2008, p. 183).

I have, therefore, chosen to be very clear on the issue of researcher positionality, as outlined above, the researcher qua author and interpolator. In order to gain access to the application of an oral history approach in a complex contemporary application, I looked at Natalie Thomlinson's (2014) oral history account examining issues of ethnicity and race in the English women's movement after 1968, entitled *Race and discomposure in oral histories with white feminist activists*. As a research methodology it had a number of important resonances for my own research. She described within oral history an increasing appreciation of the problems of memory and the effects of inter-subjectivity on the interview, emphasising "the potential of using oral history to understand how historical events were interpreted and understood" (Thomlinson, 2014, p.85). She embraced "the post-modern insistence on the cultural construction of experience and memory" whilst recognising the individual's capacity to transform and reframe the "dominant narratives of their time" (p.85).

In my approach I wanted to emphasise the importance of society and the 'situated context' over a celebration of the 'idiosyncrasies of the individual', as explored above, locating life *history* in contradistinction to life *story*, with the researcher and the 'story teller' working collaboratively to achieve an inter-textual and inter-contextual account. Given my own research material, I was interested in a system of codification which moves from individual testimony to translated material and allowed for thematic cross comparisons between the interviewees. In this sense, the methodology has some similarity with grounded theory, which does not start with a fixed theoretical or thematic viewpoint but instead uses an iterative and nested process to deconstruct and 'name' data, allowing for the development of abstract concepts to explore the data at each level and ultimately resulting in "a set of stable concepts which can be used to theorise *across* cases" (Riessman, 2008, p. 74). This is also close in approach to Raymond Williams' strategy in *Keywords*, which is a critical reason for using him as a key theorist, in which he examines language in this iterative manner, in a spiral process of examination and re-examination, with each new discovery or understanding informing the

last. Given the wide range of potential students who attended SAEC, their diverse geographical, social class, professional and gender origins, I was struck by the potential advantages of a research process which allowed initially for a focus on broad research questions through rich narrative (the interview), such as 'was the SAEC genuinely inclusive and democratic and what kind of people - socially and economically - accessed the College?', whilst allowing for theoretical data mining (codification and analysis) as a picture emerged, akin to Goodman's 'bathing in data' approach.

By taking this approach, I was able to glean both the specificity and felt experience of individual memory and to examine the staff, students and tutors' collective social conditions, the shared opportunities and constraints of the specific time and place that the College represented. I also used a deliberately iterative process in terms of interviewing certain people twice, or in some instances, three times, in order to sharpen up the focus of the questions or to delve more deeply into certain subject areas, akin to data mining.

Access to subjects

My research at Attingham Hall was constrained in terms of both 'sampling' and interviewee access choices due to the historical nature of the College and the length of time which has elapsed since the College existed. Consequently, at least initially, my approach was opportunistic – that is, it was a question of interviewing former students and staff who came forward as part of a publicity drive to alert people to the research taking place. I also benefited from the 'snowball' effect of word of mouth, by asking interviewees to recommend others for interview, and also from newspaper interest and articles on the College in the local press which elicited considerable interest. Many people, particularly former students, also submitted memories in written form. Later, I was able to make targeted requests for interviews with people who began to emerge as important contributors through the initial research. Some of the people who were most important to the research process gave a considerable amount of time and energy to the project, providing materials, newspaper cuttings and detailed personal recollections. These included, in particular, Sian Griffiths, who worked at the College during her sixth form years, Barrie Trinder, who was the Area Tutor/Co-ordinator at the SAEC in the 1960s, and Roger Orgill, who was Trevelyan's godson and a

leading figure in the Wrekin Trust. Sally Stote, curator, arts manager and producer, now retired, is the daughter of Dr Lawson Stote who was a good friend of George Trevelyan, and was able to show me the retirement oration her father gave for Trevelyan, an important source of information. Sian Griffiths told me about the involvement of Professor Mary Beard, the classicist, in the SAEC. Mary worked in the kitchens between 1970 and 1973 during the Summer Schools at the same time as Sian. I was then able to follow this up with a telephone interview with Mary.

This necessarily opportunistic approach created both benefits and difficulties. There was a freshness and immediacy to the unsolicited contributions which came through the Memories and Connections forms and through people contacting me by email who had been given my details by staff at Attingham Park. The testimonies were largely heartfelt and evocative, obviously having been stored away as important memories which the new focus on the College period had re-evoked. Some of these written testimonies came through as late as the end of 2016, including, for instance, the fascinating descriptions of the Creative Arts course and resulting paintings from Brian Trotter, one of which forms the frontispiece for this thesis.

The dis-benefits of this approach included the large number of people who had to be interviewed to gain the kind of information necessary to a detailed understanding of the SAEC based on my initial questions, as well as the iterative nature of many of these contacts. Interviewing 30 people, and transcribing such a large volume of interviews, was challenging. Due to distance and time, some people were only available for interview by telephone which was a less-than-ideal substitute for face to face contact. Accessing people who had been tutors at the College proved harder and, finally, I only interviewed Barrie Trinder and Tony Vettise who had taught at Attingham, as well as Bryan Podmore and Geoffrey Toms who taught as part of their Warden and Deputy Warden roles. There was also a natural wariness in some people in talking about George Trevelyan due to their close relationship with him so this had to be handled with great care. Relationship building and developing trust quickly were central to the interview approach.

The Interviewees

It was important from the start to capture general perceptions of the College and also to take account of the different role and relationship to the College, or George Trevelyan, of the various interviewees. People also had connections with the College at very different points in its history, some as early as the late-1940s when it started, others in its middle years and some in its final years in the early to mid-1970s.

Staff interviewees had worked at Attingham in a range of roles, including former Domestic Bursar, Diana Prowse (then Cameron); Deputy Warden, Bryan Podmore; Deputy Warden from 1968 to 1971 and Warden after Trevelyan, Geoffrey Toms; Secretary, Ruth Nesfield-Cookson (then Bell); Head Cook, Marcia Taylor; Domestic Helps, Sian Griffiths and Mary Beard; Junior Clerk, Kathy Cadwallader; Head Gardener, Mike Threadgold and two tutors, Barrie Trinder and Tony Vettise. Other interviewees included people connected to Trevelyan, including his nephews, Michael and Robin Dower; his daughter, Catriona Tyson; his half-brother, Professor Martin Bulmer, the sociologist, and his godson, Roger Orgill. A small group of interviewees were people who were connected with Attingham Park but were not students or staff. This included interview testimony provided by a carpenter, Garth Reynolds, whose father had made furniture (reed chairs) for the College and Merrion Wood, whose father had been caretaker at the SAEC when Merrion had lived there as a boy. Walter Drews, former Warden of Wansfell College who had met and interviewed Trevelyan himself, offered invaluable insight into the role of Warden, as did Michael Barratt Brown, the first Principal of Northern College, who also shared important historical perspectives on adult education and whom I was privileged to interview shortly before he died in 2015. I also spoke more recently to Derek Tatton, who helped me from the start of the project, in his capacity as former Warden of Wedgwood Memorial College in Stoke on Trent, to gain a deeper understanding of differences between the SAEC and other short-term residential colleges. I also interviewed Dr Dianne Barr, former administrator at Birmingham University extra-mural department, who offered insights into how the relationship between the University and the SAEC worked, in terms of providing tutors and curriculum development. Finally, to complete the picture on George Trevelyan, I interviewed Nigel Todd, Labour Councillor in the North East and WEA Tutor and Historian, who has undertaken research into Sir Charles Phillips Trevelyan, George's father. A

full list of all the interviewees, dates of interviews, locations and the form of the interview is shown in Appendix One.

I framed my interview approach and the resulting material through the middle ground of thematic narrative analysis. This approach is similar in some ways to both oral history and grounded theory in its emphasis on 'what' is said and the time and place of narration, and less on 'how' or 'why', but allows for comparison across different types of material, including archive data, with the development of themes as the research progresses. It is respectful of the stories told, by keeping them 'intact' and allowing for analysis of long sequences, unlike grounded theory which, in my view, tends to 'chunk up' material into increasingly smaller codes of enquiry. My learning from examining Thomlinson's approach to her interviews was that I wanted to start from a position of broad research themes, addressed in the interview process through a semi-structured interview approach. Thematic narrative analysis also allows for following up unanticipated areas, which has importance for cumulative research.

Once all the interviews had been transcribed, I undertook an analysis of all the transcripts and all the written memoirs, highlighting individual sections according to a colour code corresponding to key themes I had focused on in the interview questions. The code worked as follows: Transformational learning - impact of courses/Trevelyan – yellow; Trevelyan as Warden – pink; Personal and Professional development – orange; Sense of place and space – green; Student demographic – green/orange; Experiment and innovation – yellow/orange; Spiritual matters – pink/green and Adult education – yellow/green. This was a lengthy process but illuminated a wealth of material which I was able to then convert into a table which covered how the material was elicited – through interview or written memoirs, the theme it reflected and the key quotations representing the theme. This was the major source for my analysis in Chapters Five to Seven.

The Interview Setting

It was important to establish trust and rapport quickly and I made a point of introducing the research orally and of offering a research information handout for the interviewees to read,

along with a consent form for the storage and usage of the oral history material (see Appendix Three). I also offered interviewees copies of the question areas in advance or before the recording started. Ivor Goodson commented on the importance of building trust quickly and that being clear on the process, and on the uses of any interview material at the start, is a good way of establishing rapport.

> I always make a point of explaining what is going to happen to the interview when it is completed, and explaining what it is for. Often this transaction can be conducted around the signing of an 'informed consent' protocol. The explanation of this protocol can be part of the process of building up trust and intimacy (Goodson, p.3, 2008)

Goodson also talked about "setting the scene" (ibid) – that the space in which the interview is to be conducted is vital. Most of the face to face interviews I conducted took place either in a quiet room at Attingham itself, usually in the Tower building, or were conducted in people's homes or, in a couple of instances, in the care homes where people now lived. Where possible, a second person came with me on the home visit interviews, both to take notes and also to support the process, where appropriate. Most of the face to face interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and permission was sought first. Where people did not want to be recorded, I asked if notes of the conversation could be taken. Only one person who I met in person did not wish to be recorded (Kathy Cadwallader) and this was respected.

A number of my interviews took place over the telephone or via Skype. This was usually due to difficulties in travelling or busy schedules and notes were taken either at the time or immediately after the conversation. Again, Appendix One offers an overview of the interview settings.

The Questions

Given the range of people interviewed, the varied relationships with the College and the different time periods of their involvement, the questions needed to be both flexible and responsive and I wanted to avoid being too prescriptive. I had a set of preliminary questions (Appendix Two), tailored primarily for former students but with additional questions prepared for former academic staff, which I used as a springboard for more detailed questioning. This approach also allowed for the interviews to evolve into a free flowing dialogue. For instance,

the questions were flexible enough to also allow for more focus on George Trevelyan for those people whose relationship was with him, rather than the College.

Gaining an insight into the type of people who had attended the college as students was important. The Visitors' books only covered the first ten years, from 1948 to 1959 and, despite efforts to locate information about the students after this date, no additional information was found, so it is more difficult to determine the nature and type of student body post-1959. The first question, therefore, was an attempt to determine people's perceptions of the demographics of the students – their age, gender and class, as a proxy for more concrete information. The second question examined the importance of Attingham itself. What was it like to study, to live and work and to stay in such surroundings – what was the residential experience itself like? Did the grounds and Hall impact on the experience and create a particular sense of place and space? The next question asked about the impact of Trevelyan himself, both in his role as Warden and as a lecturer on the courses. A follow up question explored the impact of the courses, including specific courses which captured the imagination of the participants, or were deemed to be particularly experimental or innovative. All former students, staff and tutors were asked about the importance of the College – courses, lecturers and speakers, residential experience – to their longer-term personal and professional development. Finally, the theme of the College within the context of adult education more widely at the time was explored.

Emergent themes allowed me to pursue certain lines of enquiry, by undertaking follow up interviews with key interviewees which took account of my central research questions, theoretical interests and approaches, whilst respecting the meanings and purposes of the people who are the source of this rich data.

Transcription was central to this approach. Each interview was carefully transcribed, respecting the rhythms and idiosyncrasies of people's speech and their ongoing interpretation of their stories, taking a case-centred approach but which linked the individual and the everyday with wider issues relating to the experience of learning as an adult. This was also the case with telephone or Skype interviews. A copy of one of my interview transcripts is appended (Appendix Seven) as an example of how the interviews were transcribed.

Ethics

Any research which emerges out of recent history has to be acutely aware of the sensitivities of creating a 'public document' about a given issue or context and the impact of the research process on the participants. Ethical considerations were therefore of pre-eminent concern in research for the thesis. It was important to show the utmost respect and consideration to my interviewees, given their age and, in some instances, their physical limitations. This approach has been considerably supported by my own professional background as a public engagement professional/ community practitioner for over 20 years, during which time I have worked with some of the most vulnerable adults in society, including people with disabilities, older people and people with learning disabilities. Sensitive and appropriate communication, demonstrating compassion, empathy and respect have been critical throughout all my work. In the context of my research, this involved giving people time to reflect, offering supplementary questions, developing rapport and finding out about them to put them at their ease, allowing for lapses in memory and the need to pause, on occasion, or to take a break.

I ensured that every participant had access to a copy of the full interview transcript, or notes of Skype or telephone conversations, to check for accuracy. I explained that they were entitled to have anything they were not comfortable with removed or redacted. A number of interviewees took up this offer, notably in relation to less flattering comments about George Trevelyan, which were removed at their request. Some were happy for me to keep the comments on record but did not want them used in the final thesis. One person, Liz Thomas, did not want her interview used at all, in terms of quotations taken from it. Liz subsequently died but she did have chance to read through all the material before her death and her request has been fully honoured. Frances Farrer was also able to read through all the notes of our conversations before she died, in August 2015, so was able to express her opinions on the final form her input took. I also agreed to check with all interviewees before any of their material was used in the context of the research/thesis, any publication and/or in a data archive.

In terms of anonymity, all interviewees agreed to the use of their name but were assured that specific comments would not be attributed to them unless they were explicitly asked about

it, particularly in relation to any areas of sensitivity. All were keen to have their part of the story told and some are central, key witnesses and their names are crucial to the history of the College.

The National Trust requires a process of consent for storage – at Attingham itself and with the British Library – before anything is passed on. This necessitated issuing a separate form which interviewees completed in relation to the current oral history project at the point when the transcripts were finalised and the oral history recordings made ready for storage. Two people at this point decided they did not want the material used in this way and their wishes were respected.

The interviews were entirely voluntary and interest was elicited through a variety of means, as outlined above in the Access to subjects section, to gain as deep and broad an insight as possible by having a diverse range of 'voices' – former staff, students, tutors and relations of Trevelyan.

In line with recommendations from the Oral History Society (Perks, 2009), the interviews generally lasted around an hour, to an hour and a half at the absolute maximum. Some were considerably shorter if people did not want a long interview or were unable to concentrate for that length of time and those undertaken by telephone or Skype were often shorter, running at around thirty minutes. I informed people of the broad nature of the questions in advance and that the interviews would be semi-structured, allowing for a conversation but within certain lines of enquiry. I took notes of all interviews, which I shared with all interviewees as close to the date of the interview as possible and before those that had been recorded were fully transcribed.

I received formal approval for the ethical procedures for my research on 18th November 2014 from Dr Mary Oliver, the then Research Ethics Coordinator for the Nottingham University School of Education Ethics Committee. This means that all the ethical procedures complied with the University's *Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics,* which outlines research conduct, care for human participants, issues of confidentiality, data sharing and also the need for clearance through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in the context of working with

vulnerable adults, due to the age and physical infirmity of some of my interviewees, which I received in June 2014.

Public Engagement

The research project has also had a strong public engagement remit to explore, given its partnership with the National Trust, and this relationship has offered a unique opportunity to record, share and discuss the human stories connected with the College. I embarked early on in the project on a series of public engagement activities at Attingham Park which helped stimulate data collection and resulted in a range of people coming forwards to share their memories of the College. Part of this approach included my development of appropriate social media sources – a blog on the College, and Facebook links, for instance, and also included interviews with *The Shropshire Star* and Radio Shropshire. In September 2015, the National Trust held a College Celebration event at Attingham for all those who had contributed to the research through interview, written memoirs, or as volunteers helping me in the research process. It was a memorable and moving experience, seeing people back in the old dining room again, experiencing the hubbub of voices, debate and discussion, as old friends and those unfamiliar to one another from different decades of the College connected or became reacquainted after many years. There were several stirring talks, tea and cake, a chance to share memories, a group photograph on the Portico, a temporary showcase of artefacts and objects from the College days brought in by former students, and an opportunity to re-visit the former College rooms in the house and the new exhibitions about the College. Talks were given by Mark Agnew, Manager at Attingham, Sarah Kay, Curator, me, Roger Orgill MBE and Barrie Trinder (writer, former College Tutor and Industrial Archaeologist). I recorded people as they walked round the building, storing their recollections as part of my oral history record, and listening to their stories. The Zodiac panels, created by Creative Arts students at the SAEC in the 1960s, under the guidance of the stained glass artists, Molly and Jasper Kettlewell, which were installed all around the rotunda room at Attingham Hall upon George Trevelyan's retirement in 1971, were a remarkable artistic achievement. For the Celebration event, large scale photographs of the zodiac panels were on display, as their presence in the rotunda, along with reproductions of the Lascaux cave paintings and a blue ceiling with a

complete map of the constellations of the night sky, have featured prominently in many people's recollections of the SAEC. The zodiac panels are now on display at the Telford College of Art and Technology in Wellington. They were moved there in 1977, after the College had been closed down and its chattels re-sited. According to the Board of Governors reports between August 1976 and July 1977, the views of Trevelyan had been sought as to their future location and they were initially exhibited at the Festival of Mind and Body at the Olympia centre, in West Kensington, London, between the 19th and 24th July 1977, before being moved to their permanent new site at the Telford College.

Figure 2.3 An early photograph of the Lascaux cave painting reproduction in the rotunda

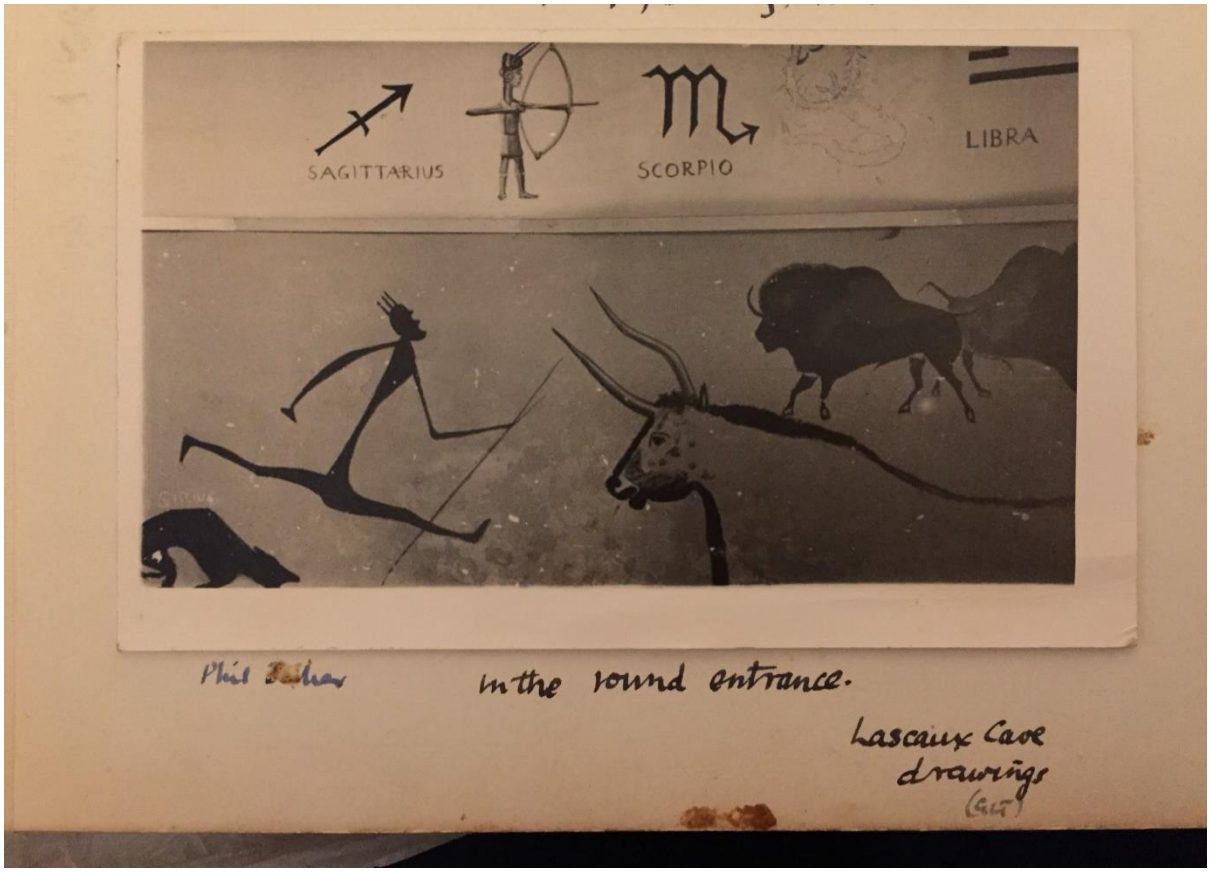


Figure 2.4 The Zodiac panels, in situ now at Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT) in Wellington

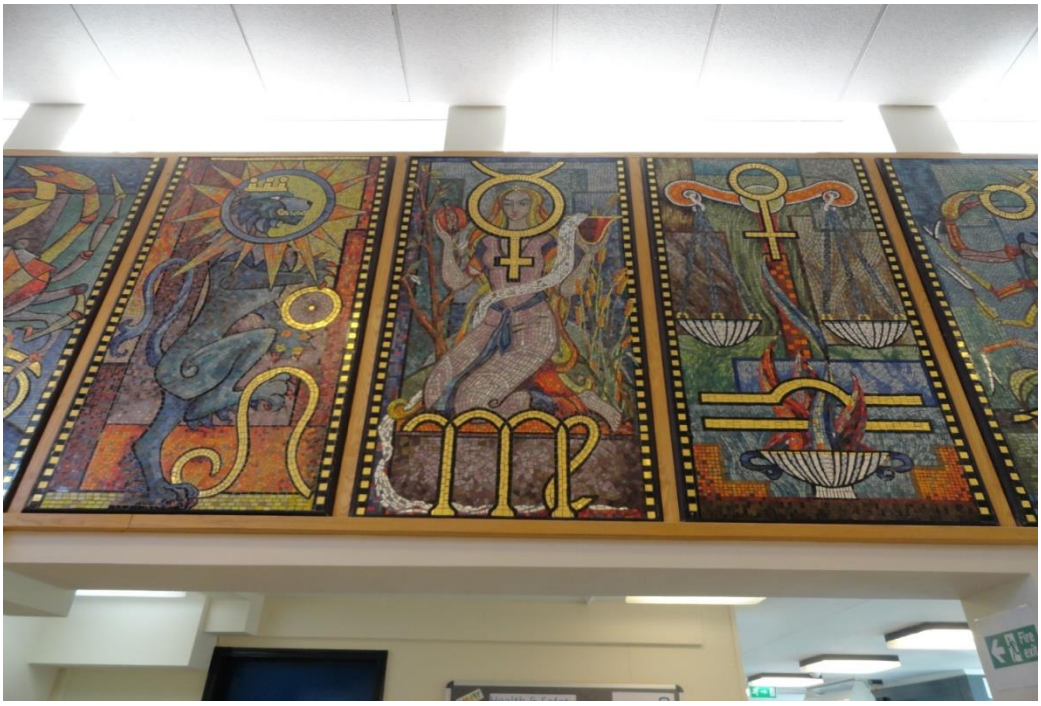


Figure 2.5 The zodiac panels in the rotunda at Attingham Hall, on Sir George Trevelyan's retirement, 1971

On the 23rd and 24th June 2016 the University of Nottingham and the National Trust held an academic conference at Attingham entitled *Moving, Teaching and Inspiring: The Power of Place and Past in the Future of Adult Learning.* It was also supported by the Wrekin Trust, the Raymond Williams Foundation and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement

(NCCPE). The conference examined a number of key themes, including public pedagogy; the democratisation of knowledge; adult education colleges and their role; the role of place and space in learning; residential adult learning; spiritual renewal through access to beauty and history; instruction and self-improvement and learning and the historic environment. Speakers came from a wide variety of disciplines, explored some of the key characteristics of nineteenth and twentieth century adult education and lifelong learning opportunities, and considered their continuing presence and relevance. The conference contributed in a number of ways to my findings, not least in terms of placing the type of adult education offered by the College in a wider historical context and of demonstrating some of the enduring, and fruitful, tensions between political and cultural concepts of adult education represented by the bodies who attended.

As part of my public engagement commitment in the context of the PhD, I also wrote a number of articles and posts for the National Trust. As the result of an article in the National Trust's *Arts, Buildings and Collections (ABC) Bulletin*, published in spring 2015, I was contacted by the artist Jonathan Parker, George Trevelyan's great-nephew. He has been involved for some time with Trevelyan College, at Durham University. According to Jonathan, the University Principal, Martyn Evans, believes strongly in the impact of surroundings on students, which has led to a series of paintings by Parker for the University and its students, a number of which have been of important figures in the Trevelyan family. I have now been asked to speak at a symposium on April 28th 2017 at Trevelyan College, to offer insight into George Trevelyan, as part of an exploration of Parker's work and as a means of creating context for the paintings.

The exhibition at Attingham Hall which uncovers the rich history of the second-storey rooms in the mansion, has been developed in such a way that the College period is now represented, with images, quotations and artefacts from 1948 to 1976, and particularly up to 1971, when Sir George Trevelyan retired. As an ongoing contribution to the project, I have created a sound archive of two tours of the house, complete with full transcription, which will be used to create College-focused visitor tours. One features Roger Orgill leading a group around the house and recollecting College memories, and the other is a dialogue between me and Sian Griffiths. This material, and the transcripts of all the interviews I have undertaken and their

analysis, will form the basis of a guidebook for visitors to the Hall on the College period, when the PhD project is complete.

Figure 2.6 'George on the Wrekin', artist Jonathan Parker. Figures suggest that the portrait has been seen by over a million people since its creation in 1997, based on average annual House visitor numbers of over 50,000 viewing the National Trust permanent collection at Wallington[4].

[4] Figures cited on the artist's website, http://theartistjonathanparker.com, accessed 7/1/17

Chapter Three – Adult Education: Debates, Dialectics, and Definitions: the Context for the College

> These country houses have for the last centuries been centres of English society. Something of the ideal of the good life has been realised in them but, of course, for the aristocratic and wealthy families. The courses run in a modern adult college can be seen in some sense as carrying on the tradition of the English country house, but in a manner fitting for our more or less classless society (Trevelyan, Adult Education and the Living Idea, n.d, circa early 1950s, p.1).

This chapter examines the ideas at the heart of adult education which converged in the educational offer at the Shropshire Adult Education College. It considers the tensions between the different types of culture represented in such a college; it explores what is understood by democratic education, what agencies have sought from adult education and how different thinkers in different periods have sought to unravel, to understand and to critique the nature of adult education. It is concerned with the dialectical space between adult education emanating from a social and emancipatory motive and adult education as a means of controlling our conceptions of culture and our access to debate and dissent.

The SAEC grew out of a post-war conception of adult education as a democratising force for good, for everyone. The College helped to both preserve a building and a culture and simultaneously acted as a catalyst for a different kind of education which was bound by few regulations or specific targets[1]. State involvement with the College, in the form of the Shropshire Local Education Authority, was relatively 'light touch'. The house itself remained broadly intact and many facets of the 'good life' to which Trevelyan alluded in the quote above continued in his concept of bringing the country house tradition into the realm of adult education. However, the SAEC was also an important crucible for the development of Trevelyan's ideas about adult education as a means of entering into esoteric consciousness, going beyond the sense-bound. Trevelyan had attended the lecture which was to turn around his thinking, entitled "What Rudolf Steiner Meant", by Walter Johannes Stein – a Rudolf Steiner acolyte – in 1942, before he became the Warden for the College. This first encounter

1 Public funding of short-term residential colleges was covered by the Further Education Grant Regulations 1946 (S.R. & O., 1946, No. 352); these were superseded in respect of LEA-controlled colleges by the Further Education (Local Education Authorities) Regulations, 1959 (S.I. 1959 No. 393), and in respect of non-LEA colleges by the Further Education (Grant) Regulations, 1959 (S.I. 1959 No. 394).

with anthroposophy was a defining moment. Literature is highly prized in this arena, as are others forms of artistic expression such as music and dance, and also the close observation of, and symbiosis with, the natural world. Trevelyan used the SAEC as the space for the development of his own thinking on adult education. The courses were the nexus for this experimentation. After he left the SAEC, he was able to establish an organisation (the Wrekin Trust) which had as its specific purpose the promulgation of spiritual education.

Trevelyan was able to experiment and explore new ideas within the sphere of adult education because it was a phenomenon which was alive and vital and, crucially, because people entered into it voluntarily. It was a fluid, dialectical space marked by political, philosophical, ideological and cultural shifts and tensions. As Trevelyan himself expressed it: "The revolutions in our society, political, religious, sociological, artistic, are in the nature of ideas which strike and permeate through people from one mind to another and can transform our thinking" (Trevelyan, 1964, p.3). Adult education has been a space for transformational thinking.

I have looked to Raymond Williams, in particular, to guide my understanding of adult education. Williams argued that there has been no single central mobilising theory, vision or philosophy of adult education, due to its huge breadth and range, its myriad manifestations and its protean quality. Consequently it has been shaped and moulded by the vicissitudes and demands of different periods in history. Williams argued that it has been variously perceived as a simple response to social change - "the bottle with the message in it, bobbing on the tides and waves of history" (Williams, 1989, p. 157) and as being "part of the process of social change itself" (ibid). He stated in 1961, in *An Open Letter to WEA Tutors*, that because adult education lacked a grand central theory, much of his thinking was focused on reflecting on what it should be. Williams' *The Long Revolution* (1961) can be read as an examination of the true purpose of education and as a paean to the importance of learning for life. In this work Williams described adult education as a struggle between three traditions, all battling for supremacy. These were 'the old humanist' tradition, 'the industrial trainer' and 'the democratic educator'. In Williams' definition, the 'industrial trainer' concept is associated with the need for skilled, pliant workers operating in a marketplace and the 'old humanist' concept is perhaps the more traditional model, particularly associated with university

education, with its focus on high culture, intellectual rigour and anti-utilitarianism. The sociologist Michael Rustin described it in the following way: "The 'old humanist' conception aimed to preserve the values of 'culture' against both industrial materialism, and the corruptions and dilutions of commercial mass culture" (Rustin, 2016, p. 148). Finally, the 'democratic educator' concept, associated most closely with the political Left, the post-war labour movement and the social democratic welfare state, called for education for as many people as possible, through numerous public means, and supported by the state.

Williams' framework is helpful for critically considering how adult education has evolved and for examining its movement towards the short-term residential college model. R. H. Tawney, the historian and social critic, supported the democratic educator concept, stating that "adult education is not put on like varnish. It springs like a plant from the soil and the fragrance of the earth is upon it" (Tawney, 1914/1966, p. 81). In his view, adult education emerges from the grassroots upwards and acts as an emancipatory space for individual and community challenge and transformation. Certain types of adult education have aimed to respond to community interests, sometimes springing directly from the efforts of committed individuals and, at other times, have been a result of state intervention. Bodies such as the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), for instance, established in 1903 by Albert Mansbridge[2], have taken, and continue to take, an approach which focuses on giving people the tools to improve their own circumstances, building capacity at a community level, tackling social and economic disadvantage and promoting values of citizenship and democratic engagement.

Adult education has also been a place in which the spiritual and the material come together through the liberal arts, a means of promoting the best in culture and thought for all classes. This is closer to Williams' 'old humanist' conception. Liberal arts education has also sometimes been a means of controlling and calibrating what 'good culture' should look like. It has been linked with what might be described as a 'missionary' approach to education, with a strong emphasis on fostering morality and spiritual enrichment, through the efforts of Church or state agencies, and through the work of philanthropic organisations. This sustained interest in the spiritual and moral well-being of the nation has peaked during periods of

[2] Albert Mansbridge, 1876-1952, co-founded the WEA and was its first Secretary until 1915. The son of a carpenter, he was largely self-taught and a passionate advocate for adult education.

national uncertainty and social change, with the 'democratic educator' and 'industrial trainer' concepts of adult education butting up against the 'old humanist' tradition in a series of "pendulum swings", which are suggestive of the tension between adult education as a tool for enlightenment and for social control:

> Public Knowledge and Public Education have historically been subject to recurrent pendulum swings between the emancipatory/enlightenment vision and the darker forces of subordination and social control. From the point of view of public intellectual life, Thomas Paine expresses the high optimism of the enlightenment when he argued, "I am a farmer of thoughts and all the crops I raise I give away" (Goodson, 2003, p.1).

The movements that shape and form adult education represent the great sweep of human ideas, an ongoing dance between how far we should be governed by reason, science and rationalism under the guidance of an intellectual elite, moving away from the constraints of religion and tradition – as in the Enlightenment project – and how far we must go to reclaim the interior realm of the mind and emotions, reconnecting with nature and mysticism – as in Romanticism. This is an essentially dialectical movement between the polarities of the Church and the state, the interior life and the external world, the mind and the body, individualism and community and nature and industry. It is, as Bourdieu described it, "the duality of education as social emancipation and education as social control" (Ryley, 2002**,** p.2).

For Williams, education was political, ideological and experiential. It was, on the one hand, about our human capacity to continue to learn, reflect and critically examine the world around us beyond the schoolroom. At its best, it was inspiration - the rush of air to the lungs, untrammelling the spirit, transcending the bounds of class, circumstance and background. Whilst short-term residential adult education may itself have had negligible "impact on the political scene" (Drews, 1995, p.v), I would argue, with Williams, that the wider adult education arena is profoundly political if one strips back the word 'political' to the ancient Greek *politikos,* which meant "of, for, or relating to citizens"[3]. Learning through life is at the nexus of wider societal debates about the relationship of power over communities, who governs them and how, the role of the state in exercising organised control, how much communities can self-govern and how power and resources are ultimately organised. How

[3] YouGov.co.uk, accessed 18/12/15

much citizens know and understand, how much they are able to challenge – from a position of knowledge and understanding – is central to any concept of societal and individual change. It is both an exhilarating possibility to the community learner and a source of profound disquiet, fear and anxiety to those in power. As the historian and adult educationalist E. P. Thompson stated in his 1968 Mansbridge Memorial lecture, *Education and Experience*, adult education, by its very nature, is "a relationship of mutuality, a dialectic" (Thompson, 1968, p.1) because it brings together adults, with a wealth of differing life experiences, with educators, and involves an intellectual exchange based on equality of experience between both parties.

This is what has made education of the kind which focuses on an interchange between the mind and the emotions, or the intellect and life itself, persistently troubling to members of the intelligentsia and the upper classes. It has promoted dualistic reactions. Thompson described the insistence in writers and thinkers from the 18th century onwards in refusing to accept the value of the life experience of the 'subordinate orders' as they were deemed. Life experience was the purview of the cultured and cultivated mind: "paternalism presumed an essential qualitative difference between the validity of educated experience – polite culture – and the culture of the poor. A man's culture, just as much as his social prestige, was graded according to the hierarchy of rank" (Thompson, 1968, p.4). The working poor were perceived as animalistic and incapable of finer feeling, which therefore invalidated their experience. Thompson argued that William Wordsworth, unlike many contemporaries from his own class, upended this argument and perceived the capacity to feel, intensely and viscerally, as peculiar to the poor. However, Wordsworth could not conceive of education as beneficial to the poor, believing that through education this particular capacity to feel would be diminished. This tension between feeling/experience and education/intellect reached its apogee in Wordsworth's friend, and writing partner, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's writings.

Coleridge's focus was on the inner mind and outer nature and the Church as an emancipatory force, offering an education which developed the human capacity to connect with the divine through the human imagination. He was quite clear that the lower orders would never be elevated beyond the purely animal if they were not exposed to "those joys and that illumination" (Coleridge, 1795, *Conciones ad Populum*, p. 25, quoted in Thompson, p. 11) which came from religious belief. Whilst the individual mind might seem to be distinct from

or antithetical to the external world around it, in his philosophy both form part of the universal mind in which they are synthesised, thus resolving the contradiction and allowing for people to transcend their environment. In his experimental pamphlet, *The Friend* (1809) he defined this dialectical process thus:

> The identity of thesis and antithesis is the substance of all being; their opposition is the condition of all existence or being manifested: and every thing or phenomenon is the exponent of a synthesis as long as the opposite energies are retained in that synthesis (Coleridge, 1809, p.94).

My interpretation of this statement is that everything is composed of contradictions or opposing forces – Coleridge refers to them as 'polarities' – and that change is helical, not circular, moving in a spiral, and suggestive of points of crisis – literal turning points – when one force overcomes its opponent force. Ultimately, this leads to a definable point of change but the movement then starts again. Coleridge was deeply influenced by Hegelian dialectics, symbolised by him, rather elegantly, by the concept of the Ouroboros, an ancient symbol depicting a serpent or dragon eating its own tail. The Ouroboros represents self-reflexivity or cyclicality, thesis, antithesis and synthesis, especially in the sense of something constantly re-creating itself; a primordial, inextinguishable quality, both birth, death and transition. Hegel described this as a form of "ever progressing motion", which saw the education of the spirit as paramount, in order that we are able to break with the past and to take on new forms, in a maturing, a dissolving and a renewing process: "This gradual crumbling... is interrupted by the break of day that, like lightning, all at once reveals the edifice of the new world" (Hegel 1965/1807, p. 380).

Coleridge concluded that education should be predicated on reflection and criticality. He envisioned a "permanent Learned Class" (Coleridge, 1848, p. 295) of thinkers – drawn neither from the literati nor the gentry – to engage in thought for the benefit of society. He also made a major claim for a wider imaginative emancipation through education. Despite his class-based prejudices and intellectual inconsistencies, Coleridge was critical in "asking fresh questions about the nature of truth" (Hocks, 1996, p.4) and knowledge, and, in particular, in seeking to forge a point of synthesis between the intellect, experience and imagination.

Critical theorists, and public intellectuals in different periods, like Coleridge, have a transformational intention, to ensure social and political democracy, not just by achieving

understanding of social and political phenomena but by changing them. They seek to uncover issues of power and legitimacy and the interests at work in particular situations. Jürgen Habermas, the German critical theorist, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*[4] (1962), tried to provide insight into the spaces within human social life which allow for ideological debate and discussion about just such issues.

In Habermas' theoretical model, he looked at associational life. He described the public sphere as the space in which citizens come together to formulate and exchange ideas, something akin to the classic Roman understanding of the 'forum'. He referred back to the salons and coffee houses of 18th century Enlightenment Europe where new civic rights to convene and to express one's opinions led to a kind of ongoing reflexiveness or ideological criticism, albeit initially for only a land owning and educated minority of people, which allowed for "rational discussion in pursuit of truth and the common good" (Finlayson, 2005, p.120) and an analysis of social structures and issues which could otherwise be accepted as 'the norm'. Learning is a form of communicative action, potentially forming part of the transformative power of social citizenship. The lifeworld is "the informal and unmarketised domains of social life" (Finlayson, 2005, p.51), by which Habermas referred to an essential space for social and cultural integration, grounded in communication as its fundamental medium. It represents family, kinship and household, voluntary and community organisations, the political life outside organised parties, the reproduction of culture and tradition, and aspects of the mass media. It is understood as a space for people's everyday encounters, where shared culture and discourse provide a bulwark against destructive dissent and social disintegration but allow for action, critical reflection and even disagreement. The implication is that communicative learning involves at least two persons striving to reach an understanding of the meaning of an interpretation or the justification for a belief – it is about striving for a consensus. It is continually evolving and shifting and refreshing itself, like language, and we cannot place ourselves outside it or remain indifferent to it, as we stand within it as 'communicative actors'. Thus, the Lifeworld serves as the transparent "medium for the transmission and improvement of all kinds of knowledge: technical, practical, scientific and moral" (Finlayson, 2005, p.53).

[4] First published in German in 1962, translated into English in 1989

Much of what Williams wrote converged with the work of Habermas on communicative action and has echoes of the dialectical approach reflected in Coleridge's writings. However, Williams takes this thinking further. Of central importance, Williams inverts Coleridge's notion of a "permanent Learned Class", making the claim that culture is ordinary and education should be focused on understanding the multiple worlds of experience from which its students come, their community, their shared terms of reference and modes of communication – their 'lived experience'. Much of the learning he had himself experienced came from a community setting, from engagement with people around him, creating learning through engagement with others (Stevens, 1985). This is the environment Habermas defined as the public sphere, the area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. However, even the coffee houses and salons of 18th century Europe were spaces where the privileged few converged, debated and discussed and Williams was arguing for a communicative action for the many and by the many, not led by the elite few. He took the notion of cultural or educational imperialism a step further, commenting in his open letter to WEA tutors that:

> adult education is no longer propped up by simple missionary feelings, that the fortunate should help the unfortunate or by simple class feelings, that the odd person should be picked out of the swine heap....the challenge to new and imaginative teaching is constant (Williams, 1961).

I would argue that Williams acted as a public intellectual for a mid-to-late twentieth century audience. He has been described as working in the interstices of inter-disciplinarity, the "intellectual 'border country'" (Stevens, 1985, p.32), grappling with the complexities of modernity and the place of education and language within it. He also sought a qualitative change from the dialectics represented in dialectical Marxism, recognising the dynamic relationship between people and the world in which they live and how the world of the interior, the mind and the imagination are shaped and bounded by the material world. The challenge for him was one of bringing together his own important formative experience in the South Wales coalfields, and his subsequent period as a student, and ultimately a lecturer, at Cambridge University, which he found both exhilarating and frustratingly narrow in its concept of culture. Both experiences were a spur to his deeper analysis of culture, and much

of his intellectual work on Cultural Studies was tested out, refined and debated in his role as an adult education tutor from the 1940s to the early 1960s. Cultural Studies saw a coming together of a range of disciplines – including history, sociology and literature – to explore human experience. This was facilitated by a form of criticism which moved beyond simple historical or biographical literary appreciation and into a rigorous and disciplined focus to reading, which often involved scrutinizing small passages of text in great detail, focusing attention on the primacy of the text itself. This appealed very much to Williams, and to the element of debate and discourse which it allowed for in tutorial work in adult education.This was largely outside the walls of the university, when he was Staff Tutor for the Oxford University Extra-Mural Delegacy, working mainly in the communities of Sussex and Kent, and co-operating closely with the WEA.

What Cultural Studies allowed for was the beginning of Williams' focus on language, as he debated issues of culture and power with his students. Williams argued in *Keywords* (1976), which was the culmination of his thinking on language, that vocabulary is necessarily problematic and that meanings are contested, both historically and in a contemporary context. Language, "like any other social production… is the arena of all sorts of shifts and interests and relations of dominance" (Williams, 1979, p.176-7). For this reason, Williams investigated language and its application as a means of critiquing the taken for granted. Williams' central proposition was that language is a pivotal part of the process by which dominant ideologies and ways of conceiving education are propagated and that understanding how it manipulates us is critical to social change. Words can become philosophically charged and a 'scraping off' or cleansing process, back to a discovery of old meanings, is required to reach the kernel of words and facilitate their reclaiming:

> I began to see this experience as a problem of vocabulary, in two senses: the available and developing meanings of known words, which needed to be set down; and the explicit but as often implicit connections which people were making, in what seemed to me, again and again, particular formations of meaning - ways not only of discussing but at another level of seeing many of our central experiences (Williams 2015/1976, p. 15).

The first kind of difficulty may be thought of as diachronic, relating to historical changes in meaning. In the sense of scraping back layers of meaning, Williams related this process to digging through historical strata, akin to archaeology. He suggested that, whilst some of a

word's meanings may persist into the present, others will have become recessive or may have disappeared entirely. The other kind of difficulty Williams identified is synchronic, relating to the ways in which language is used, its mental modelling, by an individual at any given point in time. The difficult word, therefore, could be described as polysemous, having multiple, concurrent senses that are historically and semantically related: "A dialectical relationship is posited between meaning variation and change, on the one hand, and changing social formations, on the other" (Durant, 2006, p.9). No text or use of language is 'pure': instead, we must apply hermeneutics, as both the theory and the means of interpreting texts, which enables us to critically evaluate and interpret values as relative, hierarchical and needing exposure, thus to reveal "relations of dominance" (Williams, 1976/2015, p.15). This parallels Bourdieu's commentary on doxa, as the combination of both orthodox and heterodox norms and beliefs.

I now turn to the words most closely connected with the SAEC to examine them in turn. First, democracy – the College had an avowed democratising intent, aiming to offer an enlightened curriculum and space for everyone to learn. Second, culture – I will consider how far the liberal adult education on offer at the SAEC can be perceived as a "civilising influence", a quote from Sir Richard Livingstone, the classicist and educationalist, who was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University from 1944 to 1947 and was a major promoter of the short-term residential adult colleges. Livingstone described liberal education as a cultural counter to "the trifling, ignoble and base" interests and predilections of mass culture (Livingstone, 1943, p.5). Thirdly, class – can the period in which the College commenced activity be considered "classless"?

The Slipperiness of Language – Examining Democracy, Culture and Class

> 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less' (Carroll, 1872, p.72).

Trevelyan described the education on offer at the Shropshire Adult Education College as democratic, for people from all backgrounds, for "all classes" (Trevelyan, Personal Notes, year unknown). Democracy is a perfect example of a word which has transformed under pressure.

It is generally understood in its modern context as the right of the people to choose and frame their own government and their systems of governance and the right to hold such a government to account. It is suggestive of equality, or at least of an equalising phenomenon, shifting power away from the gentry, the landowners and the clergy and into the hands of the many. According to Raymond Williams, in its earlier senses, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the word democracy was used to suggest that the people themselves would be invested directly with the power to rule, governing over or 'oppressing' the rich – and this sense of threat to order conferred on the word negative connotations. By the time Jeremy Bentham was writing in the 19th century, the idea of this 'direct' democracy had been largely supplanted by that of 'representative' democracy and direct democracy had an increasingly unsettling quality of radicalism, even revolution, about it. Creating representational democracy was a way of containing democracy to avoid the implication (and potential outcomes) of 'the people' ruling themselves. Williams noted wryly that "where democracy is defined by a process of election, such limited constitutions can be claimed to be fully democratic: the mode of choosing representatives is taken as more important than the proportion of 'the people' who have any part in this" (Williams, 1976; 2015, p.57). Thus, the old sense of 'popular' power has been steadily taken over by the sense of a right to vote for representatives; and Williams went further, suggesting that the socialist intention for democracy, popular power, had been overwhelmed by the liberal tradition of representation, freedom of speech and assembly, with little emphasis on "the institution or character of political power" (Williams, 1976: 2015, p.58). In the educational context, John Dewey, the American philosopher and educationalist, suggested in his 1916 work *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, that the ability of the human mind to learn is fostered through a synthesis of both the individual and the society in which he/she lives, and that both are equally important. In the context of adult education, the words 'democratisation' or 'democratising power' are often presented as natural bedfellows, with adult education as a means of generating knowledge and understanding, facilitating freedom of speech and assembly to a (right) thinking electorate. Its pastoral role is suggestive again of Williams' earlier quote about its 'missionary' tendencies, one of inculcating appropriate values and behaviours in the unthinking mass of people. Williams sought to challenge simple heuristics.

For Trevelyan, writing just after the Second World War, adult education was vital for recovering “peace-time values” (Trevelyan, quoted in Armstrong Ed., 2008, p.195). He did not explain what such values constituted but did state that this was “an age when so many values were slithering” (Trevelyan, 1991, p. 10) and that it was vital “to rest our minds on the great achievements of the human spirit in art, history, literature and heroic endeavour” (Trevelyan, quoted in Armstrong Ed., 2008, p.196). This statement is suggestive of a knightly battle, a crusade to re-establish order through embracing the great rather than the commonplace. For Trevelyan, adult education was imbued with a higher calling for “moral education” (Trevelyan, 1991, p.6) and for restoring meaning to life. He greatly admired, and was influenced by the writings of, Sir Richard Livingstone. Livingstone, and Trevelyan, used the words of Alfred North Whitehead, the English philosopher and mathematician, who, in his work *The Aims of Education*, described the need for “habitual visions of greatness” (Whitehead, 1929 p.69). For Whitehead, this was part of a wider definition of liberal education which would enable people to "see the world as a web of interrelated processes of which we are integral parts, so that all of our choices and actions have consequences for the world around us" (Whitehead, quoted in Mescle, 2009, p.9). For Livingstone, cultivating “habitual visions of greatness” was a means of retaining our sense of awe and wonder in a world beset by triviality and sensory overload. Livingstone suggested that that this could best be achieved through reading literature, which connects us with the great dangers and joys of human experience - love, beauty, terror, pity and pain:

> We are tied down, all our days and for the greater part of our days, to the commonplace. That is where contact with great thinkers, great literature helps. In their company we are still in the ordinary world, but it is the ordinary world transfigured and seen through the eyes of wisdom and genius. And some of their vision becomes our own (Livingstone, quoted in Hutchins, 1952, pp. 2-3).

Livingstone and Trevelyan were concerned with inculcating appropriate cultural responses, and, as a means of maintaining cultural standards, looked to the “great achievements”. As Bourdieu has shown, class and culture interconnect in complex ways which move beyond our occupation. Bourdieu defined the subtle workings of cultural capital – that which we pass on through our educational status, our confidence, sense of entitlement, ease and reflexivity in a variety of social networks, institutions and cultural milieu, the perceived legitimacy or value of our tastes and interests – as being just as important as economic capital. It is perhaps best explained in his concept of symbolic violence, which does not describe physical coercion but,

instead, a tacit domination of taste and culture which works, not as a recognisable form of overt privilege (as with forms of economic legacy, for instance), but covertly as an accretion of historical advantage masked by meritocracy. Put baldly, some tastes are the 'right' tastes. Bourdieu argued that we can believe that the cultural acquisition and "personal dignity" which we can acquire through education liberates us but that it can be a means of incorporating us into a dominant or "legitimate" culture which can delegitimise our existing notions of culture.

It is to culture I turn next. Culture is the keyword which began Williams' journey into analysing language, as the starting point for his introduction *to Culture and Society 1780 – 1950*, in 1958, and which ultimately evolved into *Keywords*. The word 'culture' in the 15th and 16th centuries was used as a description of husbandry, of animals or agriculture, and moved into the metaphorical sense of tending human development or growth from the 18th and into the 19th century. The association of the word with a general social process was also beginning in this period, when it was often used synonymously with 'civilization', and by the 19th century it was being used in Germany and England to describe the end point in a series of stages of human development "from savagery through domestication to freedom" (Williams, 2015/1976, p.52). This shift from the physical to the metaphysical was strongly embraced by the Romantic Movement to distinguish between human (spiritual) culture and material (linked to industrial or mechanical) culture, often as part of an attack on the latter for its 'inhumanity'. By the 19th and 20th centuries the sense of culture as representing artistic and intellectual activity and development had become prominent, with a particular focus on the Arts – music, literature, painting, sculpture, theatre and, later, film. It had become associated with manners and tastes, spiritual and moral values, and with 'high' and 'low' definitions of culture, which ultimately had a distinct and clear relationship with social class. Culture had also become associated with aspects of adult education, and particularly liberal adult education, with the arts conceived, by many on the Left, "as vehicles for bourgeois ideology, clothed in the snake's skin of spiritual values" (Steele, 1997, p.12). As George Thompson, WEA Yorkshire (North) District Secretary after the Second World War, eloquently advised on the subject of liberal arts education:

> A distinct word of warning to those who are having so much to say about spiritual value in adult education. The Metaphysical Interpretation of Adult Education may be

> a song that echoes sweetly in the cloister but it will sound very different in the steel mills, down the pit, in the factories and on the docks (George Thompson, quoted in Steele, 1997, p. 12).

Bourdieu's sociology of culture grappled with these very issues. His theory – largely focused on class issues – which emphasised the concept of 'capital' (or power) as social reproduction, also sought to unpick how dominant groups in society claim a natural legitimacy for their readings of culture. He exploded the sanctity of "economic disinterestedness", postulating, instead, that the elite in society promulgate the notion that economic capital is not bound up with social capital, which Bourdieu described as the "social obligations", (Bourdieu, 1986, p.241) which bind society. He argued that these very social connections or networks are "convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility" (ibid, 1986, p.241). As referred to in Chapter Two, habitus is his concept of the socialised norms or tendencies, the lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities that guide our behaviour and thinking. Bourdieu argued that habitus is created through a social, rather than an individual process, leading to patterns that are enduring and transferrable from one context to another, but that also shift in relation to specific contexts and over time. Habitus is both a product of free will and societal structures, effectively an interplay between the two, and comes to seem as if it has always existed. Steph Lawler expressed this interplay, in her book *Identity* (2008), in which she stated:

> …we learn how to act, how to behave, what is and is not appropriate, and so on, but we rarely remember that we have learned them. They come to seem 'natural' – a 'second nature…..What this suggests is that 'taste' is not innate but learned through the deep socialization of the habitus. Furthermore, what gets to count as 'tasteful' – in clothes and demeanour as much as in art and music – is what the group with the power to name things *as* tasteful decide *is* tasteful (Lawler, 2008, p. 130).

Such learned tendencies and dispositions create a form of cultural capital, which we carry with us, in internalised form, and wear externally in our networks and social connections. Bourdieu argued that cultural capital is also convertible, as with social capital, "into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications", (ibid, p.241). It can serve as a form of protectionism for the interests of those in power, ensuring that the educational system replicates "the reproduction of the social structure by sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.241). This theorisation provides a very useful framework for understanding the structural aspects of learning and

how they become encoded in human culture and within our internal mental and emotional frameworks, or habitus, by a set of acquired sensibilities, schemata, tastes and dispositions.

I was constantly reminded throughout the interview period, in the context of the lived experience of the interviewees, of Raymond Williams' famous statement "culture is ordinary" (Williams, 1958, p.5). Williams suggested that culture does not have to be great, beautiful or sublime (as in a Romantic conception), nor is its popular or more commercial aspect necessarily utilitarian, bleak and reduced (as in a Modernist understanding). Culture is, in Williams' definition, not just about beauty or that which transcends the everyday but is part of the fabric of everyday life and the lived experience – for all people, and not simply "a special kind of people, cultivated people" (Williams, 1989, p.93). What Williams suggested is that 'bad culture' crosses class divides and that it is not necessarily connected to the new or the progressive but really represents the cheap, manipulative and tawdry, on the one hand, and the overt pretentiousness of 'teashop culture', on the other, with its markings of cultural gentility, the ostentatious consumption of afternoon tea and cakes by those with the leisure and money to do it. Williams eschews an orthodox Marxist interpretation of culture whilst accepting that economic inequality can lead to an exclusion from, or restricted access to, cultural institutions, arguing instead that education is "the only defence" against the false dichotomy between the "common meanings and directions" (Williams, 1958, p.95) of people's everyday experiences and the study of perfection, or "the best that has been said and thought" (Arnold, 1869, preface to *Culture and Anarchy*), represented in good art, literature and theatre.

In his own community of Pandy in South Wales, Williams witnessed "the shaping of minds; the learning of new skills, the shifting of relationships" (ibid, p.92) that came with adult education. He argued that there is a central point between culture as 'the best' or culture as the everyday and that working class culture, with its rich associational life, was the "best basis" for a future society:

> There is a distinct working class way of life…I think this way of life, with its emphases of neighbourhood, mutual obligation and common betterment, as expressed in the great working class political and industrial institutions, is in fact the best basis for any future English society. As for the arts and learning, they are in a real sense a national inheritance, which is, or should be, available to everyone (Williams, 1958, p.96)

Williams carried this belief system with him. When asked to contribute to a publication called 'My Cambridge', he said in his opening sentence, "It was never my Cambridge. That was clear from the start". However, Williams was not uncomfortable or 'oppressed' (ibid, p.93) by the weight of a different culture during his time at Cambridge University in the 1940s. In *Culture is Ordinary* (1958) he asserted his pleasure in walking through the Tudor courts and stated that he had always known libraries and the cathedral, so that the buildings, and their grandeur, were not alien to him. He felt confident in his own cultural heritage, a culture he felt was as valid as that of those inhabiting the world of "teashop culture", proud of the working class way of life from which he came, the bonds of "neighbourhood, mutual obligation and common betterment". Writing in 1958 (his Cambridge student days were during and immediately after the war), his is a confidence born out of a time when the post-war settlement, the Education Act, the increased power of the institutions of the labour movement and a growing Left-wing intellectual wing, of which Williams was a part, asserting a new definition of culture.

This process of redefining culture, and the sense of tension it had brought, had begun to grow up during the inter-war years. That this unnerved the middle class is evidenced in the testimony of middle class respondents in the 1948 Mass Observation Survey (MOS). Mass-Observation was a social science research organisation established in 1937, which ran until the mid-1960s and then began again in 1981. It utilised untrained community volunteers to record people's behaviour and conversations anonymously, through diary writing or questionnaires, in a variety of social and work settings, and was seen by detractors as a form of mass surveillance. In work on social class over the last two decades, Mike Savage has sought to re-examine Mass Observation materials (notably in Savage, 2007), exploring changing responses to class. What he found in the 1948 MOS was that most people identifying as middle class were quite clear on a sense of cultural superiority but were also unwilling to ascribe any particular individual skill or attributes to their class, tending to see the whole issue of class definition as rather vulgar. Instead they ascribed their class to 'ties of birth':

> Identifying oneself as middle class hence involved not making claims about one's individual distinctiveness – your skills, talents, achievements – but was ultimately about showing how you belonged to a social group through ties of birth, through having appropriate manners, and other social ties. Numerous respondents talked

> about the distinctive culture which they had, which were often seen as particular kinds of habits, forms of speech, modes of address and dress, which ultimately proclaimed people to be bearers of a class identity (Savage, 2007, p.7).

The middle class defined themselves, almost defensively, in contradistinction from the working class. This is evidenced in a narrative focusing on perceptions of laziness, low levels of education and manual work attributed to the working class. Two quotes from the MOS exemplify this:

> I object intensely to the term "working class"; judging by the way productivity in certain industries has fallen it is a misnomer. I consider the professional classes usually do more work than the so-called working classes (4-1587)

> Although definitely not class conscious, I usually refer to any form of manual worker or uneducated person as a class apart from myself, which I generally term the working class (41-4389, quoted in Savage, 2007, p.7).

Class as an expression of our standing in the social hierarchy and, a perhaps more fluid concept, our social-economic status, is deeply complex and was out of fashion as a critical means of examining identity in the latter part of the twentieth century, replaced in large part by individual identity issues with an emphasis on race, gender, sexuality and disability (Savage, 2007). In the early days of the SAEC, Trevelyan wrote about “our more or less classless society” (Trevelyan, circa early 1950s, p.1) and gave a firm commitment that adult education, and especially that provided in a stately home setting - historically a space for the rich upper classes - should be made available to everyone. Certainly by the time of the opening of the SAEC in 1948, some of the older community ties and certainties were beginning to break down and the pace of societal change had accelerated between the wars. Arguably, class as an identifier in an increasingly bourgeois society was less relevant, and the decoupling of class ties and an increase in consumerism and cultural outlets for all strata of society, conferred a new freedom. In *On Living in an Old Country*, 1985, Patrick Wright quotes Agnes Heller, the philosopher, who wrote:

> With the disintegration of community ties the individual becomes an ‘accidental individual’ (his class – or stratum – affiliation is of accidental character) but at the same time he becomes a free individual as well, at least potentially (Quoted in Wright, 1985/2009, p.13, Heller, 1979, p.183).

However, some writers whose focus has been on exposing social and cultural shibboleths, have been much clearer on the enduring distinctions of class and how they tie in to both assumptions and anxieties – spoken or otherwise – about cultural and social superiority and about the fear of contamination from those 'below'.

Writing in the early part of the twentieth century, Virginia Woolf is illustrative of the not uncommon fear amongst her own class (upper-middle, educated) that mass education, the result of the principle of education for all children expressed in the 1870 Elementary Education Act, was endangering the role of the educated middle classes and the intelligentsia as the bastion of culture. Her anxiety was that democracy would distort, dilute and trivialise culture and that art, as common property, would cease to be sublime and descend into banality. She felt that the newly enfranchised people of the working class were both ill-equipped and too unstable emotionally, psychologically and intellectually for the challenge of preserving and promoting the best of culture, seeing this class as "A vast, featureless, almost shapeless jelly of human stuff - occasionally this way or that as some instinct of hate, revenge, or admiration bubbles up beneath it" (Woolf, quoted in McNeilie, 1988, p.3).

These issues were arguably very much alive between the wars and in the post-Second World War period. In *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), George Orwell railed against the absurdity of the finer gradations of the social hierarchy, as "the shadowy caste-system of class; rather like a jerrybuilt modern bungalow haunted by medieval ghosts" (Orwell, 1937, p.113). He was also very precise in his description of his own family as "lower-upper-middle class" (Orwell, 1937, ibid), noting, sardonically, that this was the upper middle class without money. For him, class was not about money but, much more subtly, about conceptions of taste, culture and "decency". He argued that the "unthinking person of gentle birth" (as above, p.123) needs only a spark to rouse his "dormant class-prejudice":

> In his eyes the workers are not a submerged race of slaves, they are a sinister flood creeping upwards to engulf himself and his friends and his family and to sweep all culture and all decency out of existence. Hence that queer watchful anxiety lest the working class shall grow too prosperous (Orwell, 1937, p. 123).

Richard Hoggart, adult educator, cultural theorist and sociologist, recognised the importance of Orwell's role as a "public conscience" (Hoggart, 1989, p.xi), in his 1989 introduction to *The Road to Wigan Pier*. He stated that: "Class distinctions do not die; they merely learn new ways of expressing themselves. Orwell's stance in this matter is completely up to date. Each decade

we shiftily declare we have buried class; each decade the coffin stays empty" (Hoggart, 1989, p. vii).

Literature and Culture

> Politicization is often accompanied by a process of cultural acquisition that is often experienced as a kind of rehabilitation, a restoration of personal dignity. That can be seen very clearly in the memoirs of labour activists of the old school. This liberating process seems to me to have some alienating effects, because the winning-back of a kind of cultural dignity goes hand in hand with a recognition of the culture in whose name many effects of domination are exerted (Bourdieu, 1994, p.5).

Bourdieu's quote attests to the colonising effects of culture. At the centre of this issue stand English literature and literary criticism. Within adult education literature has been both the testing ground for new ideas and the battleground for moral and spiritual concerns. It has been central to concepts of liberal education:

> As anyone capable of grasping the issues is well aware, in Britain the mental battles that matter, the battles which involve the intellectual passions, have for a long time now been fought out in the field of 'literary criticism' in the first instance (James, 1969, no pagination).

In 1921 Sir Henry John Newbolt (1862-1938), poet, historian and novelist, chaired a Committee which advised Lloyd George's Liberal government on the importance of developing a systematic approach to teaching English in schools. The Committee also commented on the importance of an appreciation of literature and poetry in adult education. The Committee's report, known as the Newbolt Report, became essential reading for English teachers for many years and was highly influential. In the introduction, the Report described English "as the essential basis of a liberal education for all" (Newbolt, 1921, p.4) and argued that "our system of education has for a long time past been too remote from life" (ibid). In the chapter on adult education the Report suggested that working class men, particularly those from "organised labour movements", tended to be suspicious of literature as a distraction:

> Literature, in fact, seems to be classed by a large number of thinking working men with antimacassars, fish-knives and other unintelligible and futile trivialities of 'middle-class culture', and, as a subject of instruction, is suspect as an attempt 'to side-track the working-class movement' (Newboldt, 1921, p.252).

This lack of engagement with poetry and literature on the part of the working class was attributed to poor teaching at elementary school level, rather than an inherent lack of imagination. If poetry was taught at all, the Report argued, it was used as merely another form of rote learning with perhaps one poem learnt – and repeated *ad nauseam* – all year. The focus was "purely utilitarian; its object was limited to giving children the instrument for earning a living" (ibid, p.253). The Report suggested that this situation was aggravated by an inclination at certain points in history – the one in which the Report was written being one such – to focus on material circumstances and on the collective fight for change to the detriment of any connection with "the experience of the individual":

> It would seem, indeed, as if at certain periods or phases of human development social, political or religious movements become so all-absorbing that art and literature, which interpret the universal through the experience of the individual, tend to be regarded as trivial and unimportant in comparison (ibid, p.254).

Reporting on conversations with working class people at the time, the Report described their unease with poetry and literature as being the result of "wage slavery", the increasing lack of control over their own work, their own lives and cultural expressions and a growing sense that they were simply a means of production. This made people uncomfortable about embracing the literature and art of the "middle and upper classes", which felt like a form of cultural colonisation.

> That condition, which had been imposed upon him and which he called wage-slavery, was the ultimate cause of all social unrest. Because of it there was no longer any literature springing from the lives of the people as in the medieval age, when they sang ballads and took part, in their guilds, in plays and pageants. Literature now expressed the point of view, for the most part, of the middle and upper classes, and working men felt that any attempt to teach them literature or art was an attempt to impose upon them the culture of another class (ibid, p.255).

The Report went on to make the point that, far from being indifferent to literature *per se*, working class people wanted to "pick and choose" what they read, citing Burns as a particularly popular poet and Jack London as being "read by everybody" because he "represented life as a struggle" (ibid). The comment was also made that the lack of engagement with poetry was not just an issue of the working class and that the middle classes showed an indifference to poetry, rather than hostility, which ceased to play any part in their lives on leaving school. This was accounted for as being because "poetry is not recognised as having any vital connection with a workaday world" (ibid, p.257), for either class. The

conviction was that literature and life must be intertwined to avoid people living "starved existences", and that it should nourish "our spiritual being" through the "purifying of the emotions":

> It is natural for man to delight in poetry; the history of medieval society, to say nothing of all primitive societies, proves this. Further, we claim that no personality can be complete, can see life steadily and see it whole, without that unifying influence, that purifying of the emotions, which art and literature can alone bestow (ibid, p.257).

The Report also averred that no culture should be conceived as better or more worthy than another: "The ambassadors of poetry must be humble, they must learn to call nothing common or unclean - not even the local dialect, the clatter of the factory, or the smoky pall of our industrial centres" (ibid, p.260). Bodies like the WEA, the University Extension Movement and LEA-funded Evening Classes were acting as the handmaidens at the birth of a new form of poetry and literature, best described as a "folk-poetry and a folk-drama…a great art rising spontaneously from the life of the community" (ibid, p.277). I will return to this point in Chapter Four.

In ways which are reminiscent of the Newbolt Report's arguments, Jonathan Rose, in *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001*)*, also showed the central importance of literature in enabling people to learn both through and throughout life. Literature provided a means to critically reflect on, and to challenge, even the most unprepossessing of circumstances, through the medium of novels, political pamphlets and poetry. Like Newbolt, Rose argued that understanding this transformative capacity, the intellectual and emotional response to literature, is as important as a more rigid materialist focus on social, political and economic conditions:

> Though the "new social historians" of the past few decades have produced important and innovative work, they have harboured a prejudice against literary history, perhaps because it seems 'elitist' and lacking in scientific rigor. They have focused instead on the grittier or material aspects of working-class life – diet, housing, workplace culture, trade unionism, radical politics, crime and family structure (Rose, 2001, p.3).

He also commented on the capacity for literature to elevate the 'ordinary reader', arguing that it is not the purview of an elite and that the canon of 'acceptable literature' cannot be

defined as belonging to them. Instead, he suggested that it must be understood as transcending class boundaries:

> What if the same books recommended by intellectual elites brought aesthetic joy, political emancipation, and philosophical excitement to these ordinary readers? If the dominant class defines high culture, then how do we explain the passionate pursuit of knowledge by proletarian autodidacts, not to mention the pervasive philistinism of the British aristocracy? (ibid, p.4).

Goldman took this one step further. He commented that adult education, of the liberal kind, can be used as a means of cultural and social emancipation through access to ideas which stimulate both the higher intellectual and spiritual life, for intellectuals and thinkers of all classes:

> An elite of working people yearned for contact with ideas beyond the immediate confines of working-class life which might free them personally by opening up the `higher life' to which so many referred, and which might serve as the basis for the wider liberation of their class (Goldman, 2000, p.294).

He argued that liberal adult education provided a space for public intellectuals and the working class to come together to critique both materialism and individualism, creating an intellectual commonality or community "in their joint preference for the richer rewards of the life of the mind and spirit" (ibid, p.292). Literature was an important tool in this process. Rather than acting as a means of individualising people's experience and focusing on the physical, external realities, this kind of metaphysical idealism placed emphasis on the power of human values and ideas, asserting the pre-eminence of the mind and spirit in both shaping society and conceiving of how the world might be. Importantly, Goldman showed that this did not have to be in any way contradictory to a passion for political beliefs but that the political and the spiritual combined could be a more powerful way of seeking social emancipation:

> Idealism did not necessarily compromise political radicalism; rather, it confirmed among worker scholars that political mechanisms and economic instrumentalities would not be enough for social emancipation. As a miner from Castleford explained, `I became an enthusiastic member of the [Workers' Educational] Association, losing none of my socialism, but seeing for the first time in my life that the basis of human existence is spiritual' (Goldman, 2000, p.294).

Trevelyan was quite clear that the arts, and in particular literature, were vital in restoring the cultural values with which he was familiar in a post-war world. For Trevelyan, literature was a spiritual rather than a political tool. Poetry, in particular, was the medium for becoming a "vessel for the divine" and for achieving a form of enchantment through the oral medium. He called this concept "the living word": "We do not 'see' the spiritual worlds with physical eyes. Indeed, these worlds are not outside of ourselves. It needs an imaginative leap to grasp that the human vision can equate with the totality" (Trevelyan, 1991, p. 40).

The 'living word' was a means of embodying his own spiritual beliefs, allowing the spirit to enter him and flow through him in order to reconnect with the totality of the Universe. By this, he meant that poetry has a particular capacity to create an imaginative response in the listener, in which the imagination dissolves the hard distinctions of subjective and objective, the many and the one. For Trevelyan, this was an act of profound authenticity, a bypassing of the intellect in order to access the imaginative and the intuitive. He argued that it enables transformation by facilitating a deep learning which is apprehended through the "latent faculties of perception which may enable us to find a truth in a new field, of understanding that cannot be weighed or measured" (Trevelyan, 1980, p.22). In his slim volume, *Magic Casements: the Use of Poetry in the Expanding of Consciousness* (1980) he expressed this belief thus:

> In our time there is an awakening to an 'holistic' vision of life. This involves a quickening of the spirit, a throwing wide of consciousness to encompass the eternal oneness of life, reaching beyond the restriction and limitation of sense-bound thinking (Trevelyan, 1980, p.2).

For Trevelyan literature was a means of moving beyond the commonplace and finding commonality across the range of human experience, at least for those who were sufficiently aware.

F. R. Leavis, the literary critic, was exploring the same issues in literature in the immediate post-war period. In his seminal work, *The Great Tradition*, published in 1948, he was concerned with literature as the critical means of exploring and celebrating the totality of human experience. His objective was for the reconstruction of a civilised community through the development of appropriate sensibility to, and appreciation of, the English language. This was vital to him in the face of, what he conceived as, a dehumanising "technologico-

Benthamite" (Samson, 1992, p.63) turn in culture. In it he identified those writers who were sufficiently able to demonstrate "a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity" (Leavis, 1948, p. 17). The emphasis was on a deep commitment to life and morality and an "awareness of the possibilities of life" (ibid, p.10). For Leavis, the survival of intellectual refinement and high culture in the arts, literature and philosophy was dependent on developing definite mechanisms for sustaining the distinction between high and low – or mass – culture. His canon included only four writers – Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad. D. H. Lawrence was allowed entry into the canon later. Angela Carter, the feminist writer who took issue with Leavis's self-initiated role as cultural custodian, described a similar need for literature to create a "fresh lexicon of intense experience" (Carter, 1992, p.8). However, she railed against Leavis's 'Great Tradition' theory as deadening the enjoyment of the reading experience, with the emphasis on morality denying any pleasure which does not have an improving quality: "The "great tradition" does not brook even the possibility of libidinal gratification between the pages as an end in itself, and F.R. Leavis's "eat up your broccoli" approach to fiction emphasises this junkfood/wholefood dichotomy" (p.9).

Leavis, however, also represented the prospect of a new formulation of literature as part of a "cultural renewal [which] would come from 'below' and from the 'border country', be it Wales or Yorkshire, rather than the London elites" (Steele, 1997, p.17). He was concerned that definitions of 'good' literature were not dominated by frivolous "metropolitan literary fashion" (Steele, 1997, p.16), which was shot through with "the impieties of the modern age and commercial civilisation" (ibid, p.81). Literature needed to be both deeply moral and relevant to people's lives: "Literature mattered to Leavis because he believed it to be the means, above all others, of combating the ills of a mechanised, constantly changing world and of restoring the heritage of those dispossessed by the machine" (Samson, 1992, p. 3).

In the sense of his refusal to differentiate between literature and life, Leavis was an important influence on Williams and his development of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of English. His teaching in adult education, in particular, ultimately led to the development of Cultural Studies, as we have seen. The focus on the whole human experience was facilitated by a form of criticism which moved beyond simple historical or biographical literary

appreciation and into a rigorous and disciplined focus to reading, which often involved scrutinizing small passages of text in great detail, focusing attention on the primacy of the text itself. This appealed very much to Williams, and to the element of debate and discourse which it allowed for in tutorial work in adult education. He admired Leavis's assertion that studying literature brought with it an enhanced critical awareness, allowing for greater control over life, deeper social participation and a more robust, improved and vigorous popular culture, leading to an improved capacity for appreciating life. Steele, in studying the evolution of Cultural Studies of which Williams was such an important exponent, argued that English studies "appears to have developed within adult education, a practice whose very marginality enabled it to be an experimental site" (ibid, p. 50).

In Raymond Williams' structure of feeling, literature, by transcending fixed or historically defined experience, forms and conventions, enables us to look beyond them, to our own lived experience in the moment. 'Feeling' is not a synonym for emotion or sentiment but a subjective, nameable state. It reconciles the individual and the collective, bringing together the social and the personal. It recognises that art and literature are separable from the overall culture of a given period but are the locus through which feeling is expressed and embodied. Structure of feeling is the capacity of literature to give shape to what is otherwise inchoate, still unformed, and to challenge received orthodoxies through examination of a text's historical context and ideological and political implications. In terms of authenticity and seeking expression of the inchoate, there are some parallels with Trevelyan's use of literature. In this, both Williams' and Trevelyan's views are resonant with those of the poet Matthew Arnold who elevated poetry to a religious level, arguing that "more and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us; to console us, to sustain us" (Arnold, 1888, p.2). Lovejoy argued that the literature and the art that we create at different phases of our cultural life is the lens through which we can gain an historical understanding of the ideas which motivate and move us:

> The historian of ideas, while he oftenest will seek for the emergence of a conception or presupposition in some philosophic or religious system or scientific theory, will seek for its most significant manifestations in art, and above all in literature (Lovejoy, 1936, p.17).

The Cultural Studies approach, which focused on small groups, debate and discussion, shared characteristics with the work of adult educators such as E. P. Thompson and R. H. Tawney. It built on the traditions of adult education seen in the WEA and the university tutorial class movement. Tawney argued that tutorial teaching should take place where students would be most comfortable, in the areas where they lived, and should be based on a small group format, of no more than thirty people, and not on formal lectures. The students agreed to read materials presented by their tutor; they agreed to undertake fortnightly essay writing and to meet once a week for a given period. The mutuality and respect emphasised by both Thompson and Tawney was central. John Holford has described elements of Tawney's approach as "embryonically constructivist", in that "knowledge was created in the discussion", in a two-way exchange (Holford, 2015, p.103) which was not always comfortable but which challenged ideas of the teacher as 'guru' and fostered the notion of equality of status between the teacher and students.

Raymond Williams' conception of a collaborative approach to adult education, which would focus on the primacy of the 'lived experience' of the individual learner and therefore create a stimulus for a more just society, was also based on recognising the democratising potential of education which escaped the elite-controlled schoolhouse and found its expression in the family, churches, community centres, libraries and museums. Such an approach echoed earlier working class learning experience in the reading libraries, in pubs and kitchens. It also inhered in the potential for the short-term residential colleges to act as spaces for discourse and dialogue, both formal and informal, both through the lecture and around the dining table.

Reading Trevelyan's paper on *Adult Education and the Living Idea*, it is quite clear that he, too, was convinced in the early years of the College that the country house was the 'perfect setting' for people to come together to have their imaginations stirred, to embrace transformational ideas as 'living things' and "always these must begin by entering the small group" (Trevelyan, n.d, circa early 1950s, p.2), with a view to effecting change in society. His commitment was to the idea of adult education as the space for 'living ideas', where education is animated by, and responsive to, issues of current concern to society and to the individual – the 'living answer to living questions'. He suggested that "the short residential course appears to be a vehicle for living ideas to work down into our society, and adult

education has here a special and in some sense a priestly task" (ibid, p.3). According to those who knew him well, Trevelyan embraced the idea of experiential learning. David Lorimer, who worked closely with Trevelyan in the Wrekin Trust, described Trevelyan's favourite saying as being "try it out for size". This is indicative of Trevelyan's interest in the concept of 'enlivenment', or *animering* in the Danish (meaning 'to animate'), which was inspired by his visit to Denmark, to experience the Danish Folk High School movement first-hand, in 1936. Enlivenment was a pedagogical approach in which the emphasis was placed on teachers speaking directly from the heart on subjects they found inspiring, creating opportunities for students to construct their own curriculum, based on subjects which interested and stimulated them, and which allowed for debate and discussion in small groups. Its primary objective was to support authenticity – a real love of the subject, an authentic connection between student and teacher and an intellectual freedom. Trevelyan viewed the short course format as ideal for moving beyond "merely academic studies" to allow for opportunity to "talk ideas which would widen people's horizon and excite them with a sense of deeper purpose or meaning in any subject" (Trevelyan, 1964, p.3). Whether he achieved the focus on the small group format or whether he became the guru-like teacher lecturing to a large crowd is a central consideration in Chapter Seven, in my analysis of the evolution of the courses.

Trevelyan was concerned with the great issues of the post-war period – the place of humankind in nature, the role of industry and commerce, citizenship and community and how these interplay with the interior spiritual experience. The search for the right kind of topics and issues which would stimulate enlivenment was central to the course programme at the SAEC: "the challenge is to find those ideas in each subject whether it be architecture, archaeology, nature, history, literature or music" (ibid). This was exemplified at the SAEC by the growth of small discussion groups, considering current affairs (the `56 Group), art and architecture (the Column Group) and, ultimately, the group which was to form the basis of the esoteric gatherings, which began by considering philosophical and metaphysical concerns.

The real dialectic therefore finds a point of synthesis – for Coleridge, Williams, Tawney and Thompson and, to some extent, Trevelyan, in the concept of criticality. The critical pedagogy of Thompson and Williams demanded a breakdown between student and teacher, allowing for the development of critical consciousness. Both are based on the concept of praxis; both

could be described as education for social purpose, seeking a quantitative and then a qualitative change as its end point, taking a rhetorical idealisation of dialectics firmly into the real world. Jack Mezirow described this as essential to the process of transformational learning, which induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, as the recalibration of our existing mind-set, thoughts and beliefs shapes the learner, producing a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner's subsequent experiences.

> There is an inherent logic, ideal, and purpose in the process of transformative learning. The process involves transforming frames of reference through critical reflection of assumptions, validating contested beliefs through discourse, taking action on one's reflective insight, and critically assessing it. This understanding of the nature of significant adult learning provides the educator with a rationale for selecting appropriate educational practices and actively resisting social and cultural forces that distort and delimit adult learning (Mezirow, 1997, p.11).

How far Trevelyan was successful in stimulating "significant adult learning" and in resisting the "social and cultural forces that distort and delimit" such learning is the subject of the next three chapters. Chapter Four explores how his own educational thinking evolved and identifies some of the ways in which the cultural habitus of his own background and experience both stimulated, and militated against, his genuine desire to engage with education for everyone.

Chapter Four - The Knightly Quest: Blood, Soil and Mystery

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the road less travelled by…

Robert Frost, 1920, Mountain Interval

Introduction

Sir George Trevelyan was both a pioneer and a paradox. By taking the 'road less travelled' in his search for developing spiritual education for the wider community and for personal enlightenment for himself, he plunged "with joy into the 'refining fire'" (Trevelyan, 1968, p. 3), into some of the most complex and contested areas of the twentieth century. This dialectical tension was conveyed eloquently in *The Guardian* obituary for Trevelyan, which stated that "rugged Germanic emotionalism suited him. His ideas effervesced into a heady mix…John Ruskin converged on Rudolf Steiner" (*The Guardian* obituary, 19th February 1996).

The 'heady mix' saw him engaging with thinkers of the Far Right and pursuing a Teutonic idealism which left him open to concepts of nationhood and nationalism, whilst wrestling with the ties of his birth in his drive to create a form of adult education which aspired to be for all people. Like Ruskin, he was interested in establishing connections between nature, art and society whilst promoting an individualistic self-spirituality – that is, a spirituality true to the self rather than to any higher authority. He appears to have been genuinely egalitarian in his interactions with people from all backgrounds, but still conceived of himself as a knight and was acutely aware of (and proud of) his aristocratic background. As his daughter Catriona Tyson commented, he was capable of embracing both ideas simultaneously: "He was not at all a snob but he was aware of his family always. If you can imagine these two things co-existing, in him they really did" (Catriona Tyson, quoted in Farrer, 2002, p. 104). His view of himself as a knight, on a battle or crusade to find "inner freedom", found its place in esoteric

thinking on the cyclical nature of life, which emphasised death, birth and reincarnation and life as a series of trials within the cycle. In his booklet for *Death and Becoming*, a course he led at the SAEC in 1964, he wrote: "We return again and again to the plane of earth in order to undergo soul trials until a step into inner freedom can be made" (Trevelyan, 1968, p. 2). Paul Heelas, who has written extensively on the New Age, has described it as "a perpetuation of the counter-Enlightenment Romantic movement" (Heelas, 1996, p.212). Trevelyan was pre-eminently a Romantic in his approach. In 1969 his course entitled *The Allegorical Journey* at the SAEC looked at the heroic epic journey in literature – in Ibsen's 'Peer Gynt', Homer's 'Odyssey', Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' and Dante's 'Divine Comedy' – and considered the journey in allegorical terms as a search for god and for unity (course booklet – held in the Course Programme archive at Shropshire Archives). This has parallels with Trevelyan's own life and his interest in the chivalric and the knightly quest.

In important ways the lack of externally-imposed direction in terms of the curriculum requirements at the SAEC, as with the short-term colleges generally, allowed a space for Trevelyan to experiment with his concepts of education and to formulate his own particular approach, which he was able to develop further after leaving Attingham. He stated: "Although a number of the colleges are closely associated with or run by local educational authorities they present the opportunity for free experiment on the part of the Wardens who direct them" (Trevelyan, year unknown, p.1).

His enthusiasm and passion for a multitude of subjects is an abiding memory for all of the students who experienced his particular brand of education at Attingham. He has been perceived as both a polymath and the godfather of the New Age, a rare link between the pre-Second World War world and the burgeoning spiritual movements of the 1920s and 1930s, and a new generation of "seekers" in the 1960s. David Lorimer, who worked closely with Trevelyan in the Wrekin Trust, described him, rather, as "a spiritual father" and "incredibly supportive" of those much younger than him and finding their way in the New Age movement. He maintained the appearance of an English country gentleman for most of his time at Attingham – "His style of dress was not alternative. He wore good suits and ties" – but this belied a genuine rebelliousness (*The Guardian* obituary, 19th February 1996) and a trenchant anti-materialism. As Farrer stated: "the fact that materialism appeared to have reached its

apotheosis was a big factor in the disenchantment and led to the search during the 1960s for meaning in places east of Europe, and during the 1970s in the mythologies of heroic, idealistic eras" (Farrer, 2002, p.94).

Trevelyan called out the growing materialism and ugliness of the modern world, as he perceived it, and pursued a utopian vision which aimed to unite different religions and different peoples through a global, universal concept of education. His experiments post-Attingham, at the Findhorn Foundation and in the Wrekin Trust, have left an enduring legacy, connected with an internationalist approach to spiritual education and harmonious living with the earth. Heelas described the positive aspects of the New Age as a spirit of authenticity and human kindness, a focus on the positive in all experience, a space for the refreshment and renewal of identities, right forms of livelihood and harmonious living, optimism and a celebratory and playful outlook on life (Heelas, 1996, p.221). Trevelyan, according to all who knew him, seems to have embraced all of these facets. Primarily he was concerned with "the re-enchantment of life" (Heelas, 1996, p. 221).

However, the New Age is also prey to "unmediated individualism" (ibid, p.21) and a sense in which people need only be true to themselves. The mantra of freedom and the worship of the Self sit awkwardly in juxtaposition with hidden wisdom and arcane statements about how to live which are only available to an inner cognoscenti. Such statements can be perceived by those outside the fold as a form of dilettantism for those able - through sufficient money and time - to engage in obscurantism and anti-intellectual cant. This statement, in David Spangler's Revelation: The Birth of a New Age (1971), for which Trevelyan wrote the Foreword, perhaps exemplifies this:

> The New Age is an expression of a highly flexible and creative consciousness freed from time and living in the moment attuned to the Divine Will and the needs of the moment. It may express one form of behaviour one day, another the next, but always it expresses itself under that guidance which comes to a man when he is attuned to the well-being and evolution of the Whole of Life and is living a personal life of Limitless Love and Truth. This means that there is no definite blueprint for what the New Age represents, at least not yet (Spangler, 1971, p.3).

Spangler articulated here something of the 'service ethic' of the New Age as being centred on an attunement with "the well-being and evolution of the Whole of Life" – which exemplifies

the New Age belief that all elements of life are ultimately one. He described the elusive quality of the New Age – outside time, "living in the moment", based on freedom, creativity and self-guided spirituality, "living a personal life of Limitless Love and Truth". Trevelyan engaged in daily meditation to listen to his 'inner voice' and maintained a watchful eye on his diet and personal habits. However, the playful, child-like quality which many loved also contained within it the potential for egotism, quixotic behaviour and self-centredness. Farrer commented that "people had to suffer for his success in order for him to be the Great God Pan" (Interview – Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014), which is suggestive of his power over women and of his self-concept as being the guardian between civilisation and the wild. As Heelas suggested, the voice within can be ego-prompted.

This chapter focuses on material from the interviews, books and testimonies of Trevelyan's family members, close friends and colleagues in order to gain a deeper understanding of the complex interweave of social, political, cultural, professional and personal elements which stimulated Trevelyan's own pedagogical approaches to adult education. My assertion here is that, whilst attention has been paid elsewhere to important influences and precedents on short-term residential adult education such as the WEA and the Danish Folk High School movement, Trevelyan was also profoundly influenced by his own experience of education – both as a student at Sidcot school and Cambridge university and as a tutor and teacher at Gordonstoun school, in army education and at Newbattle Abbey College for demobbed soldiers after the war. His esoteric interests and anthroposophical belief system also led him towards an interest in the alternative or free school movement, which developed experimental approaches to teaching and learning generally outside state-provided mainstream education, representing schools which were part of the Steiner School network and independent schools developed by private individuals. I argue that his own personal development shows a private struggle with the democratising impulse of education for all and a belief in specialised forms of education which remain the purview of the wealthy. I approach his development through his own personal timeline, in the context of the social and economic developments around him, and particularly the intense battle between the 'great narratives' of the inter-war years, which saw thinkers on the political Left and Right struggling to seek a balance between modernism, progress and tradition and industrial and rural life.

Trevelyan's Early Years

Trevelyan's relationship with his father, which appears at times to have been problematic and painful on both sides, is at the heart of much of Trevelyan's thinking on education, in that he both benefited from his father's experience, contacts and concerns and forged some of his own educational practices and approaches in response, or riposte, to his father's ideas. Sir Charles Phillips Trevelyan (1870 – 1958) had a deep personal interest in educational innovation and held positions in the area of education in both the Liberal and Labour governments. He began his career as a Liberal MP under Asquith as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education between 1908 and 1914. He resigned his position in 1914 in opposition to the British entry into the First World War. In the same year, in a deeply unpopular move, he co-founded the Union of Democratic Control, an all-party pressure group opposed to both military influence in government and to conscription (Swartz, 1971). The war marked Charles Trevelyan's definitive move from liberalism and towards a radical socialism. The following statement expressed this shift powerfully, with its call for a different kind of politics. His stated intention was to see an end to the world of privilege and the trappings of class:

> Our lives have been spoilt by compromise, because we tolerated armament firms and secret diplomacy and the rule of wealth. The world war has revealed the real meaning of our social system. As imperialism, militarism and irresponsible wealth are everywhere trying to crush democracy today, so democracy must treat these forces without mercy. The root of all evil is economic privilege... (Charles Trevelyan, *The Nation*, 2nd February, 1918).

In accordance with his convictions, Charles Trevelyan, and also his wife, Mary - known as Molly (nee Mary Katherine Bell, 1881 – 1966), took a hands-on approach to teaching their own children, which was unusual for many people of their class at the time. George Trevelyan's early experiences of both poetry and literature, which created such an important educational thread in his life, were stimulated by his parents, who read extensively to all of their six children. Trevelyan never lost the ability, along with his younger sister Katharine (known as Kitty - 1908 - 1989), to recite long epic poems, with them often taking the recitation in turns, verse by verse. As Barrie Trinder expressed it, "many of Trevelyan's beliefs sprang directly from Trevelyan family traditions…His reading in poetry was wide and deep, and he could quote readily and at length" (Trinder, 2006). Kitty's love of poetry, like Trevelyan's, was

a form of sustenance, “the very sun to the flower hidden within” (Trevelyan, K., 1962, p.35). They both shared the view that poetry was “apprehended on a level far beneath – or was it far above – the ordinary understanding of the mind” (p.35).

Charles Trevelyan was a confirmed atheist and, again, followed his convictions in terms of the schooling of his own children. The Trevelyan males traditionally attended Harrow school (Trevelyan, L., 2012), but George, and his older sister Pauline (1905 – 1988) and younger sister Kitty, were all sent immediately before or during the First World War to Sidcot, the Quaker co-education boarding school in the Mendip Hills of Avon, Somerset. Frances Farrer, in her interview with me, suggested that Charles Trevelyan may have been moved to send his oldest son to Sidcot rather than Harrow because he was “not the phenomenal intellect” (Interview, Farrer - 28th July, 2014) that his forebears had been. However, Charles’ decision may have been guided more by his fury over the First World War, his pacifist stance and his atheism. Charles Trevelyan was increasingly uncomfortable with his own privileged educational background. Harrow School was a “symbol of the conservative establishment” (Trevelyan, L., 2012, p.104), an establishment which demanded allegiance to King and country and to God, a bastion of “economic privilege”. Kitty Trevelyan commented that the children were sent to Sidcot due to their father’s “atheism”. She quoted him as saying, ““they at any rate won’t ram religion down your throat”” (Trevelyan, K., 1962, p.47).

For George Trevelyan, Sidcot was a liberating experience. It was at Sidcot that he developed his enduring passion for the outdoors, for activities which pushed at the limits of his physical endurance. As his nephew Michael Dower expressed it, “he became an explorer. He got out by exploring caves and became a fine mountaineer and rock climber” (Skype interview, Michael Dower, 1st April 2015). For his father, Sidcot represented a space where children were given freedom to learn in ways which were consistent with his views that children were held in a state of artificial dependency for too long. He was convinced that co-educational schooling was the only way for children to learn. He also believed passionately in the importance of access to outdoor activities for children. Charles was also convinced that debate and discussion for young people was vital, and from 1929 he opened up the stables at the Wallington estate to young people with radical views, which set the precedent for the establishment of the first Youth Hostel in Northumberland.

By the end of the First World War, Charles Trevelyan was certain that the war had been a horrific mistake, not 'a war to end war', and that those who had fought and died in it had been fed a lie. As Kitty Trevelyan described it, he believed that "the heroes just coming back from the front were misled by politicians who were knaves and that the sons and fathers had died in vain" (Trevelyan, K., 1962, p.48). He had been accused by many detractors in parliament and outside of being "pro-German". This was a much more complex issue for Charles Trevelyan than this label suggests. He was clear, however, that the war had brutalised the ordinary people of both Britain and Germany. He began to foster links with Germany soon after the war ended, by supporting early pioneering education at Salem School (Schule Schloss Salem, in Baden-Württemberg, Southern Germany). The school was established by the educator Kurt Hahn with the support of Prince Maximilian of Baden, the then German Chancellor, in 1920. Salem School was co-educational from the start and emphasised the importance of high academic performance, but with an equal emphasis placed on community service and extra-curricular activities, such as outdoor activities and physical exploration.

Kitty described a family visit to Salem, in her 1962 autobiography, *Fool in Love*. She wrote:

> By 1918, directly after the war, Prince Max of Baden had been made German Chancellor, and Father, seeing a hope for the future, bowled straight out to see him, long before anyone started to travel in Germany. Prince Max, in his great palace of Salem, near Lake Constance in South Germany, had started, with Dr Kurt Hahn, a wholly democratic co-educational school for his own children and the children in the vicinity. In the spring holidays of 1920 Father, mother, Pauline, George and I all went out to Salem (Trevelyan, K., 1962, pp. 49, 50).

George Trevelyan was 14 at the time of the visit to Salem. His sister Pauline attended Salem School briefly as a student. Meeting Kurt Hahn proved a significant event for him as he was later to teach at Gordonstoun, which I will examine later in this chapter.

The Inter-War Years

As a Labour politician in the first two Labour administrations of Ramsay MacDonald, Charles Trevelyan served as President of the Board of Education between January and November

1924 and again, between 1929 and 1931. Laura Trevelyan[1] asserted that education was the utmost priority for the first Labour government in the 1920s – "the party in the twenties regarded improving educational standards as a moral obligation" (Trevelyan, L., 2012, p.126). Charles was passionately committed to democratic education and "wanted the children of the workers to have the same opportunities as those of the wealthy" (ibid, p.126, 127). In the second Labour government he poured his energies into efforts to extend state-funded secondary school education, seeking to raise the school leaving age to 15 and to reduce church control over education. The latter issue proved a sticking point and his bill was rejected by the Lords, following interventions from the Catholic lobby. He responded to the crisis by resigning from parliament for a second time, on 19th February, 1931[2]. Effectively, this saw a move away from public politics. The period of his resignation came only two years after both of his parents had died, which meant that he became the 3rd Baronet of Wallington in 1928 and inherited Wallington Hall, which was the seat of the Trevelyans in Northumberland.

Thus began a period of ambivalence in which he threw himself enthusiastically into the life of the aristocratic country squire, engaging in an "attractive lifestyle of shooting and socialising" (Trevelyan, L., 2012, p. 129) whilst seeking methods on his estate of effecting a "wider and juster distribution of wealth"[3]. One such method was by creating an allowance for all tenants, which, as Laura Trevelyan commented, prefigured the public policy response to the Beveridge Report, in the form of family allowance, by some 16 years: "We intend to give an allowance to every family on the estate of 2/6 a week for every child from birth till such time as it leaves school or college"[4].

Barrie Trinder made the point that Trevelyan was known for his respect for the people who worked the Wallington Hall Estate: "Sir Charles…would very often be seen painting a gate on the estate, doing something with the tenants (Barrie Trinder, interview transcript, 22nd July, 2014). Frances Farrer also commented that Charles managed his estate like a "miniature welfare state" (Frances Farrer, interview transcript, 28th July, 2014). Members of his own

[1] A history of the Trevelyan family of which she is a member: Trevelyan, L. (2012) *A Very British Family – the Trevelyans and their World*, London: I.B. Tauris
[2] Charles Trevelyan, letter of resignation to Ramsay MacDonald (19th February, 1931)
[3, 4] Charles Phillips Trevelyan - Speech to tenants, April 1929, Trevelyan family papers

family were less understanding about how he could apparently live the life of an aristocrat whilst espousing socialist principles. The epithet of the "socialist baronet" had some veracity, though it has also been stated that he was much loved for his socialist politics, and his support for better pay and conditions by the miners of the area, who regularly invited 'Good Old Charlie' to speak at their annual gala (Todd, 1995, p.19).

In an overt demonstration of his socialist principles, Charles went on air in a radio broadcast in 1937 (BBC Radio Broadcast, 23rd March, 1937) to make public the fact that, in his new will, he had left Wallington Hall, not to George, the next in line, but to the National Trust:

> To most owners it would be a terrible wrench to consider alienating their family houses and estates. To me, it is natural and reasonable that a place such as this should come into public ownership, so that the right to use and enjoy it may be forever secured to the community. (BBC Radio Broadcast, 23rd March, 1937).

The decision was formalised with the National Trust in 1941. It was arranged in such a way that Trevelyan and his family would remain in situ and he could enjoy the benefits of the lifestyle Wallington conferred on him until the end of his life. This was possible due to the National Trust Act of 1937 which, through a special act of parliament, allowed for owners to continue to reside in their homes for a small rent. However, the decision meant that George Trevelyan, as the oldest son, would be disinherited. Laura Trevelyan has commented that "the arrangement whereby Charles kept a life interest in Wallington meant the sacrifice was to be made by his family and not by him" (Trevelyan, L., 2012, p. 131), enabling Charles to maintain his own conception of himself as "a romantic crusader of the Left" (Trevelyan, R., 2007, p.445). Patrick Wright has commented that, by guaranteeing the rights of residence of the family concerned, the National Trust demonstrated how it had become infected with an "anti-democratic bacillus" which encouraged a "country house aesthetic". This made a "special feature of ancestral continuity" (Wright, *The Guardian*, 1 August 1987), with the aristocratic family taking centre stage as part of the public exhibition. As with George Trevelyan, Charles seems to have been comfortable living with the apparent contradiction between continued privilege and self-interest and public ownership. Kitty Trevelyan, with echoes of Catriona Tyson's comments about George, said of her father:

> I never knew anyone who was so successful at holding complete opposites within his being, yet making a round whole of those opposites. He was an aristocrat of mind and heart and blood, yet he was a socialist by conviction; he was a born dictator, having

> his own will in the last detail, yet he believed in democracy, that no one must have power over another, that every soul must be free. These opposites caused no conflict in him, only in those with whom he had to deal (Trevelyan, K., 1962, p.31).

Though the impact of George Trevelyan's disinheritance was profound, politics and religion seem to have been at the heart of the wider tensions between Charles and George Trevelyan. Several interviewees identified George Trevelyan's engagement with increasingly spiritual interests instead of forging a political life as the main source of conflict, or at least distance, between him and his father. Martin Bulmer, George's half-brother (born in 1943) and son of Charles Trevelyan, stated: "I think there was a divergence because my father was interested in politics and George wasn't – my father was not interested in spirituality and George was and that's really what divided them" (interview, Martin Bulmer, 20th March, 2015). For the Trevelyan household, and Sir Charles in particular, this must have been a major point of contention. As noted in the *Daily Telegraph's* obituary for George Trevelyan, to be 'pi' (pious) was considered unhealthy by Charles – "anyone showing the slightest symptom of religious conviction was dismissed as 'pi'" (Sidney Hicks, *Daily Telegraph* obituary, 9th February, 1996).

Cambridge, Crafts and the Physical Body

> Radical utopian thinking flourished in the inter-war years, fed by disenchantment with a failing industrial capitalism and a desire for a more vital, authentic human society (Field, 2013, p. 203).

The 1920s and 1930s were a turbulent period and a time of great social and political change, when issues of nationhood and identity were at the fore in the wake of the Great War. Many servicemen were attempting to return to their pre-war lives, looking to re-settle into work and to re-join some semblance of family life. There was a surge in adult education which, in the war period and into the 1920s, was delivered through numerous agencies. In rural areas this might include the Village Club or Institute, elementary and secondary schools and the YMCA's Red Triangle Clubs, which were formed during the First World War, initially offering servicemen food, drink, free writing paper and pastoral support but later extending services to local communities, with a particular emphasis on young people and the unemployed. The 1919 Final Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction Adult Education Committee made a commitment to supporting liberal education offered by non-statutory bodies. Evening

institutes grew, as did clubs for unemployed workers. Liberal education, specifically, was seen as of particular value at a time when revolutionary fervour was feared, as a civilising influence and a means of fostering citizenship. This was deemed particularly important following the extension of adult male suffrage to almost all men over the age of 21 in 1918, which also began the process of suffrage for women, extended to all women in 1928. In 1924, the British Institute of Adult Education (BIAE)[5] Committee of Inquiry produced a report, *The Guildhouse: a Co-Operative Centre for Adult Education,* which laid out the plan for the development of adult educational centres in every town across the country. The BIAE, which was established in 1921, was an association of individual members from generally privileged backgrounds. Its definition of adult education as a means of linking material developments and industry with conserving morality and civilisation is important here: "If material progress is not accompanied by moral progress, it is not likely to lead to a superior state of civilisation" (BIAE, 1924, p.26). It was very clear in its objective that such adult educational centres should be the result of voluntary initiative, rather than state control, allowing for "initiative and free choice in matters of education", rising from and responsive to "the spontaneous initiative of ordinary men and women" and extending beyond the "beaten track of professional advancement" (pp. 10, 11). It suggested that this tradition of adult education was born out of the "intellectual revival following the industrial revolution" (pp. 10, 11) and must go beyond mere instruction and the acquisition of facts, focusing instead on interpretation and understanding, or critical thinking arising out of personal discipline. Expressly, its function should be to create: "A mind with impulses and emotions disciplined into a harmonious whole, to enable the finite self to realise itself in the infinite reality which we know under its various aspects – beauty, truth, energy and goodness" (p.30).

The aim was to create "revolution by consent", emanating from "progress in thought and enrichment of the spirit" (ibid, p.57). This Romantic conception of education argued for a

[5] In 1918 the World Association for Adult Education was established (WAAE). A separate British Institute of Adult Education (BIAE) was set up in 1921, initially part of the WAAE but becoming constitutionally separate from it in 1925. The BIAE was an association of individual members with a shared interest in the adult education movement. It did not have its own premises and met in hired rooms, usually at the private address of its first President, Viscount Haldane. Albert Mansbridge was also a force behind the BIAE.

reimagining of community spirit which would bring the working class together – as, according to the report, the chief recipients of adult education – with their "leaders" in order that "the disorders of our civilisation may be remedied, and the nation set upon a road that will lead it back to health and sanity" (ibid, p.55). Following the Great War, and before the onslaught of the Second World War, this spiritual and social concern with finding ways of creating a collective sense of common life bears testimony to the tensions between the classes of the times. In addition, there is a sense that liberal education should act as a counter to industrialisation and to the destruction of natural beauty. The report argued that it must counter the untrammelled "progress of industry and commerce….overgrown, ugly, noisy and smoky towns…the steady defacement of the countryside" (ibid, p.56).

In many ways the Guildhouse report articulates beautifully anxieties about a changing world expressed in this period. Throughout the report there is a concern for moral order and also for personal and individual, as well as communal, fulfilment. This Romanticism or idealism is both profoundly earnest and well-intentioned as well as looking to conserve perceived aspects of an older order. The growing unease socially and economically in the inter-war period created a huge variety of responses to what education should look like for adults, and particularly for different classes of people. There was a sense that community was falling apart, that the Edwardian pre-war world with its customs, institutions and deterministic societal order, however mistily romanticised, was lost. Industrialisation and large-scale farming were pitched against each other in the British consciousness, partly as a result of "wartime propaganda, which stressed the 'rural' nature of England (and) encouraged many who had fought to see the country in a different way" (Howkins, 2002, p.18).

Men of Trevelyan's background were uncertain of their place in a shifting world order and this period marked a state of turmoil for the aristocracy. This was also a period of collective guilt, when many young men of Trevelyan's generation, schooled during the Great War, were painfully aware of the tragic deaths of so many others, only slightly older than themselves. As Blom described it, this guilt, combined with fears of material advances and growing industrialism and capitalism, were at the heart of a strong sense of unease:

> As social realities seemingly shifted with every new day, the previous guarantor of stability, Europe's old ruling caste, went into terminal decline, taking with it the

> traditional social order and its values. The descendants of the knights and princes of old had been defeated - not by invading armies but by refrigeration and steam turbines. The new ruling class, the bourgeoisie, brought its own, pragmatic, ideals, and even if industrialists liked to play at being country noblemen every now and then, the game was played strictly by capitalist rules (Blom, 2010, pp.395, 396).

This uncertainty is mirrored in George Trevelyan's own search for a future identity and purpose during this time and he appears to have spent much of the 1920s and early 1930s exploring different possibilities for what they might be. He acknowledged in his autobiography that he was "innerly somewhat adrift" (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p.37) during this time and seeking ideas.

During the middle 1920s, from 1925 to 1928, Trevelyan was a student reading History at Trinity College, Cambridge University, as his father Charles Trevelyan and his uncle G.M. Trevelyan, the historian, had done before him: "In 1925 I went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, to which all my family had been. I, rather inevitably, fell into reading history as the family subject" (p.37). There is a degree of resignation in the statement which perhaps suggests that Trevelyan was not fired by the subject or a sense of wider purpose at this point.

Whilst at Cambridge he studied seriously but also found time to continue his considerable sporting interests, which included climbing and fencing. From his childhood at Sidcot, and in the grounds of Wallington, he had been a great enthusiast for climbing, mountaineering and the outdoor life. As his nephew Michael Dower remarked, he was always a "fine athlete" (Michael Dower, 1st April, 2015). Trevelyan acknowledged in *Exploration into God* (2012/1991) that he was afflicted by a reticence which made it difficult for him to discuss this uncertainty: "I was, strangely, never able to discuss my future or my career with anyone" (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p.36). He did consider going into politics at this point, as his father and grandfather had, but decided that "my path was to be very different" (p.36). What his politics would have been was not explored in his autobiography.

Meanwhile, however, he enthusiastically embraced Cambridge life and this is where he first met Rolf Gardiner (1902-1971), a charming and enthusiastic rural revivalist and folk dancer. Trevelyan's energies were taken up with:

> …debating, fencing, dancing with the Cambridge Morris Men under Rolf Gardiner, illicit roof climbing with friends from the Cambridge Mountaineering Club. Mountains and climbing came to mean a great deal to me (Trevelyan, 1991, p….).

He also had his first appointment with F. M. Alexander (1869 –1955) during this period, who he went to see on "the advice of a friend, dissatisfied with my body but knowing of no special defect" (Fischer, ed., 1998, p. 66). Alexander, an Australian actor, had developed an educational system for re-training the natural and instinctive movements of the body and gaining conscious control over them, by inhibiting incorrect actions. In the encounter, Trevelyan was told, very directly, that he was misusing his body: "He looked at me, felt with his hands and said, 'Young man, what have you been doing to yourself?'" (p.66). As a much older man, looking back on this period in his autobiography, Trevelyan acknowledged a clear link between his later spiritual development and his first contact with the Alexander Technique and it is perhaps typical that he embraced the system wholly and seized the concept of the proper, consciously willed "use of the self" and the physical body as an important part of the New Age mission:

> For me, the significance lay in the vision of wholeness. The word holistic had not then come into general use. I had not yet achieved any vision of the spiritual nature of man and the universe. But now, looking back, I can see how this step in my life was an essential preparation for what was to follow. I have no doubt that Alexander's technique and teaching about conscious, constructive direction of the use of the self will take its place as a fundamental feature in the emergence of a new life-style and a new humanity (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p. 38).

Initially, after completing his time at Cambridge, Trevelyan travelled to Germany for six months. As Frances Farrer commented in my interview with her, he was free to experiment, liberated by his moneyed background, but his willingness to 'play' also demonstrated a genuinely courageous and creative nature: "He played at everything – a delight. He loved to experiment…. He went to Germany to look at the Bauhaus people and see if he wanted to work with them!" (Interview with Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014). As Farrer suggested, he spent the majority of his time in Germany pursuing his keen interest in architecture and made contact with the Bauhaus school in Dessau. This was a modernist architectural movement which favoured an absence of ornamentation and clean lines and believed in bringing all arts, including architecture, together into a total work of art or *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This must have appealed to Trevelyan's interest in wholeness and holism.

Trevelyan also spent time whilst in Germany making contact with the German Youth movement, and specifically the Freischar, which brought together the *Wandervogel* – which were popular hiking and rambling groups – and scouting movements under one umbrella. The express objective of both movements was to return to a state of nature and freedom, throwing off the constraints of society. Trevelyan commented on the rise of the Brown Shirt movement which was evident whilst he was there. He remarked that the Freischar represented "that liberal aspect of the German Youth Movement which could have swung Germany in a very different direction" (Trevelyan, 1991/2012, p.37). That change was in the air must have been apparent to Trevelyan. He visited Germany at the point when the Weimar government – and the cultural and creative liberation associated with it – was on the brink of collapse. By 1929, unemployment in Germany had risen to two and a half million and the growth in German industrial production, largely financed by America, had ground to a halt. It was also the case that the Bauhaus school only lasted until 1933, when it closed as a result of pressure from the Nazi regime.

Moore-Colyer has indicated that this fascination with German youth movements was far from unusual for men of Trevelyan's background at the time and was arguably more attractive to them than engaging in the complexities of domestic affairs and politics:

> …in the Cambridge of the 1920s, domestic social problems and the shenanigans of politicians of various hues were of less immediate interest than a kind of mystical internationalism which found expression in the German youth movements with their louche fascination with hiking, nudism and other arcane aspects of what Arthur Marwick has termed 'the swinging Weimar Republic' (Moore-Colyer, 2001, p.190).

This description seems significant in a number of ways. The 'arcane' and the 'mystical' elements of the German youth movements were attractive to people on both the Left and the Right of the political spectrum and Trevelyan came into contact with a range of views. Looking back in retrospect on his own life in 1991, Trevelyan claimed that "up to the age of thirty-six, I had no concern with the Spirit and no religious beliefs" but he appears to have been part of a milieu in which a fervent level of debate about such matters was taking place. The "mystical internationalism" which Blom alluded to, and the fascination with the German youth movement, converged with British anxieties about the spread of urbanism, a growing

engagement with the outdoors and concern that the speed of social and physical change was destroying the customs and practices of rural England and leading to potential social ferment.

The hierarchical order of feudal society was returned to as a trope by many writers and commentators repeatedly during this period, depicted as a prelapsarian period of ordered, preordained governance, in a 'Great Chain of Being'. It was not a new idea. Voltaire, the Enlightenment philosopher, in the 18th century, called out the social injustice implicit in such a system of understanding, likening the "author" of the natural order, or the divine, as "a powerful and maleficent king, who does not care, so long as he carries out his plan, that it costs four or five hundred thousand men their lives, and that the others drag out their days in want and in tears" (Voltaire, 1764/1972, p.69).

Arthur Lovejoy wrote on the subject, in 1936, and described it, primarily, as an idea which captured the imagination and the zeitgeist of the pre-First World war and inter-war years. He described:

> The conception of the universe as a 'Great Chain of Being', composed of an immense…or infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest of existents…through 'every possible grade' to the *ens perfectissimum* (Lovejoy, 1936/1976, p.59).

In it, the pattern of the universe was understood as being as it should be, a rational "cosmic plan" (ibid, p.209), where all beings, from the lowliest plants and rocks, through animals and humans up to the King and, ultimately to God (the *ens perfectissimum* – most perfect being), were contingent on one another and in their rightful place. Lovejoy suggested that the Chain of Being could be used as a form of sanction for social, political and metaphysical purposes in maintaining the order of society: "Any demand for equality, in short, is "contrary to nature" "(Lovejoy, 1936/1976, p. 206).

In his *English Social History*, G. M. Trevelyan described the conservative "old rural world" in impassioned rhetoric which represented rural traditions and the beauty of the outdoors as a romanticised salve to poverty, in direct contrast to the brutalising effects of "mining and industrial districts" and the dangerous social and moral ferment they were creating. He

articulated the idea that rural life was a means of maintaining spiritual values, underlining the point that "human stock degenerates in an urban environment" (Conford, 2001, p.11):

> Immigrants to the mining and industrial districts were leaving an old rural world essentially conservative in its social structure and moral atmosphere, and were dumped down in neglected heaps that soon fermented as neglected heaps will do, becoming highly combustible matter…. The beauty of field and wood and hedge, the immemorial customs of rural life – the village green and its games, the harvest-home, the tithe feast, the May Day rites, the field sports – had supplied a humane background and an age-long tradition to temper poverty (Trevelyan, G.M., 1973/1944, pp. 475-476).

After 1918 one quarter of landholdings had been put on the market, which meant that "the traditional social structures of the shires was irrevocably weakened" (Cannadine, 2002, p. 229). At the same time, new leisure pursuits were opening up to a wider population and creating a swathe of changes to the countryside. Cannadine described this phenomenon thus:

> the English countryside was subjected to the unprecedented blight of the motor car and the charabanc, the new suburban sprawl and ribbon development, semi-detached houses and seaside bungalows (p.229).

G. M. Trevelyan's paean to the past came at a time when working people were no longer content with the confines of a life defined by their physical locality or their work. Interest in the natural world, the cultural heritage of the country and outdoor pursuits was taking new forms in the inter-war years, and was marked by a conflict between "immemorial customs" and agitation for greater rights and freedom of access, as part of a wider push towards political and cultural emancipation. As Stone has commented, the "call to 'return to the land' was at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth, as likely to be an arrow in a left-wing quiver as a right-wing one" (Stone, 2013, p.112). The National Trust also played a role in these developments, on the one hand preserving places and buildings of beauty for the public and pushing for land access and, on the other, taking a pro-landlord and anti-access approach. G.M. Trevelyan himself played an important part in the development of the National Trust. He was Chairman of the Trust's Estates Committee from 1928 to 1948 (Cannadine, 2002, p.230) and was influential in attracting donations and members throughout the 1920s and 1930s. His particular brand of green environmentalism and lyricism found voice in a number of articles for the National Trust, including *Must England's Beauty Perish?* (1929), which he concluded with the following words: "Without vision, the people

perish and without natural beauty the English people will perish in the spiritual sense" (Trevelyan, G. M., quoted in Cannadine, 1992, p.155).

Part of the response to a renewed focus on natural beauty saw the public looking for access to the mountains and moors. Howkins has described how this became an issue which excited all parts of the political and social spectrum, arguing that the "mass trespasses[6] of the 1930s galvanised working class opinion…and kept the issue of the land alive among some sections at least of the labour and working class-movement" (Howkins, 2002, p.19). It was also not a straightforward issue of class. Charles Trevelyan was a committed supporter of the access to moors and mountains movement. Perhaps more surprisingly, G. M. Trevelyan, who was much more conservative/traditionalist politically, became the first President of the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) in 1930, which had sprung from the German *Jugend Herbergen* movement. The YHA emphasised the value of a community of people coming together to share interests in outdoor pursuits, primarily cycling and walking. Its primary intention was encourage city dwellers to obtain a greater knowledge and care of the countryside and to recover their rural roots. As Roger Orgill expressed it, this was an important period for the outdoors as a space for leisure and shared group activity. This period saw, for instance, the formation of the Ramblers Association and the Cyclists Touring Club. Roger considered that the communal life that went with these movements was an important forerunner for the kind of adult education which took place later in the short-term residential colleges – "it brought people together and during their time together, there were opportunities for discussion and seeding their ideas" (interview Roger Orgill, 9th May, 2014).

Ideas of the outdoor life and its shaping by more occult interests was also a feature of the 1920s and 1930s, with a number of groups and new movements forming which celebrated

[6] In Sunday April 24th 1932 the Mass Trespass on Kinder Scout took place in the Peak District. Four hundred ramblers, led by the Communist-inspired British Workers' Sport Federation, set off to climb Kinder. They had been grown frustrated with the lack of progress being made by official ramblers' federations towards establishing a Right to Roam. As they approached the Kinder plateau they came into direct confrontation with the Duke of Devonshire's gamekeepers in a symbolic moment representing the new political spirit colliding with the old – the landowners coming face to face with the pro-access lobby. The Mass Trespass created sufficient waves that by 1949, the post-war Labour Government passed the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, which involved complex negotiations with aristocratic landowners to engineer access to many previously contested areas.

alternative, 'pre-modern' ideas of living. One such grouping was the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift[7], led by John Hargrave (1894 –1982), an artist and writer, whose Kibbo Kift moniker was 'White Fox'. Hargrave, a pacifist, founded the movement following the Great War, as a direct reaction to the violence and devastation. The Kibbo Kift brought together boys and girls in an educationally progressive alternative to the Boy Scouts. The emphasis in the Kibbo Kift was to develop a new elite scheme which would influence policy, by developing physical, mental and moral training amongst its members, to lead humankind into a healthier state of peace and togetherness without poverty and war. The organisation was, at least initially, strictly non-military in approach, focusing on activities to develop physical fitness, woodcraft, handicrafts and ritual. Hargrave's skills as an artist came to the fore in his creation of symbolic artefacts – masks, totems, images and clothing – which borrowed from different cultures and traditions, including the North American Indian and the Aztec. The Kibbo Kift did not affiliate with existing political structures and its approach was essentially a form of 'green' politics which eventually spawned the Green Shirt movement, which saw it coming into regular conflict in the streets against the British Union of Fascists and Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts. Hargrave increasingly moved in an overtly political direction, promoting a system of Social Credit which, essentially, derided the Left/Right polarity in politics and the economic and political systems and institutions which supported it and offered a 'third way'. He believed in the primacy of the individual and that a national dividend – in the form of social credit dispensation – should be created which would offer sufficient economic security and leisure to everyone to enable them to cease focusing on making money, allowing for individual freedom to pursue spiritual, intellectual or cultural goals which would result in spiritual self-development.

This has may be seen to have some similarities with Guild Socialism, elements of which George Trevelyan himself had studied, which was based on the thinking of William Morris, and, later, that of G. D. H. Cole, the political theorist, economist and historian. After Cambridge, and his period in Germany, Trevelyan spent two years developing furniture making skills in the Cotswolds at the workshops of Peter Waals in Chalford, Gloucestershire, part of the Gimson school. Waals had himself trained and worked with Ernest Gimson who

[7] The words 'Kibbo Kift' come from an archaic Cheshire dialect denoting 'proof of great strength'.

had been a protégé and friend of William Morris. Trevelyan said that the hands-on making experience was a revelation to him: "I had studied the medieval crafts guilds, but as an intellectual it had never occurred to me that one could actually make things oneself" (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p.37). The medieval crafts guilds had focused on artisanal production organised by craftsmen for themselves, the welfare of workers and "the dignity that was due to labour" (Glass, 1966, p.6). Morris conceived of "an anarchist paradise peopled by artist-craftsmen" (ibid), an organic, pre-capitalist sense of community, a proper respect for artisanship and strong chivalric values, and Guild Socialism espoused the view that parliamentary methods provided "no solution to the real problems of the working class" (ibid, p.8). Guild Socialism, instead, argued for a form of active democracy at communal, ward and village level. G.D.H. Cole took aspects of William Morris's fascination with the medieval period and brought them into a modern, industrial context. Cole argued, in *Guild Socialism* (1918) and *Guild Socialism Re-stated* (1920) that workers should take control of their own industry and that power should be diffused, both in the economy and in society. His was a federalized conception of socialism with minimal state intervention, which would focus on looking after "wider community interests…to act in some degree as a check on the producers" (ibid, p.47).

Rolf Gardiner had a profound dislike of both urbanisation and industrialisation, perceiving both as the route to a standardising, suburban soullessness (Stone, 2011). Whilst Rolf Gardiner was involved with the Kibbo Kift from the start, he and John Hargrave clashed over the leadership and direction of the organisation, and Gardiner's thinking eventually became much more right-wing and overtly pro-German.

Gardiner was a close friend of Trevelyan's from his time at Cambridge university right through the Attingham years, at which he appeared in connection with Soil Association events. From a wealthy landowning family, he was left the Gore Farm estate in Springhead, Dorset by his uncle, Henry Balfour Gardiner, in 1927. It was there he began experiments with organic farming and formulated some of his own ideas for alternative forms of living which involved the return to a "regionally nourished peasant culture" (Conford, 2001, p. 127).

Gardiner had flirted with Social Credit and Guild Socialism but neither the individualism of the former nor the collectivism of the latter appealed to him and he eventually moved away from both towards a notion of a united national revivalism, bringing together all states within the

"Germanic world" (Stone, 2013, p. 102). In 1932 he took a group of dancers called the English Dancers and Players out to Germany, which included a young Kitty Trevelyan and Marabel Hargrave, his future wife.[8] Gardiner's involvement with Germany was complex. Gardiner spoke fluent German: his mother was Austrian and he had spent long periods of his childhood in Germany. His involvement with the German youth movement, which created a shift in his politics, was marked by a deep friendship with Kitty's future husband, Georg Götsch, an important figure in the German *Wandervogel*, who established the influential Musikheim at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, the home of German music connected with the youth movement[9]. Götsch and Gardiner had a shared interest in choral music and contra dances[10]. Gardiner also believed that Götsch, through his work at the Musikheim, represented a "true executor of the ideals of the National Socialist state"[11]. They also shared a conception of nationhood which understood the self-conscious masculinity and vitalism of the German youth movement as a means of clearing away the trappings of a progressive modernist worldview which left behind tradition. As Adriaansen described it "the youth movement's alternative was a 'vital conception of history', which spurred an engagement with 'spiritual ancestors' who were considered to be still "immediately alive" (Adriaansen, 2015, p.2). He articulated the lure of this vision of a new metaphysics, with its Romantic emphasis on "traces of the eternal" and the bonds of comradeship, as the bringing together of body and spirit:

> The magic of the youth movement was that it enabled youth to concretely experience such rhythms in their main activities in an age which longed for a new metaphysics. In hiking through the pastures of the German countryside, in singing folk songs around a comforting old fireplace, in the bonds of comradeship forged on a journey through the Bohemian Forest, or in the spell of an old mystery play, traces of the eternal were spurred. These young wanderers focused on 'form' rather than on ideas, on images rather than concepts; body and spirit were not posed in an oppositional scheme (Adriaansen, 2015, p. 3).

Gardiner, and the circle of people with whom he associated, espoused a form of rural revivalism which was based on a belief in a return to a feudal world, with a "natural aristocracy" (not a vulgar mercantile middle class) and a "sturdy yeomanry", or small-scale landowner, working together with the "common purpose of serving the crown, the soil and

[8] Marabel Hargrave was a friend of Kitty Trevelyan's at Oxford University. She later played a leading role in orchestrating drama productions at Attingham. Gardiner married Marabel in 1932.
[9] It was on the 1932 trip that Kitty met Götsch at the Musikheim.
[10] A folk dance made up of long lines of couples.
[11] Gardiner, quoted in Stone, 2013, p. 102 - Letter to Joseph Goebbels, April 1933.

the race" (Stone, 2011, p.163). At the heart of this belief system was a profound dislike of democracy, the state and the urban. As Conford described it, in his book outlining the origins of the organic movement, "the radical Right were hostile to parliamentary democracy, wanting an authoritarian state and a folk community, and favouring organic 'political organisations'" (Conford, 2001, p153). Concepts of nationhood revolved around farming and husbandry, physical connection with the land, folklore and dance and song. It had strong occult connections and, whilst Gardiner was not an anthroposophist, he was deeply influenced by Steiner's concepts of reincarnation and of the pre-eminence of the Nordic or Aryan race. As Moore-Colyer expressed it, Gardiner "gradually evolved a belief system which combined a baffling blend of esoteric Gnosticism and High Anglicanism with a belief in reincarnation and more than a dash of green primitive paganism" (Moore-Colyer, 2001, p.200). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Gardiner's shift to the Right saw him becoming a Nazi sympathiser. By the early 1930s he started to divine "Hitler's vision in almost mystical terms, and while he had reservations over many aspects of Nazi policy, he saw within the concept of National Socialism the seeds of a united Europe… This would be an 'organic' Europe where men lived according to natural law" (Moore-Colyer, 2001, p.196). He particularly admired one of the Nazi party's chief ideologists, Richard Darré, who was Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture from 1933 to 1942, and with whom Gardiner remained in contact after the Second World War:

> To Gardiner, Darré's inspired concept of 'blood-and-soil' defined an inescapable mystical relationship between race and soil. Since the soil belonged to the 'folk', so could man, living close to the soil, express his own life-force through husbandry, dance, song, and poetry (Moore-Colyer, 2001, p.197).

'*Blut und boden'*, blood and soil, is important here as 'blood' denotes the notion of allegiance to one's race or ancestry and 'soil' expresses ideas of affinity with the soil, the land or territory. On the one hand, it is representative of a long-term and respectful relationship between a people and their land; and, on the other, it is intertwined with concepts of racial purity and removing the 'waste material' from society. It was a central component in Nazi ideology. The German youth movement were not slow in adapting to such beliefs once Hitler became the German Chancellor. By 1933, Trevelyan's sister Kitty had become alarmed by a change in her husband and described the fundamental ideological rift which had opened between them, "on a level which nothing could bridge", where the Youth movement had

fallen into step with Hitler and had “overnight swung into obedience” (Trevelyan, K., 1962, p. 86).

Trevelyan had finished his craft apprenticeship by this point and had decided to take up training with F. M. Alexander in earnest, which he pursued between 1931 and 1934. For two years afterwards he attempted to teach the technique in his own right, though, ultimately, he found the experience too socially isolating. Trevelyan’s diary written during his time teaching the Alexander Technique is fascinating. It is clear within it that he engaged on a social level, at least, with the English Mistery. Gardiner had gone on from the Kibbo Kift to join the English Mistery. This was an organisation led by William Sanderson who had been a freemason but had grown disenchanted with freemasonry, to the point of deciding to establish his own form of masonic movement which aimed to restore rightful leadership to the British race; namely, replacing democracy with the aristocracy. Stone has described the Mistery in the following way:

> Preoccupied by the concepts of service to the monarch and noblesse oblige, and obsessed with the need to revive England's emasculated hereditary aristocracy along with the medieval guild system, Sanderson devised the Mistery along strictly hierarchical lines (Stone, 2003, p. 339).

The hierarchy involved local ‘kin’ groups, led by a Warden, and the primary objective was to inculcate a love of ‘service’, with allegiance to the monarchy and the ‘Nordic race’, through control of local crafts and trades on an organic, village by village basis. Whether this appealed directly to Trevelyan or not, is difficult to determine, though some of the rhetoric must have chimed with more romantic conceptions of the rural, village life, with its emphasis on local crafts. However, he certainly dined during this period with Sanderson, who sought his advice about training up his “young men” in the Alexander Technique to develop their physical prowess. The diary entry reads:

> Dined with the Mistery at Gattis. Sanderson insists on taking lessons on an experimental basis and begins tomorrow. He is very keen on numbers of his young men coming to me. He was laughing about the commission sent to Germany to inquire into physical training “when we have the great genius here in London” (Diary entry Monday 7th December, 1936, in Fischer, Ed., 1998, p. 73).

The “commission sent to Germany” is intriguing but no further detail is offered in the diary, and nor does Trevelyan mention the Mistery again. The English Array, which sprang from it

and with which Gardiner was involved from its inception, was much more overtly about the preservation and intensification of an English way of life. It also supported organic farming techniques and opposed devitalised foods. It engaged with the eugenics movement, a strong force in the 1920s and 1930s amongst people from very different political perspectives, and its focus on organic husbandry and opposition to state-led intensified farming was interconnected with concerns about national health and the deterioration of the physical body, particularly amongst the working class. These ideas led Gardiner into his next project, Kinship in Husbandry, "an unofficial, informal grouping from a variety of backgrounds, who shared a common interest in organicism and a distrust of the highly mechanized, chemically-based agriculture perceived by officialdom to delineate the path of progress" (Moore-Colyer, 2001, p.201). This grouping included amongst its number Jorian Jenks (1899-1963), a farmer and writer, who was a prominent member of the British Union of Fascists, as the agricultural advisor to the party, and espoused the notion of 'spiritual ecologism'. Kinship in Husbandry was a direct precursor of the Soil Association, which was set up in 1946 (Moore-Colyer, 2001).

As John Field has commented:

> Public concern about 'soft' bodies between the wars was by no means limited to one particular stratum of society. Physical education and games spread rapidly through schools during the inter-war years, and local authorities and other bodies provided a growing volume of physical training for other groups (Field, 2009, p.17).

One important expression of this concern, and the drive towards physical training for "other groups", focused state interest on the unemployed. In 1930, the Labour government developed a national scheme for long-term unemployed men, which created Instructional Centres, known by many as work camps, particularly aimed at young working class men. Attendance was compulsory at such centres until 1932 for unemployed men, often from very poor backgrounds and from the areas hardest hit by the depression of the mid-1920s and 1930s, such as the coalfields of the Midlands and the North East. Whilst the central aim of the scheme was to improve employability, the main focus of the activity was on hard physical labour outdoors, or reconstruction, to recondition and train the men's bodies – and their minds – and to take them away from the "neglected heaps" of the industrial districts.

John Field cited a letter from December 1928 from an official in the Ministry of Labour to his counterpart in the Treasury in which the official described the work camps as a way of dealing with men, or, as they were described in this exchange, "material", who had become "'soft' and temporarily demoralised" (F. G Bowers to A W Hurst, 12 December 1928, NA T161/902, as quoted in Field, 2009) by long-term unemployment. In a parallel with elements of Gardiner et al's thinking, the work camps were part of the state response to the human suffering experienced by those who were out of work, which brought together moral training with the ideal of living in an alternative rural community. It appears to have represented a toxic mix of utopian idealism and social control:

> Many voluntary work camp systems were inspired by the belief that in some way, the work camp represented a community, however, temporary, that showed life could be lived differently, and prepared men – and sometimes women to live otherwise (Field, 2013, p.195).

Gardiner himself was a leader of one of the work camps in the Cleveland area, known by the local men taken on – mostly unemployed miners – as 'Heartbreak Hill' (Field, 2013, p.205). The men were involved in "working to break rough moorland down for cultivation" (p.205), an important element in Gardiner's drive to develop organic farming techniques which provided him with a ready supply of free labour. Camp life was leavened with folk dancing and singing as part of everyday activities. Gardiner saw the bringing together of students and unemployed men as "an experimental form of social university" (Gardiner, quoted in Field, 2013, p.206) in which a vigorous outdoor life, traditional agricultural practices and dance and song, was a means of conferring both physical and mental health and wholeness, and a revitalised masculinity, on the participants. In 1934 he suggested that there should be exchanges between the Hitler Youth and English work camps[12]. Gardiner had become fascinated by the Danish Folk High School movement in which he perceived the same emphasis on reinvigorated racial roots and which he considered had the potential for "turning the unemployed into 'the potential bearer of a new order of society'" (Field, p.207).

It is the Danish Folk High School that I now turn. After Trevelyan's unsuccessful attempt to become a private Alexander Technique trainer, he again found himself uncertain about his

[12] Suggested in Gardiner's 1934 paper, *A Survey of Constructive Aspects of the New Germany*, quoted in Stone, 2013, p. 101.

future. In 1936, at the age of 30, he was approached by Kurt Hahn, the German educationalist, to become a schoolmaster at Gordonstoun in Moray, Scotland. Before commencing work with the school, Hahn encouraged Trevelyan to go out, on his own, to Denmark and Sweden to gain a greater understanding of the Folk High schools and their educational techniques. Trevelyan returned exhilarated by the vision of an education which was based on 'enlivenment' rather than instruction, with teachers speaking directly from the heart on subjects they found inspiring. He was impressed by the freedom the schools had, having developed independently of the official educational establishment, and with minimal government supervision. Bishop Nikolai Frederik Grundtvig (1783-1872), the Danish educational thinker and writer, who conceived of the Folk High School movement, placed considerable emphasis on learning communally, and on understanding others and learning from them how to live a useful and productive life. He was certain that this was best achieved in a residential setting where the stimulus of conversation and the balm of kindness were at least as important as books:

> I saw life, real human life, as it is lived in this world, and saw at once that to be enlightened, to live a useful and enjoyable human life, most people did not need books at all, but only a genuinely kind heart, sound common sense, a kind good ear, a kind good mouth, and then liveliness to talk with really enlightened people, who would be able to arouse their interest and show them how human life appears when the light shines upon it (Grundtvig, 1856, quoted in Borish, 1991, p.18).

Grundtvig's approach was citizenship-based, and deliberately constructed as public education in contradistinction to the elitism and separatism which he believed typified Danish university education. The emphasis at the Folk High Schools was on creating a microcosm of society, bringing together post-school age people from all walks of life on a residential basis to talk and debate important issues, as a critical part of the educational process. This was an important influence on Trevelyan's idea of the 'living word' which placed great emphasis on avoiding 'dead' words in text books and letting ideas breathe through the oral medium. The subjects offered were deliberately diverse and there was considerable pedagogical freedom. There were no examinations, as the education and enlightenment on offer were viewed as being sufficient reward. The focus was on self-development and learning how to live. There was also a strong emphasis on a reinvigorated sense of national pride and on a renewed focus on folk history, lores, folk tales and traditions which were understood as helping to create a shared sense of nationhood. This was Gardiner's point of interest.

The visit was a decisive experience for Trevelyan in his pursuit of an educational concept. Of particular importance to Trevelyan was the freedom conferred on the students to determine their interests and follow their inspiration, or to "shape their own curriculum". In his autobiography, 'Exploration into God' (1991) he claimed that the concept of a British version of the Folk High School movement was in his mind before Sir Richard Livingstone wrote on the subject in the 1940s in *The Future in Education* (1941) and *Education for a World Adrift* (1943):

> I saw that for England the ideal tool for a new consciousness would be the short residential course in a country house, to break through into wider interests. I am rather proud to have been thinking along these lines in the 1930's, well before the movement for the Short Term residential colleges came to birth (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p.39).

Trevelyan wrote that he did not feel that the idea of the Folk high school could be applied *in toto* in Britain but that "aspects of Grundtvig's teaching were of vital significance" (p.39). What interested Trevelyan about the movement was that Grundtvig started outlining his ideas for the Folk High School approach in the 1840s, though it was not until the 1880s that his writings were acted upon and the first schools developed. The decades immediately following the Napoleonic Wars (1790-1815) had been a period of economic and civil disruption in Denmark, with the country in a "slough of despond" (p.39). Personal development for the lower echelons of society was central to the High School approach, within a Christian framework. Trevelyan described the approach thus:

> His plan was to run five-month residential courses for young farmers, not to teach them better farming, but to make them better Danes, so that they went back to their farms inspired, through learning about Danish history and literature and Scandinavian mythology and folklore. He felt that "enlivenment" was as important as "enlightenment"…They were free to shape their own curriculum on themes they themselves found inspiring. The plan worked, and it did much for modern Denmark (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p. 39).

Whether or not his was an accurate view of Grundtvig and his legacy, many of the features which were to define Trevelyan's own approach to education at the SAEC are encapsulated in this description of the High School movement. His commitment to Sir Richard Livingstone's vision for the subjects "best suited to and best exploited in residence where discussions could go on over meals and into the night" (Drews, 1995, p.202) are demonstrable in the

description, with its emphasis on literature, the arts and citizenship. The 'appeal to the heart' typified by Grundtvig's concept of the 'living word' appears to have involved an evocation of the folk history of the country, a return to the language and history of the fatherland, a call to its past, to help rebuild connection with the land and to act as a civilising influence on the people. All of these ideas built on Trevelyan's experience up to this stage; his engagement at Gordonstoun and the Steiner school movement was to take his thinking further.

Pioneers of the Free School movement

Returning armed with ideas to Gordonstoun, Trevelyan began his career as a teacher of history, literature, woodwork and outdoor pursuits. As Trevelyan expressed it, this convergence of so many of his interests in the teaching of children "made a fine and full life" (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p.39). Hahn gained a teacher with a wide ranging set of skills and interests and also someone who was willing to work for very little money, at a time when Gordonstoun had not long been established. Farrer referred to Trevelyan at Gordonstoun as a "zero hours' aristocrat" as he worked without a formal salary (Interview – Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014).

The spirit of alternative or free education was at large in the inter-war years, led by idealists and pioneers who wanted to challenge state-based educational practices. Sometimes referred to as 'democratic' schooling, the emphasis within the school environment was placed on breaking down the barriers between student and teacher. Important precedents included Summerhill, a boarding school in Southern England, which was founded by A. S. Neill in 1921 and still runs today. Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst had established the Dartington School in Totnes, Devon in 1926. Both wealthy philanthropists, they purchased the neglected 14th century Dartington estate in order to create a private foundation – the 'Dartington Experiment' – which would become a pioneering site for farming, forestry and educational projects, aimed at championing ecological advances and promoting nature-based education. Central to Dartington's core values was an emphasis on spiritual education and meditation, inspired by the co-founder of the School, the Bengali polymath, poet, politician, musician and thinker Rabindranath Tagore, who sought a pedagogical approach which moved away from rote classroom learning and towards knowledge for the purpose of spiritual liberation, based on the concept of *brahmacharya.* In Hindu and Buddhist philosophy *brahmacharya* refers to a choice of lifestyle which involves living simply and cleanly, practising non-violence against

the self or others, in thought and deed, meditation, a devotional relationship with sexual expression, and the voluntary imposition of restraints on stimulating foods, intoxicants and behaviours. The concept of personal mastery or self-control is central within it. Its ultimate objective is to facilitate a deeper connection with Brahman, God, or ultimate reality, the single binding unity behind the diversity of all that exists in the universe.

At Gordonstoun Hahn developed the Round Square schooling concept, which aimed to prepare students for life by offering them learning in authentic situations generated by work projects, community services and leadership training. The idea of 'service learning' was an approach common across Dartington, Summerhill and Gordonstoun. Hahn was clear that his purpose in establishing Gordonstoun was to develop future world leaders who would go out into the world in pursuit of the ideal of promoting peace, forming a supportive network of former Gordonstoun students who could help one another. Seaman described Hahn's concept as that of developing "a global 'aristocracy of service' possessed of Samaritan ethics" (Seaman, 2016, p. 2). The school placed considerable emphasis on developing an internationalist focus, demonstrated by its efforts to create understanding of different cultures through international exchanges. The focus was on an active or experiential learning approach, designed to help develop "every student academically, physically, culturally and spiritually, through a process of self-confrontation and self-formation within the supportive environment of a school community" (Sliwka in OECD, 2008, Chapter 5, p.2). Creating "liminal spaces in which "authentic" real selves can emerge", revealed through testing the body and the mind, (Seaman, 2016, p. 6) was at the heart of such an approach.

The reasons for Hahn's interest in the Danish Folk High School movement are not clear, though he claimed that he wanted to develop a school free of the hierarchies associated with other public schools and to attract people from all parts of society. He championed 'natural hierarchies', arising as a result of merit and character, self-reliance and self-discipline. There was a concentration on bodily discipline and tough physical challenges, which were designed to be 'character-building', through different forms of outdoor exploration and adventure. Hahn was also the founder of the Outward Bound movement, and helped to establish the first Outward Bound School at Aberdovey in Wales in 1941. Critics of Hahn's approach have suggested that, far from stripping back hierarchy and eschewing corporal punishment, both

Gordonstoun, and the early Outward Bound movement under Hahn's ethos, were highly hierarchical and undemocratic in nature. Charles, Prince of Wales, who was a boarding student at Gordonstoun in the 1960s, described regular beatings, cold showers and peer pressure as some of the ways in which hierarchy was imposed and some of the reasons why, for him, Gordonstoun was a "a purgatory as well as a penitentiary" (Brendon, 2012, p.84, quoted in Seaman, 2016, p. 2).

By 1942 Trevelyan had attended the lecture on anthroposophy by Dr Walter Johannes Stein (1891-1957), an Austrian philosopher, Waldorf school teacher and one of the pioneers of anthroposophy. Representing a moment of epiphany for Trevelyan, the experience also had a decisive impact on his educational thinking. His spiritually-orientated sister Kitty had encouraged him to attend to find out more about Steiner's concepts of biodynamic farming. Trevelyan, in his autobiography, recorded the moment when all the questions and concerns he had had about his place in the world, his educational interests, and his sense of himself as a seeker unsure of what he was looking for all came together in the philosophy of anthroposophy. He spent the next four years studying its principles and practices under the guidance of Dr Ernst Lehrs (1894-1979), a German anthroposophist, teacher, lecturer and writer.

Steiner believed that education based on anthroposophical tenets for children from a young age was vital for the spirit. Steiner had founded the first Waldorf school in 1919, to serve the children of employees of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart in Germany but by the time of Trevelyan's initiation into anthroposophical thinking the schools had spread throughout the world. In the Steiner model of education the emphasis is on self-discovery through the medium of creative teaching methods, which include *eurythmy* - a performance art utilising dance, music and drama - and poetry and painting, integrated into a core academic curriculum. The principles of anthroposophy, though not explicitly taught, underpin pedagogical conceptions of utilising education as a means of enabling children to become free human beings. The idea of the 'spiral curriculum' is that teaching should enable children's spiritual identity to unfold through the body, soul and spirit they inhabit in their current lifetime and to achieve a 'higher consciousness'. This inner development is attained through consciously achieved *imagination*, *inspiration* and *intuition*, which connects with concepts of

the 'living word and the living idea'. The belief that all humans are reincarnated and are working through the legacies of their preceding spiritual existence is a central tenet. The spiritual hierarchy is implicit in Steiner's thinking that, without proper education, the soul remains caught on the wheel of endless trials.

Charles Trevelyan promoted education for all children. This, he argued, was the democratic response to the bastions of "economic privilege", which he perceived schools like Harrow to be. His support for Kurt Hahn and his pedagogical approach, developed at the Salem School, was immediately after the First World War, long before the school was formed in 1934. At its inception it had only two pupils and struggled for some years for financial viability. Now, Gordonstoun charges £10,000 to £12,000 a term for boarding students. Another 'alternative' school, Bedales, which both Rolf Gardiner and George Trevelyan's cousin, Julian, the artist and painter attended, currently charges more than Harrow and Eton at £11,230 per term. Bedales has a long history of attracting "the intellectual aristocracy" (Annan, 1999, p. 1), as the Trevelyans have been called, and is proud of its progressive, artistic roots and the many members of the aristocracy and the cultural elite it has taught. Annan (1999) suggested that the networks which control so much of the establishment and the power structures in Britain are formulated at such schools. There are now Steiner/Waldorf schools in 60 countries and, according to Sliwka, it is "the predominant form of alternative education around the globe" (Sliwka, OECD, 2008, in Chapter 5, p.3). Most Steiner/Waldorf schools are fee-paying schools and therefore available only to those who can afford them for their children. Democracy and 'free' or 'alternative' education are awkward bedfellows.

War Service and Newbattle College

The final element in the evolution of Trevelyan's educational thinking was his experience during the war and in the immediate post-war period. In many ways, his army experience appears to have acted as a genuine counterbalance to the political and occult interests he had been surrounded by earlier in his life and career and also seems to have acted as a modifying influence on his burgeoning involvement with anthroposophy.

His role in the war was with the Home Guard in Inverness, with GHQ Travelling Wings, which was the Home Guard's training unit. Trevelyan was appointed to a Regular Army Emergency Commission (RAEC) as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade on 18th April 1942[13], according to the Army List and the Forces War Records entry[14]. He was promoted to a "war substantive rank" of Lieutenant on 18th Oct 1942, and then to Temporary Captain on 19th May 1945[15].

As Farrer described it, his experience in the Home Guard enabled him to continue with many of the pursuits he had gained experience in during his earlier life, including his mountaineering activities whilst at Cambridge and his teaching of outdoor pursuits during his time at Gordonstoun. In this sense, it was more of the same for Trevelyan:

> He had all the experience of training for outdoor life from his time at Gordonstoun, and from his roof-climbing, fencing, walking, mountaineering exploits. He had experience of teaching boys and young men, and enthusing and motivating them, from Gordonstoun and from working on the beginnings of the Outward Bound movement (Farrer, 2000, p.54).

However, his wartime teaching experience convinced him of the importance of teaching adults, and stimulated in him a deepening interest in the cross-fertilisation of ideas which can occur as a result of people from different backgrounds and with different interests coming together in a residential situation. His decision not to return to Gordonstoun at the end of the war was based on a desire to acquire more skills in teaching adults and may have resulted from his interest in the Danish Folk High School movement and his experience of working with soldiers from all backgrounds during the war.

The pressures of wartime had highlighted that many soldiers had had poor levels of education, and of a kind which offered little real stimulation, in their early lives. The Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA) was established in response to a push for education to form

---

[13] The Army List - first Quarter of 1946 ("Corrected generally to 7th March, 1946") - National Library of Scotland (http://digital.nls.uk/british-military-lists/pageturner.cfm?id=97343435)

[14] Forces War Records: https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/records/6076815/2nd-lieutenant-g-l-trevelyan-british-army-rifle-brigade / Accessed 6/5/15

[15] The RAEC was essentially for officers who were not members of the Regular Army. Trevelyan would have been too old at 36 for active service. The war department cancelled all normal 'commissions' (i.e. being made officially an Officer) at the start of the Second World War and then granted them only for the duration of the war. Hence anyone made up to an officer after September 1939 was on a RAEC - the 'emergency' element referred to the 'wartime duration'.

part of army training, which had been run down by the military establishment in the former Army Education Corps. Both the WEA and the British Institute for Adult Education responded to this vision and, as Mackenzie has argued, "army education was an integral part of the ongoing process of reconstruction" (Mackenzie, 1992, p.40). The growth of open discussion groups and debating societies in the army showed a widespread thirst for an education which had been denied many ordinary soldiers. This included discussion on issues of immediate contemporary relevance, such as Beveridge's outline plan for the Welfare State. Morale was understood as being inseparable from these matters and ABCA was given specific functions relating to education, information and communication.

Immediately post-war Trevelyan was able to secure a position at Newbattle Abbey, which served from September 1939 as the No. 1 Army Training College, in Dalkeith, a college for demobilised servicemen and women, one of eight such colleges across the UK where the army had made provision for service people to spend a month acquiring additional education to help ease them back into civilian life. This was a broad-based education with a liberal feel, part of the Labour Party's aspiration to regenerate the nation, and encompassed a wide range of subjects including current affairs, psychology and physical training lessons, "the arts, law, civics, or joinery and carpentry" (Farrer, 2000, p.55). He was to spend two years there, from 1945 to 1947. His express objective was to gain more experience with adults "through teaching history and literature", explicitly in the hope "that in due course I might become a tutor in one of the new colleges now coming to birth" (Trevelyan, 2012, p. 41).

The "new colleges" which Trevelyan alluded to were the short-term adult residential colleges. This was the kind of educational establishment the 11th Marquis of Lothian, Philip Kerr had had in mind when he had bequeathed Newbattle Abbey to the nation in 1937. Kerr had been a passionate advocate for the National Trust since 1934, when he had addressed the Trust's annual meeting about his concerns for the future of country houses in Britain. The building had been the 16th century ancestral home of the Marquesses of Lothian, along with the 125 acres of woodland and gardens in which it was located, based on the site of the 12th century Abbey. Kerr had been explicit in his intention that the house and grounds be used as a national residential college for adults, the first of its kind in Scotland. Newbattle Abbey College had

opened in January 1937 with 22 students until it was requisitioned as by the War Office in 1939 (Newbattle Abbey booklet, 2016).

Kerr believed that education was vital to democracy: “Adult education was not only valuable to the individual, but was also essential to successful democracy”. He also conceived it as a means of enabling people to “think and act for themselves”. His address to the National Trust ended with the words that education should also be the means of preserving the “traditions that had made the country what it was” (1935: Report of Address by Lord Lothian, Founder of Newbattle Abbey College, quoted in Ragged University).

In many ways, Lord Lothian’s speech evinced the duality of adult education as being for the promotion of democracy through the development of critical and independent thinking and as a means of preserving the traditions that had made the nation “what it was”. I am arguing that these same dialectical tensions were at the centre of Trevelyan’s own experience and also converged in his educational thinking. It is to these tensions and contradictions that I now turn, in my examination of the findings from my research on the SAEC.

Chapter Five – The Establishment of the SAEC: The spirit of Reconstruction

Introduction

The following three chapters present my primary research and use the testimony of former academic and domestic staff, students – throughout the life of the College – people who worked at the College as external tutors, and relatives and friends of Sir George Trevelyan. My aim here is to demonstrate the experience of living and learning within the College environment, to reflect on the structure and approach of the College, to consider the specific impact of Trevelyan on the evolution and effectiveness of the College as a learning space and to look at how the courses changed, as his own educational thinking evolved and his confidence grew, with a concomitant change in the student body.

In these chapters I make detailed reference to the Board of Governors' and Warden's Reports from 1944 to 1976 and the Course Programme collection. This material has been supplemented by the detailed course outlines for the esoteric courses, which are considered in depth in Chapter Seven. These sources have provided invaluable insight into the thinking behind the development of the courses, how the College was promoted and the nature of the student body. The result is the material presented thematically here.

The initial section in Chapter Five documents the early years of the SAEC, showing its evolution as an idea, its context within adult education in Shropshire, the role of the Local Education Authority and the College's governance, funding and staffing structures. I also explore the College in connection with the tensions between what Wright described as the National Trust's post-war "cult of the country house" (Wright, *The Guardian*, 1 August 1987) and the "anti-democratic bacillus" which this generated.

This chapter also examines how the College undertook promotion of the courses and sought to attract students in both the first ten years of the College and post-1960. This section is followed by an analysis of how the College changed and evolved over the period of Sir George

Trevelyan's tenure as Warden, in terms of who it attracted and how it was promoted. The chapter is animated by the themes I have explored in the thesis so far, with an emphasis on class and cultural issues, and includes an examination of the types of student who attended the SAEC in terms of their demographic backgrounds – their occupation, age, gender and geographical origin. I have approached all three of the findings chapters by examining the student body; the residential experience, for staff and students, and the course development in two periods: 1948 to 1960 (Early Years) and 1960 to 1971 (Mid to Final Years), when Trevelyan left as Warden. At the end of Chapter Seven, an overview of Geoffrey Toms' period as Warden, from 1971 to 1976, is given.

Establishing the College – 1943 – 1948

> We should start by recognising that the country house has not just been preserved: it has also been cultivated as a quotation from a supposedly grander age, one that sparkles with new and distinctly modern significance as it is played off against the grey prose of the post-war settlement surrounding it (Wright, *The Guardian*, 1 August 1987, p. 3).

The idea for the Adult Education College at Attingham, in Atcham, Shropshire, was first suggested by the National Trust and Shropshire County Council in 1943 but there had been discussions about the future usage of Attingham Park from as early as 1938. It was the 8th Lord Berwick, Thomas Henry Noel-Hill (1877-1947), who lived there with his wife, Teresa, the younger daughter of William Hulton, artist and book illustrator, immediately prior to the establishment of the SAEC. They had married in 1919 in Venice and began the job of comprehensively restoring Attingham Park shortly afterwards. Lord Berwick died in 1947, before final decisions on the future of the house and grounds had been made, and Lady Berwick continued to live in the property until her own death in 1972. Early discussions in the press, and in family correspondence about the house, are informative and pick up some of the grand themes of the 20th century, including perceptions of education and educators, anxieties about the future of the aristocracy and concerns about rising socialist thinking, particularly amongst the landed upper class in the immediate pre- and post-war period. A 1937 article from *The Times*, entitled 'Historic Country Houses', deplored "condemning the [country] house to be turned into a school".

In October 1938, Lord Berwick, in a letter to D.M. Matheson, who was then Secretary of the National Trust, raised his concerns about the prospect of the lease of Attingham Hall and Park to a school. He referred to the potential for such a client to cause damage to the furniture and fittings and also, later in the letter, declared that it had been his intention that these would also be bequeathed to the National Trust, along with the house and gardens:

> This I must point out would not be in my view the sort of tenant that would be suitable. Mr. Lees-Milne will I expect have told you that there is fine decorative furniture in the house – chandeliers, mirrors and fine silk curtains, as well as the family and other portraits (Lord Berwick, Letter to D. M. Matheson, October 25th, 1938).

The reference to Mr. Lees-Milne is to James Lees-Milne, who was Secretary to the Country Houses Committee of the National Trust from 1936 to 1950 and remained an independent consultant to the Trust until 1966. Lees-Milne had numerous encounters with stately home owners which he acidly (and sometimes very amusingly) described in his diaries from the period. He was not complimentary, for instance, about his meetings with the Berwicks, and was perplexed and nonplussed by the erudite Trevelyans, whom he felt had embarrassed him as they challenged him to a game of general knowledge in which he failed rather badly[1]. However, his chief outpouring of scorn was for social democratic reform and, in particular, for anything which smacked of communism. An ardent supporter of Franco in the 1930s, his beliefs were extreme. As Wright described it, he conceived an "opposition between the traditional *nation* and the degenerate modern *society* which, after the war, was threatening to displace it" (Wright, *The Guardian*, 1 August, 1987). He believed in preserving and conserving the old order for English country houses. This was in the face of military requisitioning during the war and high taxes after the war, which had resulted in properties being pulled down at an accelerating rate by the end of the 1940s and into the early 1950s –

1 "After dinner I long for bed. But no. We have general knowledge questions….At the end of the 'game', for this is what they call this prep school examination, they award marks. Every single member of the family gets 100 out of 100. The son-in-law gets 80…I get 0. But then I am a half-wit. Deeply humiliated I receive condolences from the Trevelyans and assurances I shall no doubt do better next time. I make an inward vow that there never will be a next time" - James Lees-Milne (1992) *People and Places - Country House Donors and the National Trust*, London, John Murray Publishers, p.162, quoted in Trevelyan, L. (2012) *A Very British Family: The Trevelyans and their World*. London: I.B. Tauris, p.135.

"just under 300 houses are recorded as having been demolished in the 1950s"[2] (Worsley, 2002, p.19). Attingham Park itself had been used by the NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institute), with the erection of huts and an ablution block, as well as a temporary wooden building erected by the War Department in the courtyard. Taxes were another matter. In order to help with this, Lees-Milne led on the English Country Houses scheme, which offered handsome tax relief in return for houses being transferred to the National Trust, rather than into the hands of the state, and enabled the first large-scale transfer of mansion houses to the Trust in lieu of death duties. This followed on from the National Trust Act of 1937 and was consistent with the National Trust's founding principle of public benefit, creating access to "special places, forever, for everyone," (Octavia Hill, 1888, National Trust website). For many owners this timely intervention and opportunity, whilst very beneficial, was still a huge wrench and the Berwicks were no exception in this.

In May 1943, Brigadier General Arthur H.O Lloyd, Chair of the Walker Trust, an important educational grants body in Shropshire, approached Lord Berwick with a proposal for the creation of a pioneering adult education college. The letter proposed the establishment of a democratically-orientated college, with an adult focus, along improving-character lines:

> The Walker Trustees…propose to assist in financing a Scheme for the Creation of a Shropshire Adult College, after the War…. We feel that Education should not cease when young people leave School – and think that a judicious "mixing" of all Classes will more than ever before be one of the Results of this War. If this Social and Educational Reform can be conducted on Sound, Happy and "English-Character" lines, we think that we Trustees will be doing great good. Shropshire would, in fact, be a Pioneer County in the National Project (Letter to 8th Lord Berwick from Arthur H.O Lloyd, Leaton Knolls, Shrewsbury, 3rd May 1943).

The idea behind the college is shown here as a product of the post-war optimism for educational reform, allowing for the mixing of social classes which is seen as inevitable in the wake of the War.

2 Worsley commented that the rush to demolish in the immediate post-Second World War period was inhibited "possibly because of the difficulty of obtaining building licences". By 1949 he suggested that "the floodgates opened. Sixteen houses are recorded as lost in 1949 and 1950, twenty-three in 1951 and thirty-five in 1952" (Worsley, 2002, p.19).

Whilst recognising that the proposal is audacious, Lloyd – or Artie LL as he signs himself, an indication that he already knew the Berwicks – goes on to make the point that this proposal is as plausible – if not more so – as giving over the property to the National Trust, effectively supporting state intervention in education through the local Council:

> Somehow, if I was in your position, I would put as much trust in Shropshire as I would in the National Trust, if not more. Very socialistic, Communist ideas and actions may be ahead of England and the world in the distant, or even near, future (Letter to 8th Lord Berwick from Arthur H.O Lloyd, Leaton Knolls, Shrewsbury, 18 June, 1943).

By August 1944, the Walker Trust had decided to set up a Provisional Governing Body for the proposed new Adult Education College and Community House, as it was to be called at the time. They were willing to contribute a generous £75,000 towards the college, for the purchase of property and equipment, and towards annual expenditure. The Carnegie UK Trust, a charity supporting well-being and equality of opportunity for learning, particularly for disadvantaged people, also offered £15,000 towards the establishment of a Community House, or college. The explicit objectives of the new college were to be as follows, with a strong emphasis on cultural education, specifically non-political and non-sectarian, of a residential nature, with additional courses for teachers, youth leaders and young people under 18 from local schools:

> Short courses, discussion groups, conferences, day and residential, up to a month in duration of a general educational, cultural non-technical character, to encourage cooperative enquiry and research in general subjects; to provide opportunities for the Group study and practice of the arts. To promote the studies of students over 18 but courses shall also be arranged for young people under 18 particularly at the request of the County Council Education Committee. It shall be available for use for training courses, particularly courses for teachers and youth leaders sponsored by the County Education Committee. The Courses conducted shall be non-sectarian and non-political (Board of Governors' report, 1943).

The College was to be bound by the Further Education (Grant) Regulations, 1946[3]. These were relatively 'light touch' regulations but did require that the College be managed and governed efficiently, that no-one be refused admission as a student without strong justification and that

[3] S.R. & O., 1946, No. 352. So far as the SAEC was concerned, these were later superseded by the Further Education (Local Education Authorities) Regulations, 1959 (S.1. 1959 No. 393).

a governing body be established, with appropriate representation from interested parties, such as any university connected with the college, WEA or similar bodies.

The Governing Body consisted of five Walker Trust trustees, three Education Committee members, a representative from the WEA and a representative of Birmingham University Extra Mural Department. It was a powerful body, with a number of high profile and influential educational figures amongst its members. The President was Arthur Lloyd, the Chairman Sir Offley Wakeman, Chairman of Shropshire County Council from 1943 to 1963, and the Secretary Martin Wilson, to whom Lord Berwick refers in his later correspondence, and who was the Chief Education Officer in Shropshire from 1934 to 1965. A liberal figure who acted as a trustee on the Board of Governors from its inception in 1943 until 1950[4] was John Wolfenden, who was co-opted onto the Board from the Carnegie Trust. At this stage he was Headmaster of Shrewsbury School and had previously been Headmaster of Uppingham School in Rutland from 1934 to 1944. Wolfenden was later notable for chairing the Wolfenden Committee whose report recommended the decriminalisation of homosexuality, published in 1957. He was identified by a number of interviewees as being instrumental in promoting liberal education in Shropshire, through public education facilities.

> And such people as Sir John Wolfenden decreed…that all education should have a degree of liberal education as well…. I think that he was interested in the population at large becoming educated through the facilities that there were such as museums, art galleries, science museum…All our great institutions which all had some kind of connection with local authorities (Interview – Tony Vettise, 4th March, 2015).

The initial concept of the Board of Governors for a suitable stately home was that it should be situated between Shrewsbury and Wellington and the original focus was on Albrighton Hall, an 18th century mansion near Shrewsbury. Arthur Lloyd was of the opinion that Attingham Park was by far the most preferable place for the college and his letters to Lord Berwick are directly based on an appeal to the Berwicks to maintain their association with the house and with Shropshire, thus – dread phrase – avoiding the house going on the 'Scrap-Heap':

[4] Wolfenden later became Vice-Chancellor of University of Reading and at this point (15th July 1950) he resigned from the SAEC Board of Governors. From 1969 to 1973 he was Director of the British Museum.

> I know of no large Houses comparable with Attingham and I feel that you and Teresa may prefer that Attingham Park should retain its Identity with your Family and with Shropshire, rather than go on to the Scrap-Heap, after you have gone. This is so often the Inevitable End of many a Country Home (Letter to 8th Lord Berwick from Arthur H.O Lloyd, Leaton Knolls, Shrewsbury, 3rd May 1943).

The Chairman, Sir Offley Wakeman, also approached Lord Berwick around the same time. In June 1943, Wakeman explained to Lord Berwick that Attingham was being considered by the Board of Governors as the home for a new Adult College. Berwick raised issues of rent, the use of rooms on the ground floor and the view which the National Trust, already negotiating the trusteeship of the house, would take. By September 1944 it had been unanimously agreed by the Board of Governors that Attingham Hall was considerably superior to any other possible site for the new adult education college. The potential accommodation offered at Albrighton and Attingham had been considered by the Board of Governors on 12th August 1944 and it was felt that Attingham was the better option.

In 1945 Lady Berwick was herself approached about the prospect of accepting the idea of a college at Attingham Park, an approach which directly appealed to her gender and her status. Mary Somerville was an important figure in schools broadcasting at the BBC, Director of School Broadcasting between 1929 and 1947. She was also a leading light in the National Federation of Women's Institutes, editing a volume entitled *Thrift Crafts* in 1943[5] . She wrote from the University Women's Club, which still exists at the same address, and brings together professional and academic women into a selective, fee-paying club. Her letter hints at the changing political and social landscape, a lack of "sufficient men and maids" at the end of the war to staff Attingham Park and that a Women's Institute College would be far preferable to one organised by those of a more socialist persuasion.

> I have been thinking about a W.I. college, if indeed we are to have one. I have heard almost nothing about it but I presume we should be tenants of some suitable large mansion – it seems improbable that you could ever find sufficient men and maids to staff Attingham Park adequately these days. Have you ever thought about possibilities in connection with the idea of the WI College? We should, I think, be more desirable

[5] Thrift Crafts, 1943 – Oxford: Oxford University Press. Mary Somerville wrote the Foreword in which she gave an insight into her thinking and the ethos of the W.I. movement - 'Thrift is an attitude of mind towards the whole of life, a point of view which stimulates, while it controls, activity….The really thrifty person has always something to give, something to share' (p.3).

> tenants than those you are now considering who might be organised by the type of extreme socialist who is so very difficult to live with! (Letter M. Somerville to Lady Berwick from University Women's Club, 2 Audley Square, South Audley Street, W.1 – November 15th, 1945).

Unfortunately, Lady Berwick's response is not recorded and nor, sadly, are Lord Berwick's responses to Arthur Lloyd's 1943 letters or his correspondence with Sir Offley Wakeman. There was a W.I. college established at Marcham Park, Denman College, in 1948, so the letter from Somerville may presage that development. Berwick's own disquiet and anxiety, the very direct sense of the political and moral tensions that the notion of socialist-leaning education engendered in him, and particularly the 'state-controlled' Local Education Authority, are evidenced by his later letters to the National Trust Estates Manager at Attingham, Gordon Miller.

> As you know I have no confidence whatsoever in the taste of the body which controls or is likely to be represented by the Education Authorities. They do not appear to be even masters in their own house, but to be state-controlled. I say definitely "no" to this suggestion, having some pride in this house and having been owner of the Attingham estate since Nov 1897, nearly 50 years. If I cannot take this advice, you suggest letting to this same body on practically any terms and you suggest that you should see the Education people, no doubt Martin Wilson who is at the bottom of the plot and ask what are their minimum requirements, which I should imagine to be the Picture Gallery, Drawing Room and Front stairs….. (Letter 8th Lord Berwick to Gordon Miller, August 10th, 1946).

Miller had already stated that the College would be the best potential body to let to, representing sound economic sense, and would enable Lord and Lady Berwick to stay on in comfortable occupation side by side with the college. He was also clear that finances dictated such a move, saying "the immediate future of Attingham is obscure and disquieting" and that it was "highly desirable" to either sell or let the house:

> Now, the rent offered by the Adult College, including the Picture Gallery, is a substantial profit rent. I must recommend … that finance dictates the letting of the Hall. I should like you to authorise me to see the Education People and say to them "*I am going to recommend Lord Berwick to come to terms with you – what are your minimum requirements"*, and so long as you retain your reasonable comfort of occupation suggest even a token rent but with major maintenance by them is good business indeed (Letter from Gordon Miller, F.L.A.S., Chartered Land Agent, Attingham Estate Office, to the Lord Berwick, 9th August, 1946).

The following three years represented a period of negotiation. Lord Berwick was anxious to protect the flooring and gilt console tables in the Picture Gallery; he was concerned that no alterations were made which would destroy the character of the house or endanger its inherent structure. He eventually agreed to restriction of the room's use to Conferences, lectures, concerts and other similar events. It was not to be used for dances or occasions of that nature. No restrictions were placed on college use of the Library, Front Hall or Main Dining Room.

Lord Berwick died in 1947 and the completion of the lease was held up as a result. Lady Berwick had concerns herself over College plans for redecoration. In a letter to the National Trust, she gave her objections and requested that they ensure the College did not carry out any change to the decoration of the house. She also became a long-standing member of the Board of Governors and maintained a steady influence until her own death in 1972.

The draft lease finally agreed upon between the SAEC and the National Trust, in January 1948, was a 42 year lease, terminable by the lessee at seven, 14 and 21 years. In approving the draft lease, the Trust stipulated that all painting and decorating must be done in colours approved by the Trust and the public should have access to the Dining room and Hall. By September 1949 a notice was placed on the front gate of Attingham declaring the house to be "open on Tuesdays and Thursdays in summertime from 2.30pm – 6.30pm, admission 1/-, buses by the back drive" (Board of Governor's reports, 1949). Lady Berwick assumed the role of welcoming visitors to the house at the Front Hall.

It was a bold move to establish a short-term adult education college in a stately home. The idea was in keeping with the times on many levels in the period of post-war reconstruction. However, it was also perceived by Lees-Milne and Arthur Lloyd as a challenge to the established order. Lees-Milne talked of his concerns about the thrust towards communism and Arthur Lloyd commented on the 'very Socialistic, communist' ideas inherent in such a college. This political tension is an important theme, the tussle between the state (or state control in Lord Berwick's conception) and the landed gentry, the established societal order and social democracy. Martin Wilson, as the Chief Education Officer during this period, was

perceived, to quote Lord Berwick, as being "at the bottom of the plot" (Letter 8th Lord Berwick to Gordon Miller, August 10th, 1946).

The LEA Chief Education Officer: the Shropshire Context

Martin Wilson's first view of Shropshire was that it was cast in aspic. In his memoirs, *An Epoch in Education: An Administrator's Challenge* (1985) he describes it as being akin to "a step back into the Middle Ages" where "the emanations of feudalism" (Wilson, 1985, p.10) were still visible and that, still, "a landowner could talk of putting a hand out of a job if he were so presumptuous as to send his boy to a Grammar School" (p.11). Wilson described this point of transition to a new, modern age and how war-time, and post-war policy on education explicitly, had shifted and changed perceptions. For him this was an act of faith, a drive towards communitarianism and the needs of the future:

> The 1944 Act was a calculated reaffirmation of faith, a recognition of the duties of the young and the deeper advantages and necessities of the modern community, a comprehensive vision of evolving demands and future possibilities…It had teeth in it (Wilson, 1985, p.12).

He went on to argue that the attitudes of the "Lords and Masters" towards the education of their staff and their younger charges would have to change, as they "inched toward the precipice". Possibly sardonically, he comments that "They were sufficiently infected with the spirit of the times to recognise in broad outline that there was a job to do" (p.12).

His engagement with the Board of Governors for the Shropshire Adult Education College, which he sat on until 1965, must have led to some interesting debates. He was presented with a very distinct perspective from some other members of the Board, such as Sir Philip Magnus-Allcroft**,** Second Baronet, who was a historian and a prominent biographer[6] and later Justice of the Peace and Shropshire County Councillor as well as Board member for the SAEC. Magnus-Allcroft's primary motive for being involved on the Board seems to have been based

[6] Sir Philip Magnus-Allcroft (under the pen-name of Philip Magnus) was the author of several biographies, including *Gladstone - a biography*, published in 1954, London: John Murray Publishers Ltd.

on a desire to ensure that the house was not damaged in any way by the College. Lady Berwick and he were in regular correspondence and shared this sense of mutual frustration with the minutiae of the Board of Governors' meetings. In a note from the Attingham Archive, held at the Shropshire Archives, the following exchange was revealed:

> It is a pity that we generally meet at these committees which have a most irritating effect on me as I have to sit and listen to discussions on schemes which I am sure are not necessary or will have a bad effect on this house and the rooms with which I am so closely concerned and yet of course I should regret not being there as it is valuable to have some warning (Draft letter, Lady Berwick to Magnus-Allcroft, 22nd October, 1967, reference 112/22/12/5/32 /12).

Patrick Wright wrote about this ambivalence towards the new order in an article for *The Guardian*, 'Why the Blight is Stark Enough' (1987), in which he examined the legacy of the Country Houses scheme and tensions between "the traditional nation and the degenerate modern society" (Wright, 1987, p. 3) which Lees-Milne and others perceived as writ large in post-war political changes, and in the social democratic surge represented by Clement Attlee taking over from Churchill as Prime Minister. Wright described the Welfare State developments and associated policy changes in education, health and housing as "the grey prose of the post-war settlement" (Wright, 1987, p.17), which he argued were juxtaposed unfavourably with the sparkling grandeur of country houses, appropriated by the National Trust as an incarnation of beauty in modern times, in an otherwise utilitarian landscape. Wright had developed this theme earlier, in his 1985 book, *On Living in an Old Country*, in which he described the idea of 'Deep England' as a ruralist, conservative fantasy, in explicit opposition to modernism and industrialisation:

> Deep England can indeed be deeply moving to those whose particular experience is most directly in line with its privileged imagination. People of an upper middle-class formation can recognise not just their own totems and togetherness in these essential experiences, but also the philistinism of the urban working class as it stumbles out, blind and unknowing, into the countryside at weekends (Wright, 1985/2007, p.82).

In a nuanced and subtle article, he went on to say that, in employing someone of James Lees-Milne's virulent anti-democratic cast, the National Trust played into this desire to not just conserve the best of the beautiful buildings of the past but to preserve them as a paean to

the aristocracy, with the lives of the aristocracy at centre stage as a "naturalised social hierarchy":

> The instinctive aristocratic culture and naturalised social hierarchy embodied by the country house were easily redirected against the false enlightenment of 1945. James Lees-Milne viewed the democracy of those whom he called the 'little people' with undisguised contempt, and he scorned attempts to harness the country house to the cause of social democratic reform (Wright, 1987, p. 3).

Lees-Milne was absolutely opposed to the use of Attingham Park, and other stately homes, as colleges or schools and he reserved some of his most damning condemnation for the SAEC itself. On a visit to Attingham Park in March 1948, before the official opening of the College but when the preparations and early courses were underway, he remarked:

> A little folk-dancing, some social economy, and Fabianism for the miners and their wives. We felt quite sick from the nonsense of it all. At a time when this country is supposed to be bankrupt they spend (our) money on semi-education of the lower classes who will merely learn from it to be dissatisfied. The house looked very forlorn and down at heel which worried me a good deal (Lees-Milne, Quoted in Wright, *The Guardian*, August 1st, 1987).

This quotation is heavily freighted – the sense of moral outrage at scant available money being spent on the "lower classes", the notion of their increased dissatisfaction as a result of education ("social economy") and enjoyment ("folk dancing") and the connection with Fabianism, beloved of Clement Attlee as a believer in both socialism and its introduction through gradual reform rather than by revolution. All juxtaposed with a house which is being betrayed by these activities – "very forlorn and down at heel". The sense of threat to the rigid class structure which British society had retained up until the outbreak of war in 1939, with the middle and upper classes tending to believe in their inherent role as the guardians of culture, is palpable.

The relationship with the National Trust in the early days of the College must also have created numerous tensions. Not only were the Berwicks absolutely committed to conserving the house with as little alteration as possible but the National Trust played a significant role in managing this, taking over the care of the house and grounds from the beginning of the lease period. Gordon Miller was the Chartered Land Agent for the National Trust at the Attingham Estate Office. The National Trust had a land agent on site throughout the whole period of the College. Miller's office during this period was in the outer library in the house

(See Appendix Eight, Ground Floor). The NT placed numerous strictures on how the building must be maintained, stipulating the detail of the redecoration scheme, paint colours to be used, siting of windows (which were not ultimately installed) and the degree of public access to the dining room and hall (Board of Governors' Report, 1st January and 26th July 1948).

A number of structural changes occurred as a result, including the alteration to the long drive from the Park entrance to the house. It was deemed dangerous due to a blind corner and a series of accidents which had taken place. However, there were some tensions between the National Trust and the Board of Governors and a sense that the College represented a potential falling in standards. The unhelpful "attitude" of the National Trust, and "protracted negotiations" with them over the siting of windows and the redecoration scheme for the house, are referred to several times in the early Board of Governors' reports and in the Warden's report of the 26th July, 1948.

Staffing

The Warden

Once the initial infrastructure for the College was in place, with the accommodation, grounds and facilities in place, the Board of Governors could then turn their attention to the appointment of the staff team who were bring the College to life. Their first priority was to appoint a Warden, a critical role for the College as the person responsible for directing and developing the courses, for networking and promoting the College and for acting as the 'face' of the College to the outside world.

The Board of Governors report of 6th August 1947 reported that 132 people had applied for the post and a shortlist of 7 people for formal interview was drawn up. Applicants were interviewed on the 18th and 19th of August 1947 and Trevelyan and another candidate were interviewed again later on the 19th at which point Trevelyan was offered the post as Warden of the Adult College. The minutes of the Board of Governors for the 19th August state that Trevelyan was to be taken on at a salary of £850 per year and was to be given free living accommodation at the College, the appointment being subject to negotiations about the tenancy of Attingham coming to a satisfactory conclusion. He was required to pay for

emoluments such as food at a rate of £48 per annum for himself and an additional rate of £48 for his wife and child. At a subsequent meeting of the newly-formed Education Sub-committee on 31st December 1947, it was agreed that if there was a substantial time lapse before the need for a full-time Warden, Trevelyan would be employed in the interim as an Adult Education Tutor at £600 per year[7]. It was resolved at this stage that Trevelyan would begin in the role of Warden from 1st January 1948.

According to Michael Dower, Trevelyan's nephew, Trevelyan had some uncertainty that he would be appointed: "He was the youngest and least experienced applicant by far, despite being in his early 40s and he was new to the civilian education process" (Telephone interview – Michael Dower, 1st April, 2015). Trevelyan appears to have feared that he did not have as much adult education experience as many of the other applicants. As described in the last chapter, his background had been in army education and as a teacher of children at Gordonstoun. The following two statements offer some insight into Trevelyan's state of mind on hearing of his appointment, and also his (mis)perception of the numbers of other interviewees for the post:

> In 1947 the Shropshire Education Committee advert advertised for a principal for Attingham Park, the Shropshire Adult College. I applied and against a very strong field was, to my astonishment, appointed. Here was a dream coming true (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, pp. 41-42).

> I went for the interview and recall meeting 24-25 others who all seemed better qualified than myself in academic fields. I was offered the wardenship of this new residential centre and it was the answer to my dreams (Trevelyan, quoted in Farrer, 2000, p. 71).

The role of Warden was partially ambassadorial and Trevelyan's aristocratic background must have held some appeal to the Board of Governors. Diana Prowse, formerly Diana Cameron, who was Domestic Bursar at the College in the 1960s, commented on the networking and facilitation role that Trevelyan assumed, maintaining a relationship with Lady Berwick and preserving the public profile of the house:

[7] The proposed salary of £600 a year is comparable with remuneration for other full-time tutors at the time, according to figures in the Ashby report, which does not feature the short-term colleges but does cover salaries for full-time WEA tutors and University/University College staff in 1953. The majority are shown as being paid between £600 and £900 per annum. *The Ashby Report (1954)*, Appendix 6A, p.61.

> I think Lady Berwick, well, she tolerated the college and she was very gracious with us. Very dignified and beautiful lady and of course she was very old by that time. With Sir George, of course, because he was upper class, it was fine. I mean, probably if it had been any other warden other than Sir George or if he'd been a different kind of person.... And I think it was probably Sir George who smoothed the way for, for example, the tours on the Sunday morning of the private apartments (Interview – Diana Prowse, née Cameron, 27th June 2014).

It is noteworthy that Lady Mary Trevelyan, George's mother, was also important in the relationship with Lady Berwick, no doubt further strengthening the cultural and social cachet which George carried. She attended numerous courses at the SAEC, and was therefore a regular visitor[8]. She also bonded with Lady Berwick over a shared love of gardening. Mary, known as Molly, was described as a "notable chatelaine" by her family (Farrer, 2000, p.15). The public service activities she was involved in included the Women's Institute movement and the Rural Women's Organisation and she was also President of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, which, Frances Farrer noted, "had many aristocratic members" (p.15)[9]. As shown previously, G. M. Trevelyan was a very active member of the National Trust and in 1946 was the Chairman of the National Trust's Courses Committee. It is clear that George Trevelyan boasted an impressive and influential social network.

Trevelyan was certainly proud of being Warden of the "grandest of all the short-term residential colleges" (Drews, 1995, p.164). In terms of its sheer size, architectural grandeur and the accommodation it offered, for as many as 70 students at its height, Attingham was significant. Given that his father had decided to leave the Wallington estate to the people, Trevelyan spoke warmly of the opportunity Attingham provided for him, almost as his rightful place: "It was very, very amusing from my point of view that what could not have come about at Wallington in Northumberland now seemed to be offered to me in Attingham", going on to say:

> I was almost in the position, of what you might say, Lord of Attingham. I could have my guests continuously every weekend and mid weeks too with the other conferences

[8] Over a sample two year period she attended the following courses: Great Houses of Britain (1953 and 1954); Recent Progress in Archaeology; Cathedrals of France and Gunpowder, Treason and Plot, the 350th Anniversary (1955).

[9] Lady Trevelyan had also been a keen political supporter of women's suffrage. After 1904, whilst Sir Charles Trevelyan was still a Liberal MP, she became the President of the Northumberland Women's Liberal Federation (WLF). The organisation's objectives were to promote legislation for women, through the introduction of votes for women at local and parliamentary elections, on the same basis as men.

> and I could whistle up the Amadeus to come and play to us and that kind of thing – I did this for 24 years – into my retirement (Interview George Trevelyan, at his home in Hawkesbury, by Geoffrey Beard, circa 1988 - Attingham archive).

This quotation conjures up images of weekend house parties and genteel living and also an innate self-belief, almost nonchalance, born of his background, which enables Trevelyan to "whistle up" important musicians, such as the Amadeus and Allegri quartets. This also suggests an element of performance in Trevelyan's interpretation of the role of Warden, playing the part of 'Lord of Attingham'. Ruth Nesfield-Cookson described this dichotomy in Trevelyan, saying: "there were two sides to George – he loved being 'upper crust' but he also believed passionately in education for the masses" (Interview – Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, 5th November, 2014). Bryan Podmore, former Deputy Warden from 1962 to 1967, described Trevelyan's airy confidence.

> George had the chutzpah, the cheek, the aristocratic flair to say 'let's call in Pevsner'…that sort of thing – and he would! And Pevsner and co. would like to come here, away to this environment and people came – teachers – and enjoyed themselves. They were very happy to come along (Interview, Bryan Podmore, 21st May, 2014).

Confidence, charisma and individuality are words associated with Trevelyan. Almost every interviewee and many of those who sent in written testimonials described Trevelyan as 'charismatic'. Max Weber (1958) described charismatic leaders as those people – often men – whose authority was the result of unique personal characteristics, not the result of any tradition or rules. There is a magical aspect to this kind of power, particularly associated with the cult of personality, which can be seen in the identification of followers with prophets, gurus and priests. Frances Farrer described Trevelyan as having a "manic, preacherly light in his eye – compelling and magnetic" (interview, Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014). Diana Prowse (now Cameron) described him as "very attractive and lovable" (interview – Diana Prowse, 27th June, 2014). Trevelyan began to attract groups of adoring women to the College very early on. Michael Dower and Barrie Trinder, who was the LEA-funded Area Education Tutor and Area Organiser from May 1965 until the College closure in 1976, both independently described them as "George groupies" (telephone interview – Michael Dower, 1st April, 2015 and interview with Barrie Trinder, 22nd July, 2014) and Geoffrey Toms commented that "women worshipped him", remarking upon "the number of women who said he was marvellous despite not having understood a word he had said" (telephone interview,

Geoffrey Toms – 19th July 2014). Toms described this as a "problem" for Trevelyan. Barrie Trinder commented that the Warden role conferred considerable power on those who held it. He suggested that the increasingly messianic nature of Trevelyan's leadership was not uncommon amongst other Wardens as he also saw the phenomenon at other colleges. He recalled Walter Drews, Warden of Wansfell College, entering a room "and people shouted 'good old Walter!', 'Speech' etc. when he got up to address the groups!"(Interview with Barrie Trinder, 22nd July, 2014).

Trevelyan's background and his charismatic qualities enabled him to act as a networker who spanned the boundaries between several worlds – that of the landed gentry and their interests, the National Trust and the Local Education Authority, as well as attracting many students who came for him as much as any education on offer at the College. He was both pivot and paradox, and his relationship with his own aristocratic status and with his acolytes perhaps signifies this. Whether he was aware of his effect on women or not, both his female staff and students responded to him, to the point of devotion.

Support Staff

Whilst the part played by the Warden was crucial, and Trevelyan was particularly well-suited to acting as both an ambassador for the College and for developing a broad and stimulating course offer, the team supporting the Warden was just as critical. Frances Farrer commented that Trevelyan had no interest in the day to day operational aspects of the College, saying he was "utterly not interested in anything administrative or boring" (Interview Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014).

By 1948 (Board of Governors' report, 26th July 1948), the configuration of the team which would support Trevelyan throughout his 23 years as Warden was largely in place. This team included a Resident tutor, at this stage a Mr E. W. M. Richardson, and a Secretary, Miss P.M. Case-Morris. The Domestic Bursar, Mrs Gwen Orgill, who started alongside George in 1948, was particularly significant as she "really created the College with George" (Nesfield-Cookson, 2000, p.3) and was recognised as being vital to the operation of the College for its first 10 years. As Ruth Nesfield-Cookson expressed it, "her total dedication from the outset was an

essential element in the founding of the College" (p.3). The rest of the team comprised support staff, generally locally recruited, including a Head Cook and assistant cooks, domestic workers and laundry staff, a caretaker, a steward-handyman and gardeners to maintain the grounds.

Trevelyan was, by all accounts, open and engaging with his staff and full of ideas. This was particularly apparent in his relationships with Gwen Orgill and the academic staff. He was more fortunate than many of the Wardens in other colleges in terms of additional support in relation to academic input and course development. Birmingham University had made a commitment from the start to furnish a full-time residential Tutor post to support Trevelyan, initially Richardson. In his Report on the first year of the College, in October 1949, Trevelyan commented that the appointment of the residential tutor would be "one of the most important conditioning factors in the future lines of development" for the courses. It is clear that he gained both insight on current trends and interests in adult education and also academic expertise in fields outside his own from the residential Tutor role. After Richardson left, Michael Rix, an extramural lecturer in English Literature at the University of Birmingham, was seconded to the post by the University. His field of expertise was in Local Studies, which was growing in popularity in the late 1940s and into the 1950s. Trevelyan thought the subject especially useful for its action-based learning potential, with students 'doing' and 'creating' for themselves and stated "Local studies have been shown to provide infinite scope for this" (October 1949 – Warden's First Year report). By 1951, Trevelyan commented on the success of the appointment, saying that "Michael Rix is installed as local studies tutor and has launched into a full programme of lectures which appear to be well liked" (Warden's report, 4th December 1951). Finally, in 1954, the Deputy Warden post was created, with Gerald Richards assuming the role. Richards played a very important part in developing focused discussion groups on subjects of a philosophical nature and attracting selected groups of people with an interest in the metaphysical and the esoteric.

Trevelyan also benefitted from Adult Education Tutors and Area Organisers who played a critical role in promoting the college externally and also acted as a bridge between the College and the local communities they were aiming to serve. These posts were connected to the SAEC but were not appointed by the College, being employed either by the University as

extra-mural lecturers responsible for running and developing their own classes or as adult education officers who already worked in the county and were funded by the LEA. The external networking aspect of their roles enabled them to bring back intelligence on community-level interests and fields for course development. It is to the wider networking, promotion and marketing activities I now turn.

Networking and publicity - how the College was promoted

The Early Years

> …there was a strong theme in the college of 'folke verstandigen', understanding people…It was needed post-war where everybody was trying to re-group and so on. And find new people and livelihoods. So understanding people was the theme…which again stood me in good stead for the future, so I sensed I'd been trained to do something (interview - Roger Orgill, 9th May, 2014).

Given the physical isolation of the College, it was vital from the beginning to find a means of promoting messages about what it offered to local communities and, more widely, to the people of Shropshire and the West Midlands, which were considered its target areas. Trevelyan was a natural networker and he threw himself with considerable energy into this role during the early months, when the College was first being established, and such efforts continued throughout the first few years. Roger Orgill, as Trevelyan's godson and protégé, shared Trevelyan's conviction about finding ways of understanding people and what motivated and engaged them, particularly after the hardships of the Second World War. Orgill had spent some time in Germany immediately post-war and had seen the value of taking arts and cultural activities out into local communities where the physical impact of the war was evident: "Everything was flattened, devastated. We travelled extensively around Germany so we were aware of what we'd done to Germany bombing". He had performed Morris dancing and folk songs in German villages and he felt the experience had taught him the importance of fostering understanding between people - 'folke verstandigen' - and finding the optimism and courage to rebuild, socially and culturally, as well as physically. He considered responsive adult education a key component in this approach.

As stated in an article in *The Shropshire Star*, which applauded the work of the College after its first three years, the College aimed to unite people, at this crucial time of rebuilding a sense of community, through study and activities which spanned work and leisure pursuits:

> The founders of the College felt that there was a need for a place at which people with common interests from different parts of the county could meet together and carry on studies and activities of value to them in their leisure and work. Apart from the value of the studies themselves they thought it a good thing that Shropshire people from all parts and from all walks of life should have the chance of getting to know each other in the pursuit of common interests, and that in modern times such a college could make a particularly useful contribution in knitting society together and giving people a sense of unity (Shropshire Star article, circa 1951, exact date not known).

The *Shropshire Star* article demonstrates how much emphasis the Board of Governors and 'founders' of the College placed at this stage on a local focus, for "Shropshire people", which perhaps foreshadowed some of the later anger and antipathy towards the College when the courses attracted people from much further afield.

Even in the immediate post-war period when there was a great drive to bring people together to share common interests and to build unity, publicity was crucial for the College. As Newman commented, quoted earlier, "adult education must advertise…it must vie with the welter of other leisure activities society offers – television, cinema, concerts, travel, the pub…" (Newman, 1979, p.28). It was particularly vital to take the message of the College out to the many small, outlying communities around Shropshire which was then, and remains, predominantly rural. Whilst the College did not have its official opening until October 1949, its first programme of courses began in winter 1948. The vigorous publicity drive, often undertaken in person by Trevelyan, who went out to local villages with leaflets and information, included making contact with a wide range of bodies with a potential interest in education. This included the WEA, Heads of schools and 6th forms, Technical Colleges and Evening institutes, Parents' Associations, borough officials, Young Farmers' Clubs, Youth Clubs and the YMCA and the Services Association. Publicity also extended to broader social/community interest groups and civil society organisations such as the Townswomen's Guild, Women's Social Service Clubs, the British Legion, Parish Councils and Rotary Clubs and the Inner wheel (an organisation for the wives and daughters of Rotarians).

Publicity was also targeted at employers, given the drive to use the College for mid-week employer-based conferences and meetings and to draw working students for the more general courses from amongst professional organisations. Employer bodies targeted included the Employers Federation and individual local firms, Teachers bodies, the Police Federation, Farmers' Associations, Magistrates, Medical and Nursing bodies and the National Coal Board. Contact was also made with trade unions and work councils. There was also an attempt from the inception of the College to attract local groups to use the College facilities, as a venue and a space to meet and organise. Such groups included the Archaeological Society, local Drama groups who went on to use the facilities extensively, the Caradoc Field Club, which still exists in Shropshire and provides for the knowledge and study of the natural and built environments through lectures and excursions, and the Shropshire Photographic Society. Perhaps as a result of efforts to publicise the College, Trevelyan noted in his Warden's report for 26th July, 1948, that "some organisations had already asked for courses or the use of the college for conferences". However, in the Warden's report of March 16th 1949, Trevelyan commented that:

> Much work needs to be done in getting Attingham more widely known. The first courses naturally have tapped the more obvious sources for students (WEA, Teachers, W.I. etc.). The problem now is to widen the field in order to bring in those who would not readily come to such a centre.

Some help was available to the SAEC, and the other short-term residential colleges at the time, to promote their courses much more widely, through publicity materials offered by partner universities – in the case of the SAEC, this was the University of Birmingham. In addition, the National Foundation for Adult Education had been established in 1946, as a forum for consultation between the organisations providing adult education. In 1949 it merged with the British Institute of Adult Education (BIAE) to become the National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE). The Director of NIAE at the time was Arthur Stock and he was committed to helping the short-term residential colleges in the promotion of their courses. Biannually the Residential College Short Course programme was produced and this was circulated widely to university extra-mural departments and WEA bodies for them to utilise amongst their own adult learning circles. There is also a hint from one former student who sent in a written testimonial, Diana Williams, that the College promoted its offer through newspapers such as *The Guardian*, at least when it was starting up: "I had heard of the start

of the Adult School probably from *The Guardian* newspaper" (written testimonial, Diana Williams, received 27th March, 2017).

Trevelyan's staff also went out into the local community to spread word of the College. One instance is mentioned in the Board of Governors' report of 6th December 1954, where evening classes were offered in the village of Leighton. The idea of 'Attingham on Tour' was a concept that re-appeared several times throughout the early years of the College.

The Adult Education Tutors and Area Organisers became increasingly important in marketing and promoting the College. They were able to engage interest in the College and its courses externally as part of their roles, through evening class activities such as Attingham on Tour and by offering guest talks for community organisations. Later, their promotional activities included utilising local media, such as radio appearances. Testimony from those who were involved in the college in this capacity in its earlier years is not available but Bryan Podmore, Barrie Trinder and Tony Vettise, who was an Art Tutor at the SAEC in the 1960s, commented on the importance of the Area Education Tutor and Area Organiser in working at a genuine community level. Vettise described the approach of Albert Hunt, one of the Area Organisers in the late 1950s and early 1960s, who was a film and drama teacher and critic:

> I know Albert Hunt used to try and arrange talks in pubs to get people interested in different topics - politics, mass communication, radio, television, that kind of thing. Barrie Trinder used to do walks around the town on a Saturday morning and do local history and in later years he began to record that for Shropshire radio (Interview, Tony Vettise, 4th March 2015).

They also acted as a bridge between the College and local communities in being able to bring back intelligence on what interests were current and those that were falling out of favour. In my interview with Michael Barratt Brown, the former Principal of Northern College, and David Browning, who was an Area Organiser for Northern College, David explained the importance of working with specific communities to elicit interest in adult education, as not all communities have the instinctive confidence to attend a college, or they may not recognise it as being for them. By working with such groups, and understanding their interests and their educational motivation, David asserted the importance of the area organiser role in acting as both the catalyst for the "creative elements that arose from the ground" (Interview with

Michael Barratt Brown and David Browning, 15th December 2014) and as the antennae for the college. Even the act of applying could be a barrier for some people. As Barrie Trinder commented the people of Shropshire were a heterogeneous group and required specific interventions targeted towards particular communities:

> The college would say courses were open to anybody - it's how the people found those courses - it's the same today as it was then. It is always an issue. Although it's available, they may not know about it or they may not be sufficiently confident about applying for a weekend and committing themselves to it (Interview – Barrie Trinder, 22nd July, 2014).

Barrie also described how Shrewsbury – as a lens on the wider county of Shropshire – changed between the 1940s and the 1970s and again, to the town as it is seen today. In his contribution to *The Victoria History of the Counties of England – a History of Shropshire*, he stated "The town has been regarded as a middle class enclave, free from the contamination of manufacturing industry" (Trinder, 2015, p.271). Far from being a sleepy, rural, predominantly middle class town, in his interview with me he commented that, in fact, at this period it was "quite an industrial town…it was quite an important engineering area as well. Certainly also furniture-making, cabinet-making and so on" (Interview, Barrie Trinder, 22nd July, 2014). Large employers included the engineering firms Rolls Royce and Halls Engineering, and the Corset Silhouette factory, which made underwear and swimwear. Consequently the role of the Area organisers was to know and understand the area they were working in and to recognise and respond to the fact that the potential students were a diverse group of people. Despite the efforts of the Area Tutors and Organisers, however, there is little or no evidence that people from the industrial sector, and particularly skilled and unskilled manual workers, attended the College in significant numbers, which the next section shows.

The Students – 1948 – 1960

The students who attended the SAEC, particularly in the first 10 years, were described by interviewees such as Marcia Taylor as many and diverse. In the speech he gave for his friend Sir George Trevelyan's retirement event in 1971, Dr C. Lawson Stote estimated that: "I must represent 20 or 30 or 40 thousands students ...which is an awful lot, and must include a pretty varied lot" (booklet for Sir George Trevelyan's retirement event, 21st August, 1971). He went on to say that the experience of being a student at Attingham had been genuinely

inspirational and transformative for many of the students and that George Trevelyan had been central to the experience.

> George has, in some marvellous way, not only given each the feeling that Attingham is important to them but, what is more significant, that they are of importance to Attingham. This is, I think, the magic of Attingham which all students will have been conscious of and which is one of the great contributions George has made here (Stote, 1971, as above).

A more detailed analysis of the types of students who attended the SAEC is inevitably bound by the limited availability of demographic data on course attenders. For the early period of the College, almost its first ten years, the sources of information are much more plentiful and a more detailed quantitative analysis is possible. As stated in Chapter Two, the archival material from 1948 to 1957 includes two Visitors' Books which cover this period. In addition, though Trevelyan kept scrapbooks throughout the life of the college, the one which is most detailed, and which has a plethora of photos, archival newspaper reports, course-related materials and leaflets, covers the period 1948 to 1957. The scrapbook which covers the 1960s is mainly filled with photographs of creative leisure and craft activities.

In addition to the above, Sir George Trevelyan gave a detailed account of student numbers on a half yearly basis in his Warden's Report to the Board of Governors. Given the constant need to prove the viability and accessibility of the College to the governors, as well as the need to refute naysayers and hostile press articles, it was important to offer a full account of who was attending and where they were from. However, Trevelyan ceased to offer information on the students' geographical origin in his Warden's reports during the 1960s, almost certainly because many who attended the esoteric courses were not local.

Apart from the Visitors' Books, the scrapbooks and the Warden's reports, the main sources of information on the types of students who attended the College came from the interviewees, who I asked about the type of students who attended the College and if this was in line with the College's stated democratising intent. Much of the richer material in this section of the thesis, and the next section looking at the post-1960 period, is based on the

detailed thematic analysis taken from all the interviews, and from the written memoirs which have now become part of the Attingham Archive.

Another important source of information on the College and 'the student experience' as we would perhaps call it now, over its first ten years, is the *Report by H.M. Inspectors on Attingham Park, The Shropshire Adult College* (inspected between 1958 to 1959[10]). This was a full inspection of the College by H.M. Inspectors, which examined the overall impact of the College, the types of courses offered, the nature of students who attended and also included areas of pedagogy and course provision which were commended and others highlighted for improvement. No other similar reports about the SAEC were uncovered during my research.

Analysis of Student Profile

In the Visitors' books, everyone who attended the college during the nine year period they span, either as a student or a lecturer, was named and the courses they attended or presented at are listed chronologically. To gain insight into the student profile, I examined in detail three periods of one year in the Visitors' books, 1948/1949, 1953/1954 and 1956/1957, to look at shifts in occupation, the proportion of male to female students and the gender breakdown according to the course profile.

An important note is that the information is incomplete and was gathered through the voluntary disclosure of the course participants on registration, which could be both course attenders and speakers. Disclosure of all details was not required. Therefore, for each category I examined there was a significant number of 'not knowns', where students did not complete the details needed. This may skew the analysis and it indicates the difficulties of working with limited, or incomplete, information. As such, the analysis is not authoritative but illustrative.

[10] Ministry of Education - Report by H.M. Inspectors on *Attingham Park, The Shropshire Adult College*, Inspected August, 1958 to July, 1959, Ministry of Education, Curzon St., W1.

Occupation and Class

I used the Registrar-General's Social Classes definition, as this was introduced in 1913 and was not significantly changed until it was renamed as Social Class based on Occupation and recalibrated in 1990. It is a system which was ordered numerically. At the top was Social Class I, which equated to the upper middle class and included those in higher managerial, executive and professional occupations, as well as farmers with over five hundred acres and senior officers in the Armed Forces. Social Class II equated to the middle class and covered those in middle-range management, administrative/executive and professional occupations, including teachers, General Practitioners and farmers with between a hundred and five hundred acres. Social Class IIIN pertained to skilled non–manual occupations, the lower middle class, which comprised junior managers and executive officers, small businessmen and shopkeepers, clerks and salesmen. Social Class IIIM equated to the skilled working class, which included all skilled manual occupations and some lower-grade white-collar jobs like typists and shop assistants. Social Class IV was described as working class, and encompassed semi and unskilled workers, and Social Class V described the unskilled, or those at the lowest level of subsistence, with no earning capacity, including retired people, people with disabilities and with long-term illness and unemployed people. As Fieldhouse (1997, p.173) points out, this categorisation can only be considered a crude indicator of a person's social position, not least because, at this stage, women are frequently classified as housewives. A number of SAEC students were also retirees.

This was the classification system used by Trevelyan in his riposte to criticisms in the article in the *News Chronicle* newspaper, entitled 'Unwanted College', in February 1954. He suggested that most students who attended the SAEC were in classes IIIN and IIIM (Drews, 1995, p. 162).

My analysis of the Visitors' Books tells a rather different story. An analysis of the SAEC students by occupation for the periods 1948/1949, 1953/1954 and 1956/1957 was undertaken, as above. A significant number of attenders – 37% in 1948/9, 44% in 1953/4 and 30% in 1956/7 – did not disclose their occupation and have been excluded from the analysis. Of the remainder who did disclose their occupation, the percentage of students with

professional/managerial backgrounds was significantly high throughout. A very large proportion of these were always from the teaching profession, and this reflects the role of the Shropshire Education Authority in both commissioning courses and using Attingham as a venue. This would place the majority of students in Social Class II. Alongside this, the percentage of manual workers (both skilled and unskilled – Social Class IIIM and IV) was consistently low, always between 7% and 8%. This could of course be one definition of 'working class' though this is a nebulous concept, as I have indicated, and a proportion of those classified as 'white collar' (Social Class IIIN) might also be reasonably included, such as typists, clerks and lower grade civil servants in this category. The proportion of unskilled manual workers was never more than 1.5% and by 1956/57 had fallen to virtually nothing (only three students). This was despite the role of the WEA as a key partner in course development, delivery and governance.

In the 'Unwanted College' riposte, Trevelyan may have been alluding to the closed session or special conferences, as they were described in the College course programmes. An overview of such sessions/conferences, shows that there were a significant number of weekends, in particular, where the college was utilised by trade unions (for example NALGO – National Association of Local Government Officers, who held regular and frequent training courses) and other trade and employer organisations, such as the Co-operative Retail Society, and by specific professional bodies such as clerical officers and youth and community workers. This was in line with the express intention of the College, acting as a venue for other organisations.

A significant number of people identified as 'students'. These seem generally to have been young people from the schools – primarily grammar school sixth forms – in the area who would not have been economically active but were an important target group of the College, as the statement of its original purpose suggested.

In the main, the percentage of students in each occupational category did not vary markedly over the period, with the exception of students from the Armed Forces which was 11.5% in 1948 to 1949 but fell to 1.5% in the subsequent periods. A strong initial link with the Army, indicative of the immediate post-war period when the College began and reflected in courses such as *Forces Educational Broadcasts* and *The Soldier as Individual* in 1948 to 1949, appears not to have survived into subsequent years.

The lack of engagement from manual workers is consistent with wider trends in adult education at this time. Ernest Green, in *Adult Education: Why This Apathy?* (1953), undertook a survey of the reasons why people engaged with adult education (or did not). He commented that "adult education has not registered with the manual worker, least of all with the unskilled worker" (Green, 1953, p. 13). He cited a decreasing trend in engagement with adult education by manual workers over a 20 year period (1933 to 1953): "In 1933 the percentage of manual workers in W.E.A classes was 34.25%. The figures for recent years are: (1949) 20.50%, (1950) 19.80%, (1951) 18.89%" (ibid, p.12). As a result of further questioning, he concluded that his respondents' early school life had had a profound effect on whether or not they chose to go on to further or adult education. This was particularly true for those who had left school at 14, before the 1944 Education Act. Many found elementary school stultifying and had had similar experiences at secondary school or grammar school where they felt there had been little interest in instilling enthusiasm for a subject or making it relevant to real life experience. This had led to narrowly defined subjects of a utilitarian nature, with the emphasis on passing exams, and left many feeling unequipped to discuss issues confidently, or with a sense of inferiority. Some remarked on the 'highbrow' nature of the tutors within the adult education field and the lack of small group work, where a group of like-minded people from a similar background might come together and share views without feeling under-educated and inadequate. For others, the sheer fatigue following a day's work may have made adult education unattractive.

Gender

In terms of the gender breakdown of the students, over the period the percentage of male students increased significantly and then stabilised. It is difficult to give an exact reason for this, though in 1948 to 1949 there were a number of courses clearly aimed at women, such as *The Housewife in History* and *The Articulate Housewife*, as well as visits to the SAEC by organisations such as the W.I., the Mothers' Union and Townswomen's Guild. These seem to have then fallen away, with a diminishing percentage referring to themselves as 'housewives'. The demand on time may have been an issue. The first course aimed at women, specifically mothers, in 1948, was *Growing Children: their Needs and our difficulties*. This was a two day course and, whilst it offered a crèche facility, would have required women to leave their

homes for two nights. It was also during the week (Wednesday evening to Friday evening). Green commented on this issue, stating that many women raised the issue of the prior claims on their time of home and family responsibilities as a reason for not engaging with adult education. With an increasing number of working class women working to provide additional family income during the day by the 1950s, some female respondents commented that it was as much as they could cope with to go out to work and then engage in childcare and housework in the evening. Lack of time may have been a genuine issue in terms of engagement with adult education.

Geographical Background

Overall, there was a general trend 'outwards' geographically with progressively fewer students coming from the local area and more from other parts of Britain, or abroad. Despite this, Shropshire and the West Midlands remained by far the highest percentage throughout. This suggests that the College's reputation was spreading further afield as it became established and more widely publicised.

Within Shropshire, the balance between Shrewsbury and the Telford area shifted markedly between 1948 and 1949 and 1953 to 1954 from approximately 1:2 in Telford's favour to the other way round. By 1956 to 1957 it had settled down at about an equal split. This may have been due to the initial influence of the WEA which was critical in promoting the College and was notably strong in the industrial east of Shropshire (Telford/Dawley area) but not as strong elsewhere. Individual support from WEA organisers may also have been influential. The personal involvement of Edith Pargeter, the writer, who was a committed supporter of the College and WEA tutor/organiser for the Dawley area, may also have been a factor.

The percentage of students living overseas (outside Great Britain) increased over the period. This may well be part of the general 'outward' trend noted above. The figures however are relatively small and could have been influenced significantly by a single course. The USA represented by some distance the highest proportion of those coming from abroad throughout the period. Germany was a distant second. The influence of the National Trust Summer School movement for conservators, which began in 1952, may be relevant here, though attenders are not listed in the Visitors' Books to any great extent and the Summer School seems to have been seen as a separate enterprise.

At the end of the first year, 1948 to 1949, an evaluation exercise was undertaken which sought feedback from the students about what had drawn them to the SAEC. This exercise was not repeated, perhaps because this was part of understanding in the early days how best to target the College's marketing strategy. By far the largest group of people responded that they had had previous contact with the College and were making a return visit (51.5%), though this gives no insight into why they attended the College in the first instance. Next, at 12.5% were those who had come through hearing about the College through the WEA. 11.5% said they had come as a result of personal contact with the College at one-off events such as Music evenings which had stimulated an interest in attending a course. Some had come as a result of seeing promotional material or out of general interest. The overall impression from the feedback, however, was that a large proportion of people attended courses because they had been before and had enjoyed the College's ethos and atmosphere or because of the reputation which it (or Trevelyan himself) had earned, in a relatively short period of time.

Perceptions of the Student Body

Marcia Taylor, who was the Head Cook between 1953 and 1958, described the students in the 1950s as being from "across the board", and travelling from the region and beyond – "Shropshire, Hereford – and they used to come from other counties...they'd come by bus to Atcham and they'd have to walk up the drive"– (interview with Marcia Taylor, 14th October, 2014). Sally Stote, mixing with a group of archaeology students for the first time as a teenager, described being more concerned about the other students' academic levels than their social background – "so it was to do with academic or not academic rather than class. They just seemed like people, ordinary people – I think it was pretty varied actually - very mixed" (Interview – Sally Stote, 19th June, 2014).

Tony Vettise commented from the perspective of a tutor who was involved in adult education teaching in the 1950s within Shropshire and who also taught art at the SAEC. On the one hand he felt that the students were from all kinds of backgrounds, due to the "general expansion in education". He described an exciting time when "suddenly the numbers began to take off", with a rapid expansion in the arts, "in theatre, general design, fashion industry, graphic

design, printing". His view on the SAEC specifically was that the costs may have been prohibitive for working class people to attend the residential courses: "what on earth do you do with this great country pile? You know, you can't sort of put working class people in it because it would be too expensive" (interview, Tony Vettise, 4th March 2015). He felt, therefore, that attending the College was "partly an elitist type thing to do". He commented, however, that the College created a ripple effect for local people who were able to benefit from its resources, and the space itself, on a non-residential basis - for music concerts, drama groups and evening groups like the Film Society and the Shropshire Theatre Guild.

The Report by H.M. Inspectors on Attingham Park, August, 1958 to July, 1959, commended the College for drawing in external bodies and for promoting the development of new societies, as well as for its ongoing outside body conference provision. Of particular note were the Column Society, which studied art and architecture, the '56 Group, which debated current affairs and philosophical issues and the Attingham Writers' Group' all of whose formation had been promoted by the College.

The general consensus of the Report was that the College attracted a wide cross-section of students in terms of professional background but that they were "mainly of a middle class type"[11]. The Report also emphasised the importance of creating bursaries for the group of students who might have been discouraged from attending due to course costs, suggesting that "some suitable students are kept out by the cost and [that] the scope of the present possible remission of fees needs to be extended" (Ministry of Education, 1959, p.3). The proposal was that the University of Birmingham extra-mural tutors and the Area Tutor Organisers could have an enhanced role in identifying such students. By autumn 1960 the first reference appeared in the programme to bursaries. The wording was as follows: 'a limited number of bursaries are available to help students where fees present genuine difficulties; please apply to the Warden'. From autumn 1963 the wording changed to the following: 'If a reduction of 10 shillings makes all the difference between coming and staying away do not hesitate to write to the Warden. A limited number of larger bursaries are available'. By autumn 1965 the fees had risen again and there was by this stage a reference to retired

[11] (R.I. – Mr R. L. Wakeford) Notes of Meeting with Governing Body held on Monday, 29th June, 1959 – Panel of Inspectors

people: – 'those to whom the increase of fees makes attendance at Attingham really difficult are invited to apply for a bursary of 10 shillings or 20 shillings. This applies especially to those who are retired on pensions'. From this point onwards this wording, or a small variant on it, remained constant until the end of Trevelyan's tenure.

Course costs

The costs for the SAEC courses had been kept relatively low by Trevelyan from the start and he tussled with the Board of Governors over this issue many times. However, by the period of the H.M.I Report Trevelyan suggested that the fees were at the top level for a short-term adult college. A five day Music Summer School in 1949 cost £4.15.0 when the average annual nominal wages (excluding overtime) – showing what workers were paid in the money of the time – was £303.76 (Clark, 2016, Measuringworth, accessed 11/12/16). It is difficult to achieve a genuine price comparison and there are many factors to consider, including, for instance, whether a worker was in permanent full-time work or only in work part of the year, whether there were other workers in the family, whether the family had income from other sources and the cost of living, which acts as an approximation to the Retail Price Index. Nevertheless, a weekend course at £2 in the 1940s and £4 in the 1960s (at a time when my father, as a miner, was earning £8 a week) would still have been considered too expensive for many, despite the bursaries which were offered for those who had difficulty paying. The course fees and how they shifted are detailed in Appendix Six, which offers a detailed trend analysis.

Tony Vettise made a wider point that the adult education fraternity tended to be "mature", on the whole, commenting that "I think people who work for their living were too knackered to go out to anything in the evening" (Interview – Tony Vettise, 4th March, 2015). Some industries, and particularly those that were nationalised such as the National Coal Board, built training provision in for their employees as a result of trade union influence, which explains the prominence of bodies like the NCB in the early mid-week programmes. For other people, there was no infrastructure in place at this time[12] at a national level to enable working

[12] The Convention concerning Paid Educational Leave was *adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour organization, Convention No. 140, 24th June, 1974).* This made provision for paid educational leave for a) training at any level; (b) general, social and civic education; (c) trade union education.

people's entitlement to any kind of Paid Educational Leave. Therefore, the wider costs associated with taking time off work during the week would have been largely prohibitive, alongside issues of working a 48 hour working week for many, and with only one or two weeks' leave a year available to most. This is in strong contrast to the Danish system, where courses of up to six months' duration were not uncommon. As Walter Drews stated:

> The longer courses, which had been modelled on the Danish system – of up to six months' duration…did not materialise in England. It became clear at an earlier stage that employers were not prepared and not able to release their workers on full pay for these long periods and that the average person was unable to think in terms of a weeks' holiday for a residential course, considering that most people at that time were only given a fortnight's annual leave (Drews, 1995, p.202).

This arguably helped confine short-term residential education to weekend courses of a more cultural nature, to longer one or two week courses to embrace a subject in depth for those who could afford it, and to one-day mid-week conferences for groups of working people under the aegis of their workplace, and with an emphasis on matters pertaining to it, such as the National Coal Board. This accessibility issue is important, as the possibility of personal transformation through short-term residential education in the privileged environs of the stately home was not available to everyone.

Nevertheless, staff observers such as Mike Threadgold felt that the students in the earlier days were very mixed, at least in terms of their age. He remarked upon an older group of students, whom he called "the regulars", and the young people from local schools and universities who attended during the week. Trevelyan clearly made the experience a memorable one for the university students:

> Sir George, you'd see him if you'd happened to be about at night sometimes. I'd come down when it started raining, he'd be going off across the deer park with a gang of them, going to Wroxeter to take them to Wroxeter at night, you know, just to give them something to do you know and show them round Wroxeter ruins…(Interview Mike Threadgold, 8th May, 2014).

It did not, however, become a requirement. The UK ratified the Convention only on the basis of rights to Trade Union education in the 1970s. Rights were never extended to a/training or b/ general, social and civic education.

Roger Orgill, who came to Attingham at the age of 14 in 1948, remembered attending the music courses in the 1950s and described a group of people who were drawn together by their passion for, and knowledge of, the subject rather than any other factors pertaining to their age, their occupational background or their income:

> And particularly, the courses I came on were music ones, which obviously is its own delimiter, isn't it? I remember a wide range of ages and a wide range of jobs. If people were interested, it was welcoming to everybody. And it was very lively, which always seems to indicate that you've got a good group who are really passionate about something (Roger Orgill, interview, 9th May, 2014).

The Students - 1957 - 1971

Any 'picture' of the student profile from the remaining period, from 1957 to 1971 when Sir George Trevelyan retired, and then from 1971 to the College closure in 1976, a period under Geoffrey Toms' leadership as Warden, has to be pieced together from other sources. These sources include the Wardens' and Board of Governors' Reports throughout.

As stated above, Trevelyan ceased to provide information on the students' geographical origin in his Warden's reports from the 1960s onwards. This may be due to the growing numbers of students from outside the area for his own 'significant' courses and an awareness that this would not be well-received by the Board of Governors. This is despite the request in the H.M.I Report that the list of students, their addresses and the courses they attended be maintained. Geoffrey Toms gave a detailed account of student numbers on a half yearly basis from 1971 until the closure of the College but there is a complete hiatus between 1960 and 1971. I examine Toms' period as Warden in Chapter Seven but here it is worth commenting that Toms had to undertake an enormous amount of work to reconnect with local people.

Certain interviewees, specifically Barrie Trinder and Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, were kind enough to provide detailed course materials, both for the courses Barrie led himself on Industrial Archaeology and for the whole range of esoteric courses, which Ruth Nesfield-Cookson had kept on file. Neither, however, had a list of names or any details of those who attended these courses by the time of interview. According to Roger Orgill, the College

developed a mailing list of 2000 plus attenders for the spiritually-orientated courses. This subsequently helped form the basis of the Wrekin Trust mailing list.

Clearly the work of the Area Tutor/Organisers was still important at the SAEC during the mid-1960s and beyond, as the testimony of Bryan Podmore and Barrie Trinder has indicated. However, the esoteric courses had a different approach in terms of recruitment. As the former Secretary, Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, suggested, the College had become too big by the early 1960s to allow for the maintenance of a record of all course attenders. Without records, it is difficult to determine whether people were drawn for the esoteric courses from pre-existing groups or courses who already came to Attingham, such as the '56 Group, and if the courses were thus responding to an identified need or interest, or comprised an entirely different group of people. Opinions vary on this but it is clear the Area Tutor/Organisers were not involved at all. Both Barrie and Bryan described a complete separation of the esoteric courses and their own courses. Trevelyan would still discuss the term programme with them at the start of each new season but, as Barrie pointed out, by the late 1960s, there were at least three esoteric courses per term, with dates earmarked, and this was absolutely non-negotiable in terms of timetabling, and no clash was allowed. The house was given over to the esoteric courses for specific periods of time. Barrie Trinder commented on this in his ODNB entry for Trevelyan:

> He was also interested in spiritual matters, and in 1942 had been attracted to the ideas of Rudolph Steiner. While he encouraged colleagues to run courses on many subjects he had particular interests of his own about which he permitted no debate during programme planning. Some related to craftsmanship; several of his own, elegantly crafted chairs adorned the college, and for many years he gave great encouragement to the making of mosaics. Such courses were uncontroversial but his courses on spiritual topics did raise some concerns among academic colleagues, particularly when, as with a course entitled 'The significance of the group in the new age', a Michaelmas festival in 1965, it was acknowledged in publicity that they were intended for 'a small and mainly invited group' (Trinder, 2004, ODNB entry).

Ruth described a process whereby people were invited to the courses. She suggested that there was no precedent for a college tackling such courses or discussions, so that much of the work of building up the network list started from scratch. However, she referred to one person – Clarice Toyne, described by Ruth as "a rich woman in her own home" (Interview –

Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, 5th November, 2014) – who had for some years been inviting people with an interest in death, rebirth and reincarnation to her own home. This may have been a source of at least some of the invitees. Toyne went on to write *Testament of Truth - The Intimate Chronicle of a Remarkable Mystical Experience*, published in 1970.

Ruth was clear that this was an invitation-only approach, quite different from the usual process of sending out leaflets and materials to a general adult education audience, and suggested that such courses were not trying to attract the same people: "It wasn't for everybody. Every course drew its own natural group -- I mean the creative leisure course wouldn't draw the same people as the esoteric ones" (ibid).

This change of approach seems to have started in earnest with the 'Significance of the Group in the New Age' course at Michaelmas, 1965. Ruth described the invitation process - "we'd invited people from different groups -- this was meant to be a creative learning from each other… it was meant to be a small group of those that were really doing things" (ibid). Ruth's role was central. She described how a telephone call from Peter Caddy, of the then fledgling Findhorn Community, came in just as the course had started and how she took the decision to allow him to come:

> As I was greeting people there was a telephone call and there was this very aristocratic voice, Peter Caddy, ringing up to say 'look, I'm awfully sorry, I didn't realise that you had to book for courses', et cetera, et cetera. And from the moment he opened his mouth I knew he'd got to come. And I wouldn't call myself very intuitive at that time; I just knew he'd got to come (ibid).

Within a relatively short space of time such courses were attracting a large audience who understood the booking system. Sian Griffiths commented that "the minute the programme came out, by the following morning the whole thing would be absolutely full" (interview - Sian Griffiths, 17th September, 2015). As many as 170 people came to later esoteric events.
Testimony from Barrie Trinder and Bryan Podmore, in particular, who both worked at the College during this period, suggests that these students were considerably older and economically comfortable (though they very rarely had opportunity to mix with them). Clearly the College had shifted in terms of both its approach to attracting students and the type of students who came. Trinder commented that the esoteric courses were not unique in this respect as he felt, increasingly, that even his own courses -- in industrial history and

archaeology -- were attended primarily by the middles classes and special interest groups, such as retired engineers who came on the courses. However, the counterbalance was the large Labour History following he drew.

Chapter Six - The Residential Experience for Staff and Students – Space and place

As we have seen, the SAEC began at a time of post-War austerity in Britain. At the start, the way the house was run as a College reflected the "taking the thing at hand" (Interview, Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014) attitude which typified the period. This included simple, even Spartan, residential standards, with old sheets printed and re-used to create bedspreads, shared dormitory bedrooms and bathrooms, an antiquated heating system and hearty but plain food.

By the 1950s people were becoming accustomed to more leisure time as a result of paid holiday entitlement, beginning with the Holiday with Pay Act of 1938. Greater disposable income meant that people could experience staying away from home within the UK and, by the 1960s, cheap travel overseas was becoming accessible to many. People were becoming more discerning about the uses of their leisure time and developing expectations of a degree of comfort as living standards in the home improved. Despite upgrades to the accommodation and new wings being built in the 1960s and, again in the early 1970s, sustaining the College as a residential space was a constant problem in a building which was not purpose-built. Other adult education spaces were opening up and there was an ongoing call for new bespoke centres to be created which would be better located on main transport routes in towns and cities, more accessible and open to a wider group of potential students. According to the Russell Report (1973), by 1969/1970, the numerous alternative leisure opportunities available to the public meant that by this period 73% of people were seeking courses of less than four days and the longer courses, of up to a week and beyond, became much harder to fill (Russell, 1973, p. 223).

Despite – or perhaps because of – its isolation and rather Spartan residential offer, especially in its early days, the SAEC experience appears to have had a profound, personal, transformational impact on many of its students, particularly women, guiding them to further learning, even career pathways, and introducing them to a range of speakers who were, or later became, preeminent in their fields and were high profile at the time. This included

thinkers and intellectuals, such as the historian E.P. Thompson[1], French professor John Hathaway[2], the archaeologist Graham Webster[3], the sociologist Richard Hoggart[4], violinist Yehudi Menuhin[5], astronomer Patrick Moore[6] and the influential art and architecture scholar Nikolaus Pevsner[7], amongst many others. This engagement of important speakers at the SAEC, in both a formal and informal context, allowed for exchange with the students which could lead to more formal study. It was also potentially a place for academics such as Hoggart to test out new ideas before their careers took off. Interviews with several former students have demonstrated the value of such 'dinner table' conversations. Bryan Podmore said that the social aspect of the experience was vital - "that coming together of people from diverse interests and backgrounds was part of the game of it – a very important part of the game" (Interview – Bryan Podmore, 21st May 2014).

Fitness for Purpose: Becoming the College

When Attingham was first mooted as a space for a short-term residential college it was, as Lees-Milne described it, "down at heel" (Lees-Milne, Quoted in Wright, *The Guardian,* August 1st, 1987). During the war Attingham Park had been used by the NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institute), who had erected a series of huts, "the dreadful red brick ablutions" (Roger Orgill, interview and house tour, 15th July, 2015), and a wooden building, in the courtyard. Roger Orgill had arrived at Attingham in 1948 as a fourteen year old, following the appointment of his mother, Gwen, as Domestic Bursar. His recollections of the physical landscape of the house and gardens show, perhaps, its "down at heel" state at the time and

[1] E.P. Thompson (3 February 1924 – 28 August 1993) - British historian, socialist and peace campaigner and writer of *The Making of the English Working Class,* published in 1963.
[2] John Hathaway was a Professor of French language at Birmingham University in the 1960s and 1970s. "I remember John Hathaway did a course on popular French chansons. Right from the days of the forebears, up to the present day. People like Jacques Brel. And modern writers, Becket, Sartre, Camus. And it was an absolute revelation" (Diana Prowse – interview – 27/6/14)
[3] Graham Webster (31 May 1913 – 21 May 2001) - British archaeologist, important in Roman-British archaeology in the late 20th Century
[4]Richard Hoggart (24 September 1918 – 10 April 2014) - British academic in the fields of sociology, English literature and cultural studies.
[5] Yehudi Menuhin, (22 April 1916 – 12 March 1999) was the American-born violinist and conductor. He is widely considered to be one of the greatest violinists of the 20th century
[6] Patrick Moore, (4 March 1923 – 9 December 2012) was the well-known British amateur astronomer.
[7] Nikolaus Pevsner (1902 – 1983) was a highly influential scholar of the history of art and architecture. He wrote the 46-volume series of county-by-county guides, *The Buildings of England* (1951–74).

are also testimony to a period when the house and gardens were less ordered and more informal. Roger recalled a “great heap of coke” in the inner courtyard, “because there were two central heating boilers looked after by the caretaker called Mullins” (ibid) and peacocks all over the property, crying heartily every morning. Mike Threadgold, the former Head Gardener, suggested that the peacocks were so loud and numerous that they were eventually “got rid of” as they woke up the College residents. He commented that “it was certainly a very different place then. It used to be a complete mess – dogs and chickens in the brew-house… the Trevelyans had a dog run and a washing line” (Interview with Mike Threadgold – recorded Sept 1986 – interviewer Edward Payne, in Attingham Audio Archive).

Merrion Wood, son of Henry Cyril Wood, the caretaker who took over from Mullins, described being at Attingham as a child (between 1950 and 1961) as idyllic, with a total physical freedom which was breath-taking for a young boy. As well as his caretaker duties, Wood’s father also acted as the beekeeper for the estate. The apiary was also in the courtyard, along with chickens, goats, dogs and cats and ten magpies which Wood and his brother used to train. Roger Orgill remembered the Wood household as “absolutely mad because they had a great cage in the living room with a squirrel inside” (ibid). According to Wood, the squirrel was found as a baby in water in the bottom of an oak tree and rescued, as the family had a penchant for orphan animals. Wood perceived the apparent lack of order reflected in the rather wild state of the gardens at the time as having a beauty of its own: “You could drive through the clock tower courtyard then – on either side of you it was just white roses” (interview with Merrion Wood, 19th May, 2014). However, whilst the uncontrolled and slightly chaotic state of the house and grounds at this time was a source of charm to a small boy, it required considerable effort and work to make it fit for purpose as a College.

Early photographs, from 1947, in the scrapbook which covers the first ten years of the College, show a whole host of community volunteers working on the building, alongside Trevelyan, whitewashing the walls of the rotunda and preparing the interior for College use. As Roger Orgill expressed it, “of course this was a pretty dilapidated area and, with the WEA working groups in the very, very early days of the College, an awful lot of painting and cleaning went on here” (interview Roger Orgill, as above).

Figure 6.1 Early working party – 1948

Figure 6.2 The Clock tower courtyard in 2015

Figure 6.3 English Folk Dance Society Summer School 1948

Living at Attingham

> Attingham Hall had formerly been a 'stately home' in a rural part of Shropshire. Its subsequent use as a centre for Adult Education in the early 1950s made the best of both worlds. Its newer functions did justice to its being there, and made people attending courses there proud of the best of its, and their own, 'English Heritage' (David Conroy, written memoir, 18th October 2012, Attingham Archive).

At the start of the College, the Board of Governors agreed that there would be residential accommodation for around 30 students, in the East wing of the house and the first floor. The rationale for the plans conceived by the Governors for the College layout and provision for students is not described in the Board of Governors' reports but seems to reflect their own experience of a collegiate or club-based environment, and followed some of the ideas of the Guildhouse report. These included creating a common centre as a unifying space, a "combination of college and club" (BIAE, 1924, p.26) which would generate a "social atmosphere, a measure of comfort...[a place] to which students can come when their own particular classes are not in progress, where they can work quietly and meet other students" (ibid). The Guildhouse report argued that "the dynamic character of adult education is due to its social motive" (BIAE, 1924, p.28), providing a space for human contact, where common interests converge and the ennobling influence of the imagination is engaged.

The College was to offer one large room (then referred to as the Lecture room, now the dining room in the Hall) made available for lectures, recitals, film shows and large conferences. There were to be bed sitting rooms for the tutors, a students' common room, a study for the Warden, a library and a dining room/refectory for students and academic staff. The students were also to be provided with a recreation room – including a settee, a billiard table, piano, table tennis table and other games equipment (Board of Governors' report, 31st December 1947). A Building and Furniture Committee was established in March 1948 and met for the first time on the 13th of the month to discuss the Warden's accommodation. The Warden and his family were to be sited in the Orangery building, with a false ceiling at a height of 12 feet to be installed to create a living area and bedrooms above.

Figure 6.4 – Trevelyan in his study

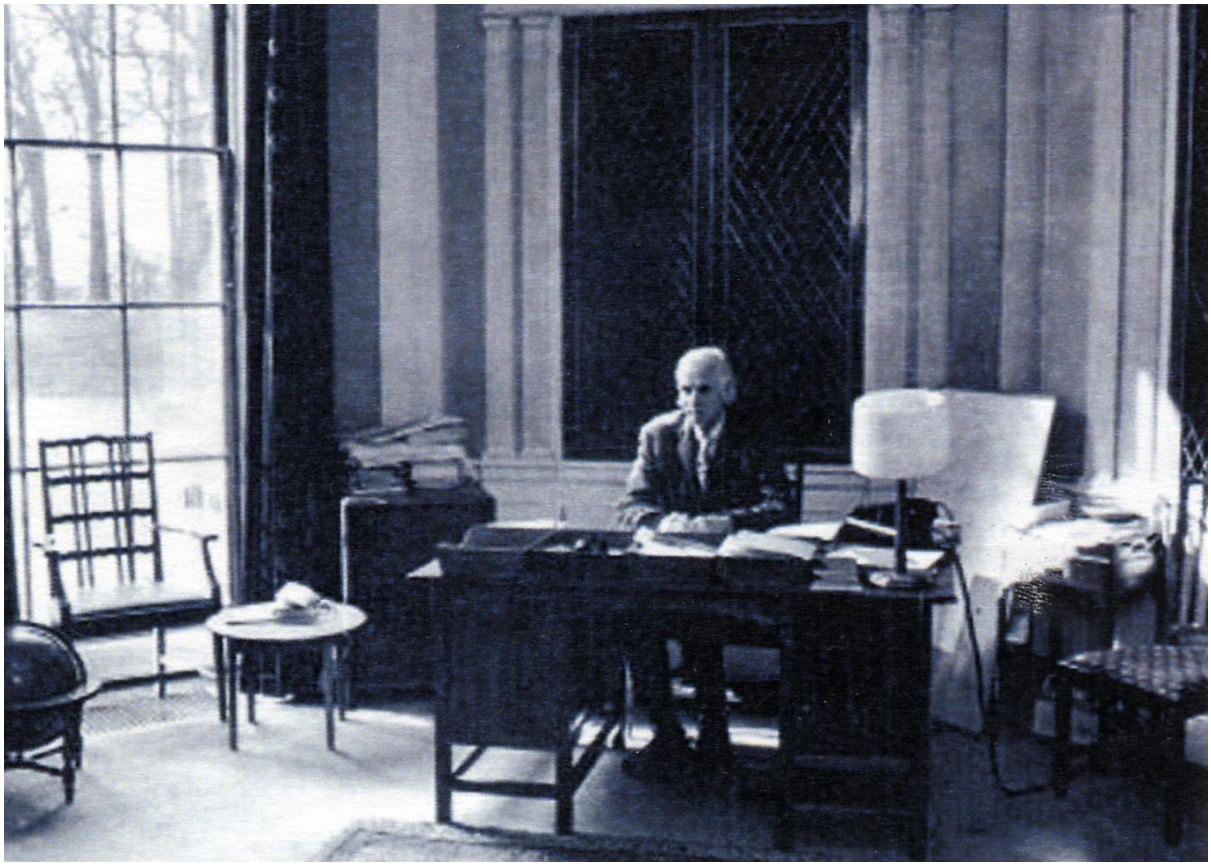


Figure 6.5 – The student Common Room

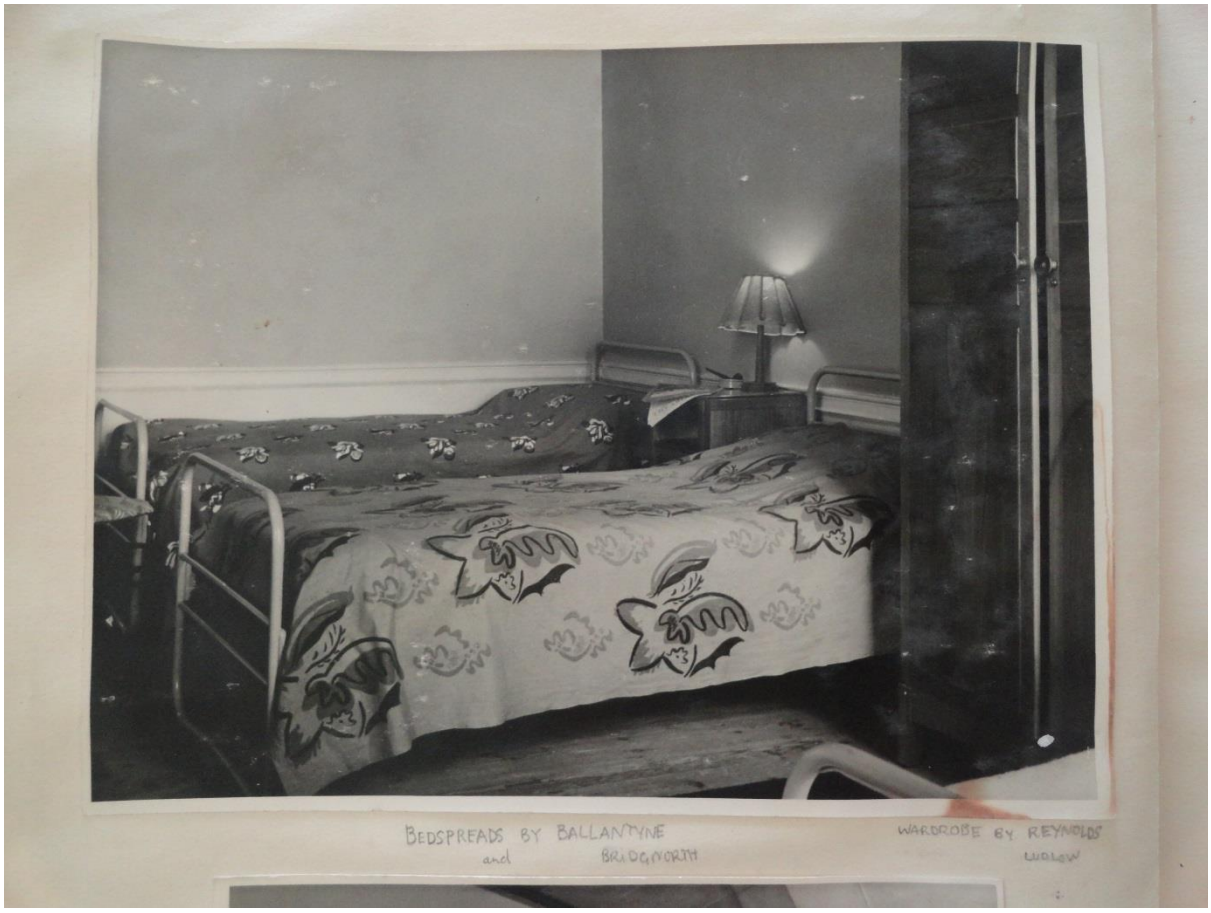


Figure 6.6 College bedroom, with printed bedspread

There seemed to be a general acceptance that, at least in the early days of the College, "nobody came for the comfort of the place" (Telephone interview, Geoffrey Toms, 19th July, 2014). The residential arrangements in the 1940s up to the mid-1960s, consisted of shared bathrooms for the staff and students, with four baths and two sinks on the upper floor and two baths on the lower. The dormitories accommodated four to eight people per room and the only privacy afforded was by a curtain around the bed, giving the appearance (to modern eyes) of hospital beds.

Much of the testimony from former students is connected with the physical actuality of being a resident, with details of the house, the gardens and park, the dormitory bedrooms - particularly in the early years of the College - and with the rituals of student life. The long walk up the drive from where the bus stopped near the Mytton and Mermaid pub, a favourite haunt for Trevelyan and the students, must have felt like entering a different world – a "bygone age". Trevelyan was central to the experience, assuming a Master of Ceremonies

role where he would greet the students and, in many instances, take them round the house and gardens. Jancis Mander, as a 16 year old, recalled the drama and excitement of arriving and being shown around the gardens by him, in the dark:

> He began every course with an introductory talk about the history of the Hall and the Berwick family. At some convenient time during a course he would lead a short walk to the Ice House, the forerunner of our freezer (ibid).

The weekend courses often started on the Friday evening. Catriona Tyson and Barrie Trinder both recalled, what Barrie described as, "the ritual of Friday night dinner" (interview with Barrie Trinder, 22nd July, 2014), which involved Trevelyan welcoming the students and telling them about the course which was to take place and then offering them free cider. He would then leave them to settle in and to have tea. Catriona commented that this was his way of putting people at their ease, as they first met as a group:

> And they'd all be quite nervous as you are -- and he'd give a little lecture at supper on Friday night and talk about it and what they were going to do and actually by the tea at 9 o'clock, they were all absolutely raring to go. And I think it was him that really galvanised them (Interview, Catriona Tyson, 18th June, 2014).

Many students' memories focus on the dining room area of the house, as well as the student games room, formerly the Stewards Room, which became an area for students to play table tennis and other games and to relax. One of the most memorable features of this part of the house, where the students convened on the Friday night, was the map room. In this area, Trevelyan had had a map covering the whole of the British Isles pasted and lacquered around all the walls. Brenda Rose commented on how this acted as the perfect icebreaker, as students identified their home towns on the map: "you gathered before meals in the Map Room and this was, of course, a very good starting point for getting to know everyone while you looked for your home town on the maps" (Brenda Rose, written memoir, 7th July 2016, Attingham Archive).

Trevelyan's showmanship and energy was a decisive factor in the positive memories people hold for the College and their impressions were of his charm and ability to generate enthusiasm for Attingham and the courses. He seems to have had particular appeal for younger students who seem to have especially enjoyed his company. This may be accounted for by what Roger Orgill described as Trevelyan's idea of the 'Levity principle', by which he meant embracing fun and humour and avoiding too much gravity and seriousness.

One of the ways the SAEC set out to broaden its appeal and to meet its objectives of offering courses "for young people under 18 particularly at the request of the County Council Education Committee" (Board of Governors' report, 1943) was to bring in sixth form and 'A' level student school groups during the week. The College focused most of its efforts on local grammar schools or "selected" schools as John Hassall described them, with occasional groups of students attending from Shrewsbury Technical College. Birmingham University students also attended, particularly in specific subject areas such as Archaeology.

For young people in particular the College was a place for experiencing freedom and of being away from home, and in a co-educational environment. The late 1940s and 1950s saw the rise of the teenager as a group in its own right and there is a sense of young people testing out limits and enjoying the privilege of new opportunities. John Hassall, a student from a local school who attended mid-week courses in 1961 and 1962, was only 16 at the time he attended the College. He described the value of being away from home and in mixed company: "this was residential and I did stay overnight….it was quite important for me at that time because I hadn't been very often away from family, in that sort of situation" (Interview John Hassall, 9th May, 2014). He saw the experience as being primarily one of preparing young people from local grammar schools for the experience of university. He described the sense of friendship, knowledge-sharing and community which was rapidly generated and the opportunity to mix with a range of people. The sense of learning accelerated by the immersive residential experience amongst people not normally encountered is evidenced in the following quote:

> It certainly challenged me in many ways to reflect on the subjects that I wanted to find out about, and also the experience of meeting with people there was valuable to me, especially in the sixth form. Yes, and the other courses I went through to, that was where you were meeting people from different walks of life from very different parts of the country who you probably wouldn't have come into contact in your usual way of life, whether at work or at school (ibid).

Jancis Mander was 16 when she attended the very first summer course at the SAEC in 1948, a closed course offered by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) for people who were members of the EFDSS. For Jancis, folk dance and music was a passion and she and her father had seen the course advertised in a magazine. Her father was a member of the EFDSS

and gave her permission to attend in his place. Jancis described sleeping in a dormitory of six beds and how the young men from the male dormitories had been in during the night: "Next morning, we woke to find all of our wardrobes were in a row in the middle of the room and all six of us had our hair tied to our bedheads; none of us had known!" (Jancis Mander's Written Memoirs of Attingham – 1949 to 1961, Attingham Archive).

Trevelyan seems to have been able to respond to this energy in the younger students and his flamboyance captured their imagination. In the early days of the College, at least in the 1950s, Trevelyan apparently had a capacity for putting people at their ease. He often ate with the students and enthusiastically engaged them in games. Roger Orgill recollected games of physical prowess which Trevelyan would devise, at which, due to his height and physical prowess, he excelled:

> He was able to lie down on the floor, holding himself on one hand whilst he placed a matchbox with the other hand as far as he could reach and lift himself up without touching the ground other than with his one hand…and of course some of the competing students never made it. They were lying prostrate on the ground, collapsed (Roger Orgill, house tour recording, 4th September, 2015).

Merrion Wood, who lived at Attingham as a child, described Trevelyan as having a youthful quality which enabled him to play at a child's level - "Sir George was like a big kid" - and as being "always up to antics". He came into his own, in particular, at times of celebration and ritual. "They used to celebrate bonfire night in the courtyard then – with a big bonfire. Sir George would leap over the bonfire which was his party piece whilst singing 'On Ilkley Moor Bah't 'At'" (Interview with Merrion Wood, 19th May, 2014). Dr Lawson Stote, in his speech for Sir George's retirement, remembered a particular incident which conjures Trevelyan's ability to engage people and to maintain enthusiasm in the face of difficulty. Stote described a particularly harsh winter, with deep snow on the ground:

> All the pipes had burst and water dropped depressingly through the ceilings and of course the central heating ceased to work. But George had no difficulty at all in making the affair an adventure and real fun as we wrapped ourselves in grey blankets for the lectures and got warm by racing up and down stairs doing quickly derived and quite absurd competitions (booklet for Sir George Trevelyan's retirement event, 21st August, 1971).

Another group of people who seemed to derive particular benefit from Attingham was women. The experience for many women appears to have been connected with a sense of escaping the day to day. Jill Dodds attended early courses in 1950 and for several years after that. She described an unburdening process as she entered the archway to Attingham Park, with the "workaday week" dropping away:

> Whatever the reason for our visits, on entering through the lovely archway at Atcham, the cloak of a workaday week seemed to completely drop away, and one was in another world until after tea on Sunday. I still feel that atmosphere to this day, when I visit (Jill Dodds, written memoir, received 8th August, 2015).

Diana Williams described the manoeuvring she had to do in order to attend a course at Attingham in October 1950 and how leaving her children with her husband was unusual at the time:

> I had three young children; the youngest two were eleven months and two years old. My husband agreed to look after them as well as the dog and the cat. It was the first time I had left him in full charge overnight and very unusual in those days (written testimonial, Diana Williams, received 27th March, 2017)

Diana commented on being both "entranced with George Trevelyan and with the content of the course". A particular luxury for her was in "having meals prepared for me" (ibid).

Brenda Rose was another female student who expressed gratitude for Attingham's isolation and for the ability to escape there, particularly after being at work all week: "These courses were a godsend for someone like me. Whenever I drove through the gates and up the drive at the end of a busy week at work, a wonderful feeling of peacefulness descended" (Brenda Rose, written memoir, received 7th June 2015).

The location of Attingham was important to the students as a whole. According to the testimony of former students from all periods of the College, much of the value of studying in such an environment was derived, not just from the opportunity to learn as a group, but from the physical location, the isolation of Attingham Park from the outside world and the sense of being part of a separate community. The main advantages reported by former students were the feeling of privilege afforded to them by studying in an environment which was perceived as beautiful, in a community separated from the daily routine, and engaging in intensive short-term study, focused on a specific subject, which allowed for group discussion on equal terms and the consequent cross-fertilisation of ideas.

John Hassall described the special attraction of Attingham Park – "the deer in the park and the River Severn winding around, it's really so beautiful. It's all part of it, the setting at Attingham...It's an important aspect" (Interview John Hassall, 9th May, 2014). He made the point that the advantage of learning in a stately home was its separation from the "workaday world" and its sense of being in a space from a "bygone age":

> The great advantage of Attingham was that it was a change from the ordinary workaday world….And of course it was often said that that's why people went there. They were interested in the courses….they didn't skive off and sit in the deer park or something. But a lot of the attraction was simply the refreshment of a complete change, of a complete break in a different environment, in a different kind of house and even a bygone age, and that was the great advantage (Interview John Hassall, 9th May, 2014).

Walter Drews (1995) suggested that this was an important aspect of the residential experience at all of the short-term colleges and that their setting in stately homes was part of the allure. He argued that, in effect, they acted as a learning retreat, describing a monastic sense of sanctuary, away from the "distractions" of the world outside:

> Probably the underlying commonality of the medieval monastery and the present-day short-term residential college is the withdrawal from the distractions of the daily routine into a 'retreat' for the purpose of learning (Drews, 1995, p.2).

Derek Tatton (Derek Tatton, interview, 10th October, 2016) argued that the short-term duration of the courses and the residential experience in the rarefied environment of the stately home was important. He suggested that it conferred on all the short-term residential colleges an important difference from longer-term residential colleges such as Ruskin or Northern College, where courses lasted one or two years. He commented that a weekend course, or even a course of one or two weeks in length, was long enough to stimulate but did not allow for loneliness or the ongoing tensions, bullying and group allegiances which can sometimes emerge on a longer-term course. None of these kinds of tensions is mentioned by the students in any of the testimony from the interviews or the written memoirs, which perhaps suggests that the short-term format worked.

The sense of a rarefied atmosphere away from the realities of the day to day could also create difficulties. John Hassall commented that, whilst he valued the "refreshment of a complete change" in a very different environment, he also sensed that this created "a disadvantage in

a way because it is so different and I suppose if you're living there, if you're in this environment all the time, you become a bit detached from the everyday world" (Interview John Hassall, 9th May, 2014).

Trevelyan himself arguably lived out a fantasy of being 'Lord of Attingham', as I discussed in the previous chapter. This was more than just a role he played but was an element that shot through the College atmosphere and ethos. Whilst the world outside Attingham was experiencing a changing youth scene, new music and new technology, Attingham maintained a focus on choral and classical music. Trevelyan, as something of an expert on Shakespeare, ensured that the literature on offer at the SAEC was of the right calibre. Sherry parties took place on a regular basis, sometimes in the orangery where Trevelyan and his family lived or occasionally in Lady Berwick's apartment. It was a resolutely 'highbrow' scene, something in the style of the country house party. As Trevelyan said, "I could have my guests continuously every weekend and mid weeks too with the other conferences" (interview George Trevelyan, at his home in Hawkesbury, by Geoffrey Beard, circa 1988 - Attingham archive). He explained it thus: "the courses run in a modern adult college can be seen in some sense as carrying on the tradition of the English country house, but in a manner fitting for our more or less classless society" (Trevelyan, n.d., circa 1950, p.1). David Conroy, a former student, commented that creating an adult education centre at Attingham "made the best of both worlds. Its newer functions did justice to its being there, and made people attending courses there proud of the best of its, and their own, 'English Heritage' (David Conroy, written memoir, 18th October 2012, Attingham Archive). There is a slight whiff of patronage in this comment from Conroy. As Sarah Speight has commented, there is a danger in assuming that the opportunity to partake in the residential experience in a beautiful country house was being conferred on people as a means of taking them out of their humdrum lives:

> Philosophies of residential adult education have tended towards the simplistic, with strong residual traces of philanthropic patronage; the belief that the residential experience provided respite from the daily grind (particularly for working class and female students) and that it had a 'social purpose' (Speight, 2003, p.151).

The chief objective of the College according to the HM Inspectors' Report from 1958 to 1959 was, above all, to meet the demands of the 1944 Education Act in providing leisure time activities of a cultural and recreational nature for *anyone* over compulsory school age. It was

not intended to enable the recreation of a county house party atmosphere or to make people proud of a heritage which had arguably not been theirs in the first place, but had been the purview of the aristocracy. The Report acknowledged that, whilst the College was broadly successful in meeting the objectives it had been set, the physical appearance of the building and grounds could be off-putting, particularly for those from lower income brackets: "No-one is excluded from Attingham but certain income groups tend to exclude themselves. At the lower end of the income scale, the weighty appearance of the 18th century portico may discourage would-be students" (Report, p.7).

This detachment from the "everyday world" and from certain income groups, sat oddly with the avowed democratic intention of the SAEC of being open to everyone. This kind of issue may have been a consideration in the thinking of Mr R. D. Salter Davies, Chief Inspector for Further Education, who spoke at the Conference of Wardens of Short Term Colleges in 1959 about the place of short-term colleges in providing Further Education. His argument was that there should be new residential colleges built for the explicit purpose of providing adult education, not in such "isolated country mansions" but connected to the social world around them, in urban cities and towns where they would be openly available to a wide group of people and more physically accessible, without losing the attraction of an aesthetic appeal. He specifically suggested that such colleges should be in cities such as York or Norwich, both old medieval cities, which were "both aesthetically satisfying and intellectually alive" (Conference of Wardens – reported in *Adult Education*, 1959, p.217). As Raymond Williams described it, this kind of adult education should provide for engagement with society, in all its manifestations, and that "society is itself an educative process, that society is a method of association and co-operation" (Williams, 1961, p. 192).

This focus on recreating something of the world of the elite country set was not particular to Trevelyan and does not seem to have been confined to the immediate post-war period. Walter Drews interviewed a number of the former Wardens for his thesis (1995), including Guy Hunter who had been Warden at Urchfont Manor, Wiltshire, from 1947 to 1952. Hunter wrote extensively on the experience of being a Warden and wider issues of short-term residential education in the 1950s, and his period as Warden corresponded with Trevelyan's time in the role. Such testimony enabled Drews to create a picture of the Wardens and their own experience of 'living in' over a longer timescale. As part of my own research, I interviewed

Walter, who had been the Warden of Wansfell College, in Epping Forest, from 1973 to 1993, and Derek Tatton, who was Warden of Wedgwood Memorial College, in Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, from 1979 to 2003. My objective was to see if their experience as Warden was consistent with Trevelyan's, which is well-documented in his own autobiographic writings (such as *Exploration into God*). It became clear from these interviews that 'aping the aristocracy' was also significant in the wider short-term residential college network and suggests that living and working in a stately home may have had an effect. Walter Drews described the affectations that some Wardens developed as a result of their position. He describes this phenomenon as being in evidence at the early meetings of the Conference of Principals of Short-term Residential Colleges, which later evolved into the Adult Residential Colleges Association (ARCA) of which Walter was a founder member:

> They met once a year– it was a shocking business, it really was - it was a gentleman's club… A lot of the Principals were ex-service because quite simply they got a unit of housing you see – after the war and where do you live? And of course for some of them, it went to their head – there was one of them who rode on his horse round the estate and said to the gardener 'my man!'….They felt you see that they were a cut above other people because of the place they were living…they behaved like squires (Water Drews - interview, 16th June, 2015).

Derek Tatton described a similar fascination, expressed through the mores and values of Oxbridge – "a lot of them had the top table idea, where the Warden would sit with selected members of staff and visiting lecturers" (Interview – 10th October, 2016). He also commented that the Wardens "had considerable power and some of them used it very unscrupulously". His overall analysis was that some of the Wardens were capable of "holding to the idea of being open to everyone" whilst simultaneously relishing "being the Lord of the Manor". He did not see this as particular to Trevelyan and it seems, according to Walter Drews who interviewed him in 1994, that Trevelyan had little patience with this kind of behaviour – "I don't think he was too impressed – he was pretty much an individualist" (Water Drews - interview, 16th June, 2015). Frances Farrer attested that Trevelyan could afford to be an individualist. He had both the financial ease and the family background to have no need to rein in his views or to seek or mimic a social standing which he already had. This led to a distinct disconnection, at times, from the world outside the walls of Attingham. He could quite seriously comment in the early 1950s that Britain was a "more or less classless society" (as above). Catriona commented that her father fell upon a role that was perfect for him and saw

no limitations in it: “I think this [Attingham] just was really fortuitous for him. It's like a glove, really. He could do what he wanted, he could be very innovative and he never really thought that no was an option. And because of his delight in people, he would just talk to anybody about anything” (interview Catriona Tyson, 18th June, 2014).

The Family Residential Experience

The Warden’s role was by no means without its strains. Developing and – in Trevelyan’s case – leading so many of the courses, with an estimated 40,000 students attending the college during his time, must have been exhausting and there was no way of escaping the College as a live-in staff member. As Trevelyan himself said to Drews, “after 24 years I had worn myself out and become so ill that I had to retire” (Trevelyan, quoted in Drews, 1995, p. 157). There were other reasons why Trevelyan retired, as I will consider later, but there is no doubt that the College experience, and its requirement that the Warden live on site, was demanding. Walter Drews himself described his own experience at Wansfell College as all-consuming: “You’re not running a residential college anymore...if you are a Principal of a college, it’s part of your life, you live there, my three kids grew up there – it was my life for exactly 20 years” (Interview with Walter Drews, 16th June, 2015).

Derek Tatton described a similar experience. His view was that, for most of the colleges, the trustees or governors wanted a residential Warden as they could be called upon at any time. Consequently, partners/wives and families were also required to live in. Derek explained that this could become a complex issue, with some partners experiencing, as he described it, “Doctor’s wife syndrome”, a sense of being an appendage to a husband (the Principals/Wardens were all male at this time), and expected to support their activity and to be ‘on call’ in any eventuality. In Derek’s case, he recalled his wife Erica being keen to help and taking to hospital any student who had fallen ill or been injured. As Derek commented, this was a role largely unseen by the Board of Governors, or at least not acknowledged, but could become “an issue” as it continued over the years, leading to feelings of resentment, even a sense of being exploited, on the part of the wife or partner (Derek Tatton, interview, 10th October, 2016). This was particularly the case in colleges which did not benefit from a Deputy Warden, as Derek Tatton commented in relation to Wedgwood Memorial College. In

his view, women often took on elements of the role of Deputy, for much less pay and little recognition, particularly the Domestic Bursar and Secretary, as well as the wives and partners who provided 'voluntary' support.

Helen Trevelyan, Sir George's wife, figures very little in either the historical or my own oral history recordings and little is therefore known about her experience. It does seem to have been the case, however, that she maintained a distance from the College and had scant active involvement with it. Mary Beard described her as "extremely nice but very long suffering" (Interview, Mary Beard, 2nd July, 2014) and Sian Griffiths said that she "withdrew to do her own thing" (Interview Sian Griffiths, 24th June 2014). She does not appear to have attended many courses except for music courses, particularly those led by Yehudi Menuhin from which she appears to have derived considerable pleasure and, notably, the painting course in the 1950s, *You All Can Paint*, which many interviewees described as a turning point for her when she realised her gift as a painter. Margrit Turpin, who was an au pair for the Trevelyans between 1955 and 1956, offered insights into the kindness and generosity of Helen Trevelyan, with whom she spent most of her time, who taught her English with great care and attention during her year with them. "Together we read John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as well as many of Shakespeare's Sonnets which she made me learn off by heart!" (Written memoir, Margrit Turpin, received 7th September, 2015) She commented that painting was everything to Helen: "Helen was also a very gifted painter. She had her own studio in the Orangery which was next to the dining room. She would always let me have a look at her latest work" (ibid).

The decision not to engage with College life seems to have been a deliberate one on the part of Helen Trevelyan. A number of interviewees commented that they were not a close or happy couple. Trevelyan took many of his meals in the college and was busy with the courses much of the time. Helen retreated into her studio. Trevelyan commented that he "could not plunge into Steiner's teachings for family reasons: I had married and my wife did not swallow it, so I became a fringe anthroposophist" (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p.40). Something of the language here suggests a degree of resentment. It is also debatable how 'fringe' Trevelyan was as the 1950s rolled into the 1960s and he was surrounding himself with more people who wanted to utilise the College as a space for spiritual awakening, with him at the centre of the enterprise. Frances Farrer implied that Helen became a victim of Trevelyan's utter focus on

his convictions and a certain naturalistic wildness in him: “people had to suffer for his success in order for him to be the Great God Pan” (Interview – Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014).

Catriona Tyson described some of these tensions as they affected her, as a girl growing up at Attingham. She remarked that she was often lonely as her father was focused so exclusively on the College and her mother was immersed in her painting. She was given a great deal of freedom and had a pony and trap which she used to trot around the grounds. She also enjoyed being part of the pony club – “like little girls do” (interview, Catriona Tyson, with Sarah Kay, May 2000). The service staff at Attingham became a source of comfort to her. Mrs Derwood, Lady Berwick’s housekeeper, would make her special cakes and the College cooks were kind to her. The moments she spent with her father were cherished but infrequent: “Father did wonderful things with me sometimes, when he remembered he had a daughter and had a day off” (ibid). Trevelyan would occasionally take time away from College work and take her on expeditions of different kinds, which show a side of him which embraced fun and experimentation. Her final comments suggest a man who was essentially kind and without any sense of arrogance or condescension:

> He used to do lovely things for me. He was always busy and never around, but if he had a day off, he'd suddenly say okay, let's go and build Treasure Island. We had an island down by the bridge over the river there, had a stockade and had treasure in a coal scuttle in the water and a map. Or let's go brass rubbing. He used to go around churches and teach me about architecture and how to look at churches and things. He was a very, very nice man too. He didn't speak ill of anybody, ever (Interview, Catriona Tyson, 18th June, 2014).

The Staff Experience

Figure 6.7 Student group at the College entrance

The testimony of the domestic staff, both from my own interviews and the oral history archive at Attingham, has been a critical way in to understanding how the College operated on a residential basis. The cooks, in particular, gave insight into the day to day routines, the meals on offer – considered lavish, even too lavish, by some on the Board of Governors – the types of students with whom they came into contact and the living arrangements. Marcia Taylor, Head Cook between 1953 and 1958, described a world in which the 'engine' of the College was stoked by the efforts of the kitchen staff:

> You knew you'd got to get a meal, everything ready and cooked and one o'clock, ten to one, the hotplate that was taken up to the dining room was brought down, plugged in in the kitchen and it had to be ready for them to take up to serve. Yes, yes. We had to be *on time* (interview with Marcia Taylor, 14th October, 2014).

The days were long, particularly when the larger courses were taking place, with a full English breakfast in the morning, coffee and biscuits at 11 o'clock, lunch at 1, which was often a roast

dinner with a steamed pudding for dessert, afternoon tea, a salad and meat-based meal or sandwiches and cakes in the evening and then a night time drink. Veronica Jones, a later Head Cook from 1965, commented that most staff were so exhausted at the end of such a long day that they climbed upstairs to bed as soon as the last shift was over.

Most of the vegetable and fruit produce came from the Attingham gardens but some food stuffs, such as meat, came from outside suppliers and was brought in on a daily basis. There were no freezers, so a daily menu was vital. The role of the Domestic Bursar in orchestrating this was considerable: "Mrs Orgill would work out the menus and she would order most of the stuff and anything extra I wanted I had to let her know and she would order" (interview with Marcia Taylor, 14th October, 2014). The compensation came at other, less busy times, when staff members were given time off: "It was hard work when there was a big course in but, you know, we had our time off. We worked from seven in the morning. We had afternoons off. Often we would go swimming in the river" (ibid).

Generally, kitchen staff worked a half day on Thursdays and a half day on Sunday. In the open environment that Trevelyan seemed to generate, at least amongst the support staff, staff members were also allowed to join in with certain courses if the rest of their work had been done. Marcia Taylor commented on the folk dancing courses, which was an interest of hers: "If it was sort of folk dancing or anything like that, we could join in. And if it was anything that we were interested in we could stand at the back of the lecture room" (ibid).
Veronica Jones described this same attitude of support and inclusion. She was allowed to join in on the film courses which took place on Tuesday evenings during the 1960s. Veronica remembered that she and other staff who lived in were given freedom to invite boyfriends and children to the house and "just made lots of entertainment for ourselves" (interview, Veronica Jones, 2002, Brenda Hough and John Ecclestone). Both Veronica and Marcia commented on the generosity and kindness of George Trevelyan. Marcia described him as a "wonderful man" and recalled that he and Mrs Orgill would be quick to offer praise: "if we'd done a good meal, they would both come down to the kitchen and thank us" (interview with Marcia Taylor, 14th October, 2014). Veronica described his warmth and graciousness: "He'd always pop his head round the door and say 'hello girls'. You could always go and talk to him…and he made you feel important" (Interview - Veronica Jones, 2002, Brenda Hough and

John Ecclestone). Mike Threadgold, the Head Gardener, described Trevelyan as being willing to talk to anyone and as wearing his aristocratic status lightly at this stage – "it don't matter whether it was the bloke lying in the gutter or the lord of the manor, he'd stop and have a word and a natter with him" (interview, Mike Threadgold, 8th May, 2014).

Career impact – "Thank you, Attingham"

The College, and the 'dinner table' conversations which Bryan Podmore described, had a profound impact on a number of the students' career choices and played a critical enabling function in creating networks they could tap into and offering important academic contacts. Sally Stote described the impact of the lectures and courses on architecture generally, which stimulated a lifelong interest in her. Contact with Pevsner, in particular, was of major significance for Sally: "Brilliant lecturers, I mean John Summerson, Nikolaus Pevsner, a lot of V and A [Victoria and Albert Museum] lecturers and BM [British Museum] lecturers. Life-changing – hard work – it was absolutely incredible (Interview – Sally Stote, 19th June, 2014).

Sally's mother had often acted as a helper on the National Trust Summer Schools, in case someone became ill, on the earlier tours in the 1950s and, as a child, Sally had sometimes gone with her. In 1962 Sally was able to attend the Historic Houses of Britain Summer School, in her own right and as part of the group. On that occasion the tour took in the great houses of Shropshire, Derbyshire and Wiltshire. Sally's parents lived in a house of considerable architectural interest in Shrewsbury so it became a stop off point for the Summer School visitors and they offered her a place as a thank you:

> The year I did the full course was the year we went to Salisbury in 1962. Because they always came and had tea at my parents' house in Shrewsbury and looked round the house, as a reward and a thank you, they gave me a place, a free place (ibid).

For Sally this had a considerable influence on her career, cultivating an interest in museums and the decorative arts, and she attributes her later career success to this early influence and to Trevelyan's support. She herself went on to work at the Victoria and Albert museum (V and A), and Trevelyan acted as Sally's referee for several years in her early career.

Sian Griffiths, who worked at Attingham during their sixth form days from 1965 to 1972 as a domestic helper and particularly on the Arts Summer Schools, felt she owed a specific debt of

gratitude to Trevelyan for her own career development. She studied Architecture at A level and suggested that it was his "enthusiasm and erudition" that fired her imagination: "He was incredible – the enthusiasm for looking at architecture, for listening to music, for writing – and that's the part that I look back on… I can't imagine what my life would have been without the influence of Sir George in particular and Attingham as a whole" (Interview, Sian Griffiths, 13th June, 2014). Sian recalled how much the SAEC "offered on a plate" to her without her realising its value at the time. Composers such as Aaron Copeland leading courses and "the Allegri and Amadeus quartets" playing regularly at Attingham; Nikolaus Pevsner, the leading scholar in his field at the time, speaking on art and architecture; the plays and the "excellent Amateur dramatics". Sian went on to a career in the music business and cited the SAEC as a major influence.

Diana Williams described coming on a course at the SAEC in 1950 as a pivotal life moment. As someone who had "missed out on higher education" (written testimonial, Diana Williams, received 27th March, 2017), she stated that, through her attendance at the SAEC on that first course, "a new world opened for me" (ibid). She came back "for further weekends" whenever she could manage to. Again, mixing with people from a range of backgrounds was important to her. "At one there was a sitting M.P. with his wife and month old son, who grew up to be a minister in the government, himself" (ibid). For Diana, the experience inspired her to go into a career in teaching. She stated "I was so inspired by what I had learned that I resolved to seek further training when I was able. I trained as a teacher at Wolverhampton and taught until 1984. So thank you, Attingham" (ibid).

The 1960s - a Changing Staff Experience

For academic and operational staff, too, Trevelyan appears to have offered considerable freedom, particularly in the first 10 years of the College, but also into the 1960s. Unfortunately none of the residential tutorial staff or Area Organisers from the 1950s came forwards to comment on their experiences in that period and, given the passage of time, later staff indicated that most of them have now died.

Barrie Trinder, who was the LEA-funded Area Education Tutor and Area Organiser from May 1965 until the College closure in 1976, offered important insight into the experience for academic staff into the 1960s, including those who lived on site. Bryan Podmore, who was Deputy Warden and Adult Tutor from 1962 until 1967, also described how the course programme was developed as an open process. A group would meet in Trevelyan's study and plan the programme together. Barrie Trinder commented on his period as an Area Organiser/Adult Education Tutor, which began in May 1965 until the College closed in 1976, as providing an opportunity to develop his career and to make contacts with a range of experts in his field, which was industrial and social history:

> I was only 26 when I was appointed and being able to pull in really distinguished historians to lecture was marvellous. If you're asking for its impact on my career it's a key element there. I got to know Edward Thompson [E.P. Thompson, the historian]. It was a marvellous opportunity and I think my colleagues felt much the same. I mean Geoffrey Parker who did courses on international relations…..George let me do what I wanted to do. And I did that, in terms of my own career anyway, very successfully– my courses drew in people who seemed to enjoy it (Interview – Barrie Trinder, 22nd July, 2014).

Diana Prowse, then Cameron, was Domestic Bursar at the College between 1967 and 1972, and found her early experience of the SAEC liberating. She felt that the whole ambiance was geared towards inclusivity and mutual understanding, commenting, "it's truly wonderful to be in a place where what you say is listened to" (interview – Diana Prowse, 27th June, 2014). Trevelyan was inclusive and respectful of Diana's background as a French teacher and as a graduate of Edinburgh University. Diana felt that that part of her life had been put on hold whilst she had run a hotel business with her former husband, prior to Attingham. At the SAEC, by contrast, she was able to attend French courses on her weekends off, run by John

Hathaway, then Professor of French Language at Birmingham University. The milieu of the SAEC, and the quality of the courses and the lecturers, meant that, for Diana, "Attingham really did a lot for restoring my confidence" (ibid).

Diana described Sir George as a "very attractive and loveable man" for whom she had great respect – for his erudition, his energy and his supportiveness. She also commented, however, that she witnessed a change in him and in the atmosphere of the College, particularly towards the end of the 1960s. By this time, the sense of a shared community of staff working for a common cause, and the almost halcyon environment described by Veronica Jones and Marcia Taylor, was beginning to shift. This coincided with the increasing focus on the 'esoteric' courses and the changing student profile for such courses. Sally Stote was involved with the College from her childhood, attending many courses there, both with her parents and, later, in her own right. She suggested that "staff divisions" were becoming apparent, leading to a breakdown in the old camaraderie:

> (It was) us and them in the end, because of the spiritual courses and there had been a great sense of camaraderie and the odd bit of bickering and arguments which you always get – you hear this in all the early recordings – but by the time you get into the latter period you get more and more of the spiritual courses and you get a split in the staff group (Interview – Sally Stote, 19th June, 2014).

Diana Prowse described the impact on staff recruited locally of encountering new and sometimes alien ideas which made them uncomfortable. Diana acknowledged a desire to avoid being biased as she and Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, then Bell, the College Secretary, who was recruited to the post in 1960, "did not get on - we weren't at all alike in any way, really" (interview – Diana Prowse, 27th June, 2014). However, she specifically highlighted what she perceived as Ruth's increasingly strong influence on George Trevelyan, particularly in the mid to late 1960s:

> All the kitchen staff and the chamber maids were local women from the villages round about, from Atcham, from other villages, and some even from Shrewsbury. And they would, you know, obviously they were aware of what was going on and they would be aware of -- that they couldn't go and clean Ruth's room until such and such a time in the morning because she and Sir George were in there meditating (ibid).

She intimated that some of the rumours in the wider community about the College were initiated by such encounters, as word spread outside about practices that were considered outré and elitist, and at the rate payers' expense.

The College itself developed a kind of mystique for staff who were involved with it later, after Trevelyan had left. Dianne Barr, who worked for the Birmingham University extra-mural department from 1973 for several years, was involved in administering the courses held at Attingham, which was considered as the University's residential college, along with Westham House in Warwickshire. Dianne never met George Trevelyan and was connected with Attingham during Geoffrey Toms' wardenship but the rumours persisted: "'I used to just hear this in hushed tones, that there was a smell of cannabis around the place and George hadn't a clue what it was!" (Interview Dianne Barr, 17th July, 2015).

Veronica Jones remarked that the esoteric courses also heralded changes in the food on offer at the College, with an increasing emphasis on brown bread and wholefood, which she saw as being a particular result of the organic farming courses and the presence of the Soil Association. She commented that brown bread had always been perceived as inferior by the cooks and that it was much more difficult to bake with, so she took to mixing half white and half brown flour and passing it off as brown bread. Diana Prowse, as Domestic Bursar, witnessed a growing emphasis on vegetarianism. This, in itself, was laudable enough, in her view, but her tensions with Ruth flared over the issue. She found Ruth didactic on the subject, saying: "and when asked about her vegetarianism, she would say rather primly, 'we don't eat our friends'" (Interview – Diana Prowse, 27th June, 2014).

As Sally Stote commented, such changing practices brought distinct tensions to the staff team. Whilst the physical isolation of Attingham was one of its appeals for residential staff when times were good, it became a considerable problem when there were tensions as there were no obvious sources of support internally and no easy means of gaining support from outside:

> People who lived here - though it seems absolutely lovely as you know – all say they were incredibly isolated and it was fine if you got on with everybody but if you didn't it was really lonely - it's like being in the middle of the country and there's nobody at all to go to (Interview – Sally Stote, 19th June, 2014).

Her particular point was about the lack of access to the world outside and how this generated an intensity which was difficult to escape and amplified any rifts in the staff group. This became much more apparent, she suggested, when rivalries occurred over the "spiritual

courses" and older allegiances broke down: "Of course it is undiluted, you couldn't walk out and go to the cinema unless you had a car and of course at that time not everybody had a car - even getting down to the Mytton was a bicycle ride" (ibid).

By the time of the burgeoning esoteric courses in the 1960s there was a general sense that the student group which was drawn to the College, at least for the esoteric courses, was quite different – older, often retired, and from more professional backgrounds or with private incomes. Barrie Trinder commented that the students for the spiritual courses were more privileged and middle to upper class:

> I think the class element is important. While neither I nor most of my like-minded colleagues had many contacts with the students on George's spiritualist courses (which usually filled the house), we did have a sense that these were people from privileged backgrounds and that there was a mutual hostility between us (Written memoir - Barrie Trinder, June 2015).

Pamela Hawse, who was a friend of both George and Kitty Trevelyan and also attended some of the esoteric courses, vividly described the changing student profile. From the slightly 'down at heel' quality which had characterised the SAEC in its early days, she commented that, at the height of the esoteric courses, the area in front of the house was "awash with Jaguars and Rolls Royces" (interview Pamela Tawse, 21st March, 2017).

Mike Threadgold described some of the later course attenders on the esoteric courses as "rich hippies". This is a particular reference to the young people's courses which grew out of the more established esoteric courses in 1970 and 1971, immediately before Trevelyan left Attingham. Mike Threadgold observed the young people, in unusual clothing, sleeping outside, along the Mile Walk, a secluded and leafy part of the grounds. Ruth described the young people's sudden appearance, and her own anxiety, during a coffee break at one of the esoteric courses: "the boys were in capes -- hippies -- and I thought I wonder if I'm going to be knifed or what. And they came and said could they attend the course" (interview – Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, 5th November, 2014). Ruth commented that the course in question had been fully booked for some time but Ruth talked to Trevelyan, who immediately spoke warmly with the young people and offered to put on courses for them if they could gather together a group of a sufficient size. Three courses of this type were put on in rapid succession. Mike described his perception of them:

> They used to have peace courses and I remember that one time when I was here - we must have been clipping the box hedges, must have been August time I should think, on Lady Berwick's side. We went round there and all these hippies was all over the place and there was one on the front by Lady's Berwick's end of the lawn there breastfeeding this little girl or boy whatever it was…and somebody said yes that's Lord Harlech's daughter…and she was a hippy - she did knock about with the hippie community (Interview Mike Threadgold, 8th May, 2014).

Ruth Nesfield-Cookson was quick to rebut the 'rich hippy' comments, and remarked that Lord Harlech's daughter was not typical. Attenders included the sons and daughters of the gentry but also those who had no money. She commented on the generosity of those who could afford the courses, who would pay for others who could not.

A number of people from this group of students came to Attingham in 'gypsy caravans' and stayed in them in the grounds, so they did not experience the routine residential experience. Carole Bowdler, a laundry worker and kitchen helper in the 1960s, commented on this: "we used to have them in and they used to stay here with their caravans" (interview, Carole Bowdler, 2002, interviewed by Brenda Hough and John Ecclestone). By this stage, Catriona too had a similar caravan and was described as being "a bit hippified…and she had a gypsy caravan" (ibid).

By the late 1960s the sense that Trevelyan was unconscious of his class and willing to talk to anyone was disappearing, at least amongst some staff. Diana Prowse described how "Sir George brought his aristocratic background to bear on the College, and was clearly part of 'upper class life'" (Interview – Diana Prowse, 27th June, 2014). This included having a 'top table' in the College dining room. This was a distinct change from earlier periods, when all staff remarked on the mixing between staff and students and Trevelyan's lack of pretensions.

How the students on other courses interpreted these changes and the growing emphasis on the spiritual courses is difficult to ascertain as few people mentioned it, or at least not directly. However, Pam Turner, who attended music and drama courses with a group of young friends from 1963 until the late 1960s, described the change. Pam felt that there were increasingly two sets of courses running in parallel – music, arts and drama on one side; New Age on the other. The two did not intermingle. She commented that the two types of courses did not

even share the same space for meals when courses were going on at the same time, even though both sets of people used the basement refectory. Pam commented that she could see the change happening "before her eyes", with an increasing emphasis on the New Age, especially by the end of the 1960s. She said that she and her friends stopped coming completely (interview Pam Turner, 4th December, 2014).

There is also an illuminating quote from Brenda Rose, who first started attending courses at Attingham in 1968. She mentions the 'top table' phenomenon and also described how Trevelyan was increasingly associated with a coterie of people involved in his "philosophy courses" and only appeared at the introductory sessions for the non-esoteric courses:

> Sir George Trevelyan usually came to welcome students at the beginning of each course, and sometimes presided at 'top table' for the first meal but he was mostly seen by his followers on the philosophy courses which were his personal contribution (Brenda Rose, written memoir, 7th July 2016, Attingham Archive).

Shortly before Trevelyan retired from the College in 1971 a new bedroom wing was built, which made it possible for more students to attend. The 'make do' approach of the earlier years was replaced by accommodation facilities which were much more salubrious, some even having en suite facilities. The irony is that the days of the College were numbered by this stage and the large numbers of people attending for the esoteric courses which had made additional accommodation so important naturally stopped as Trevelyan moved on.

Retirement and Post-Trevelyan

Geoffrey Toms became Warden when Trevelyan left in 1971. Toms was a specialist in Roman archaeology and as Deputy Warden between 1968 and 1971 had led a number of courses focusing on Uriconium and the archaeology of Stonehenge, as well as developing the Archaeology Summer Schools. Sally Stote described him as "a great historian and archaeologist" who enabled people to "live the experience" of Stonehenge (Interview Sally Stote, 19th June, 2014). He was a considerable influence on Professor Mary Beard, the classicist, who worked in the kitchens between 1970 and 1973, during the Archaeology Summer Schools and Sian Griffiths, who worked with Mary during the same period. Mary's father, Roy Beard, an architect, was also involved. She stayed at Attingham during this period

so her experience was an immersive one. Staff accommodation by that stage was separate and was located in staff flats at the back of the house.

Both Mary and Sian spanned the period in which Trevelyan left and Toms took over as Warden. Their insight has therefore been invaluable as to how this change played out. Mary described the importance of her time helping Geoffrey Toms with his slides on the archaeology courses, saying "his input was invaluable to me" (Telephone interview, Mary Beard, 2nd July, 2014). She described this period as being the point at which she first became interested in archaeology. She remembered Trevelyan as being learned and charismatic – "charming, aristocratic and a bit nuts". Rather poignantly, she recollected him showing photographs of Wallington when he gave his architectural talks. Mary expressed some sadness that she only knew him "in his nutty days" (ibid).

In common with Barrie Trinder, Diana Prowse and Geoffrey Toms, both Sian and Mary felt that Sir George Trevelyan was drawn to his own detriment down the esoteric route, losing something of his vitality, his open-minded love of many subjects and his energy in the process. Even his daughter Catriona commented that "he got more peculiar as he got older, and he got into it [the esoteric] more. And I think that was a big mistake because he was quite old then and about to retire" (Interview, Catriona Tyson, 18th June, 2014). Trevelyan was badly affected by severe rheumatoid arthritis by the latter period of his time at Attingham and this may certainly have affected his capacity to engage as he had done with all courses. He said himself that he had grown weary. It also drew him into changing his lifestyle and his eating habits.

There is also some evidence, however, that he was manipulated. Geoffrey Toms commented on this – "I felt he was being taken advantage of in the last few years" (Telephone interview, Geoffrey Toms, 19th July, 2014). This was a sentiment echoed by several people. Barrie Trinder thought that the manipulation came from the "inner cognoscenti", from the people who were most enthusiastic about the esoteric courses, and particularly Bernard Nesfield-Cookson and Ruth, who he felt controlled George. He also sensed that George was "vulnerable" by the end of his time at the SAEC. Diana Prowse made the same point, recognising a mutual influence between Ruth and George which she felt was not entirely

healthy. She was sorry to see Sir George's enthusiasm and joie de vivre curbed, which was how she perceived it -"I liked Sir George enormously and admired him enormously but regretted that he went so far down this path". She commented that the esoteric courses "troubled" her, as she had developed a view that most of the people on the courses had "deep problems and were looking for solutions". She concluded -"I'm afraid that it was exploitative".

Barrie Trinder described one occasion when a course he was running was taking place at the same time as one of the esoteric courses. This never usually happened, as I have stated previously, as the course programme was designed in such a way as to avoid this. He described an uncomfortable sense of not being wanted – "the whole atmosphere was very odd" – and of an unwillingness on the part of Bernard Nesfield-Cookson to engage in any kind of conversation. Trinder found him "very sinister". Albert Hunt, his colleague at the time, had expressed concerns to Barrie about the "extreme right wing associations" of some of the people who attended the esoteric courses (Interview with Barrie Trinder, 15th February, 2017).

It is now impossible to adjudicate between the veracity of these perceptions. Out of all the people who took the opportunity to talk about their experience at Attingham during my research, only one person from the esoteric courses came forwards (and that very recently) – Pamela Tawse. This may be because this group of people tended to be older, and therefore the result of the simple passage of time. It may be that the courses represented a time of pain and difficulty for people that they do not wish to speak about or revisit. Sian Griffiths had two experiences of attending an esoteric gathering during the summer of June 1970, the Expansion of Consciousness course, and again in July 1971, at the final session before Sir George retired, The Doors of Perception[8]. Her observation was that the people on the first course seemed to be seeking comfort. The room was "absolutely packed", largely with older people – "middle aged to 85, with a few of the younger hippies amongst them" – and Sian

[8] Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* was published in 1954 and dealt with Huxley's experiences of taking mescaline. Trevelyan knew Huxley in the 1930s and dined with him at the Athenaeum on 18th March, 1937 (Fischer, 1998, p.92). In 1968, Timothy Leary (1920-1996) published *High Priest* (New World Publishing). Leary, an American psychologist and writer, became an important figure within the New Age scene in the late 1960s, as an advocate of psychedelic drugs as giving insight into higher realms of consciousness; the Establishment viewed him as a mortal danger to the younger generation.

stood at the back, with many others. Notable speakers included Lady Cynthia Sandys, Rosamund Lehmann[9], the novelist, and Tim Feild, who was later known as Reshad Feild and was a leading Sufi. Sian recalled he had beads, long white hair and flowing robes. The course focused on life after death and the course programme offered the following description:

> If we accept the postulate that a state of absolute and creative Being exists beyond outer appearances, then it follows that life extends into different dimensions and planes of higher frequency. Is objective investigation and exploration of these higher worlds possible? There is much evidence to suggest that human thinking can telepathically contact realms of higher thought and being.

Lady Sandys and Rosamund Lehmann spoke on the subject of letters they had received telepathically from their dead daughters and Sir George gave a contribution on the subject of "the Supreme Hope – Life endless, indestructible and divine". The audience members were rapt throughout and Sian commented on the reaction:

> A lot of the people on the courses, either their animals had died recently or a member of their family and they were grieving, and they found some comfort – not necessarily from the lectures - but of course there was 'aah perhaps so and so hasn't died, perhaps the soul is somewhere'…it's powerful stuff…and what's wrong with that? (Interview with Sian Griffiths, 17th September, 2017).

Sian understood the need for comfort amongst those who had been bereaved and were in pain but was less comfortable with the feeling that this was how the College made money by this point. In some ways, her reaction mirrored that of Diana Prowse who considered such courses exploitative. Sian explained that up until this point she had had considerable sympathy with Trevelyan's concept of seeking unity in all forms and matter. She recognised it in relation to his philosophy on architecture, for instance, but she described how "that weekend was the one to tip me over the edge into saying 'this is ridiculous'" (ibid).

Her final memory of the College came from *The Doors of Perception* course. This course was part of a Spiritual Summer School so was over a seven day period, July 28th to August 4th 1971, demonstrating the growing focus in time and energy on these courses. Sian commented that she believed Sir George was "past caring" by this stage as his retirement was imminent. Marabel Gardiner (Rolf Gardiner's wife) was leading a dramatic masque, entitled Persephone,

[9] Rosamund Lehmann's daughter died in 1958 of polio, in her mid-20s. Rosamund described the psychic experiences she claimed to have had related to Sally at the Expansion of Consciousness course, and these were also documented later in her anthology, *Moments of Truth* (1986).

which took place in the grounds and was to use the Bell Tower for Persephone's appearance. 'Persephone' was a young woman who had come along to support her mother and was politely press-ganged into taking the part. Due to torrential rain, 'Persephone' tripped up and hurt her ankle and had to hobble to make her entrance. Marabel railed against the heavens, complaining bitterly that she did not know it was going to rain.

As Sian was such an invaluable contributor to my research I would like to give her the last word on the College residential experience. Sian emphasised two key points, which are pertinent here. The Warden's role was vital in developing, framing and colouring the ethos and atmosphere of the College, as well as the course direction. This was true in all the short-term residential colleges, as testimony from Derek Tatton and Walter Drews has shown, and Trevelyan was a powerful presence. There is, however, a danger in conflating the College and the Warden entirely. Sian was keen to describe the vital role of other staff in College life – the Deputy Warden (Geoffrey Toms at the point she described), the Area tutors, her own relationship with Diana Prowse, then Domestic Bursar, as well as lecturers and speakers. Whilst Trevelyan directly inspired Sian's interest in architecture, key music tutors, such as Mary Firth, were vital to her own career and personal development. The ambiance of the College was also influenced considerably by the house and gardens and by the physical experience of living on site, as I have outlined in this chapter.

Finally, she commented that it was important in recognising the wider value of the College, and giving a balanced perspective, to avoid allowing Trevelyan's esoteric interests to overshadow his pioneering efforts in other areas. She concluded by asserting that his total self-immersion in the College, for 24 years, was important to acknowledge, as well as his warm and charismatic character: "He invested so much of himself in it. He could make the mundane magical" (Interview with Sian Griffiths, 17th September, 2017).

Chapter Seven - The Courses and their Evolution – the English Way of Life

Introduction

If the doors of perception were
cleansed everything would appear to
man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till
he sees all things through narrow
chinks of his cavern.

William Blake, 1793, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

The findings in this chapter are the result of a detailed thematic analysis of the course programmes from 1948 until the College closed in 1976, which provide insight into how the balance of the courses shifted, who led on the development of the courses and how much the College was utilised by outside agencies. This analysis allows for an examination of how the College appears to have started out with a democratising intent, with an emphasis on the open and community-orientated ethos and approach of the Danish Folk High School movement which was so important to Trevelyan and his educational thinking. From the earliest course programmes, the introductory statement from Trevelyan on the front page read that, whilst Attingham Park was "held by the National Trust and its state rooms and grounds are open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons":

> It is also run as a residential centre for adults, offering short courses on very varied subjects to meet many different interests. The aim is to present subjects in a way which everyone can understand and enjoy. Previous knowledge is not necessary and the atmosphere is easy and informal.

The College was also a place of experiment for Trevelyan as the Warden. He recognised the freedom conferred on the adult residential colleges to foster different forms of educational innovation despite the intervention of the local education authorities, arguing that this ability to respond to "all comers" made them "genuine centres of adult education":

> Although a number of the colleges are closely associated with or run by local educational authorities they present the opportunity for free experiment on the part of the Wardens who direct them. They are genuine centres of adult education, promoting their own courses open to all comers (Trevelyan, year unknown, p.1).

Trevelyan recognised that the short-term residential colleges represented a "new movement" in adult education (Trevelyan, year unknown, p.1). In the early years of the College, up to the beginning of the 1960s, he appears to have strongly believed that the diverse individuals who attended the eclectic, and sometimes controversial, college courses were not only entitled but obliged to play a part in shaping the world around them. He also appears to have wanted to bring students and speakers from all disciplines and interest areas together at this stage, "taking an integrative approach, to tackle problems rather than conventional subjects" (Harrison, 1960, p.232). The early courses, in particular, are testimony to this but there was always a tension between meeting the pressures of "every variety of local demand" and providing "stimulus and intellectual excitement", which was what became part of the SAEC's attraction.

Trevelyan's own educational thinking, explored in Chapter Four, appears to have conferred on him a genuine interest in finding new and innovative ways of engaging people in the educational process which moved beyond the traditional 'stand and present' style of lecture, which allowed for minimal student engagement. This interactive learning approach is best exemplified in the area of teaching crafts such as furniture making, where Trevelyan's own experience of learning the craft in the atelier of Gimson and De Waals could come to the fore. In this context, he developed a practical, workshop approach to teaching, in which students could learn from one another as well as the class tutor. He stated as early as 1949 that "our problem in adult teaching is to devise ways of getting away from the straight lecture and to get the students to 'do' and 'create' themselves" (Warden's First Year Report, October 1949). He considered a number of other ideas, including a School for Citizenship, in which discussion groups would be a central focus and which showed his desire for the College to meet its "serious social purpose" (Warden's Report for January to June 1953). The early 'philosophical' programme, which was how the early esoteric courses were initially described, also featured small group debate and discussion.

However, analysis of the course programmes suggests a tension between the pioneering and the experimental and the traditional and conservative. Many of the courses offered at the SAEC appear to have focused on shoring up an established order and an elitist culture. There is a strong emphasis on 'highbrow' art, music, literature, architectural studies, folk revivalism and building conservation. The Soil Association, which melded Trevelyan's esoteric thinking with environmental activism, regularly featured presentations from the landowning aristocracy, the Country Landowner's Association and farming bodies. I have shown in Chapter Four that the early environmental movement had a strong Right wing bias. Courses which focused on current affairs and social and contemporary issues smacked of a fear of change which the post-war period heralded, at least for the monied classes, such as *The Retreat of Empire*, with its reference to dealing with "backward peoples". Trevelyan unashamedly utilised his position as Warden to explore areas of interest to him and, in many instances, courses which offered a more socially progressive approach were led by Area tutors/Co-ordinators or the Birmingham extra-mural department.

The area for which Trevelyan is best known, the esoteric or New Age, appeared early in the course programmes, in the late 1940s, and was clearly his abiding passion. The close link between environmentalism and the esoteric, particularly through the Soil Association, was one route for exploring these interests during the early period of the College. Later, as the esoteric courses took off, the Soil Association was less of a regular feature. By the end of the 1950s and into the 1960s, his concept of interactive learning, with an emphasis on the 'living idea', was coming into conflict with his increasingly guru-like status as a star performer in the burgeoning New Age scene.

For the first ten years the programmes reveal the care that the Board of Governors and Trevelyan took to include both courses that could be expected to recruit well locally and attract high fees, such as Local History, and courses that represented Trevelyan's personal interests. The esoteric courses, which began to emerge in earnest by the late 1950s, also tapped into a rich vein of students and the Board of Governors were not unaware of their appeal, as such courses regularly filled the house. These courses did not tend, however, to recruit locally and were not open to the wider public, as they centred on an invited group. The tensions between the original objective of the College to provide adult education for the

people of Shropshire and the need to maintain numbers and financial viability began to manifest themselves at the end of the 1950s.

Trevelyan's relationship with the Board of Governors became progressively marked by a partial approach to keeping them informed. It is notable that he stopped providing information about the geographical origins of the students by the start of the 1960s, for instance, as the Governors became increasingly concerned about losing local focus. He was careful to play down the esoteric nature of the 'philosophical courses' as they were described and the lure of such courses for those from far outside the region. By the end of the 1960s his spiritual world view made its way covertly into increasing numbers of apparently generalist courses, as well as the courses which were overtly branded as spiritual or philosophical. He drew around him a coterie of favoured speakers and presenters, many of whom shared his convictions, and relied increasingly on the Adult Area Co-ordinators who were employed by the LEA, and the Birmingham extra-mural department, to maintain a semblance of course diversity. The College increasingly became a vehicle for Trevelyan's views on the role of short-term residential education as a means of developing spiritual enlightenment. He described it as "a vehicle for living ideas to work down into our society, and adult education has here a special and in some sense a priestly task" (Trevelyan, *Adult Education and the Living Idea*, n.d., circa early 1950s, p.3).

Ultimately, in creating closed courses for a select group of people Trevelyan turned away completely from the Folk High School model and moved into an elitist model of education. This, alongside financial and infrastructure issues, is arguably the primary reason why the College closed. The last section of this chapter will consider Drews' salutary comment: "Attingham should remain a lesson to present wardens to give their potential enemies no food for thought" (Drews, 1995, p.232).

Social Purpose and the 'Whole Man'

> Attingham is more successful at catering for those who want stimulus and intellectual excitement and less so for those who are basically more interested in the traditional forms of learning (Ministry of Education, 1959, p.6).

Finding an approach to developing a course programme, particularly in the early years of the College, was very important, given that the short-term residential colleges were not given explicit guidance from their respective LEAs in terms of course content. As I have outlined in Chapter Six this was a key reason that the local knowledge of the Area tutors was so vital to the Warden, and I have also shown that their areas of expertise and academic interest could have a direct bearing on the direction of course development.

Walter Drews commented that the nature and skills of the Warden and his staff, and the interests and demands arising from local community level, created a complex interaction which led to considerable variety between the colleges in terms of overall ethos and course offer. For all the short-term colleges the emphasis was on liberal education but within that broad construct there was a considerable amount of localised variation, with some colleges focusing more on political and socio-economic subjects and others on music and arts-based activities. Drews felt that this interplay was a critical aspect of their experimental nature (Drews, 1995, p.205). It was also a considerable burden on the Wardens who were responsible for maintaining financial viability and, crucially, achieving a balance for the courses.

The balance of the curriculum in adult education has been an ongoing source of debate for much of the last century and the experimental short-term residential colleges wrestled with this issue. Without a set of defined parameters, their original purpose was to create a space for communities to meet and explore their interests, in the hope of rebuilding a sense of shared citizenship after the war. However, they took different directions in terms of where they directed their energies to achieve this end and this led to considerable diversity in terms of the main areas of focus for their courses. Some like Wedgwood Memorial College took a primarily socio-political path and focused their efforts on emancipatory working class education, using the longer-term colleges such as Ruskin as a model (Drews, 1995, and Tatton, 1987). Others, like the SAEC itself, focused on the idea of liberal education as a means of liberating the 'whole man'. Richard Livingstone described liberal education as the education befitted to a "free citizen", in the Hellenic tradition. A man must have knowledge outside the utilitarian needs of his work – "he must have also the education which will give him the chance

of developing the gifts and faculties of human nature and becoming a full human being" (Livingstone, 1943, p.61). For Livingstone, this was best achieved through the teaching of literature, history, and above all citizenship. He stated: "an adult education based on, or largely infused with, history and literature rightly taught might help to bring some order into the spiritual chaos of today" (ibid, p. 75). The colleges, however, needed to offer choice at a time "when art, folk-dancing, choral-singing, drama, handicrafts, health subjects and much more have taken their place with the older studies" (ibid, p.59). For Livingstone this wide range of choice was in danger of diluting the value of education – "Education is like a restaurant which used to offer a few old-fashioned dishes and now has a menu covering several pages" (ibid).

Grundtvig's original conception of the Danish Folk High Schools was as a 'School of Life'. As Drews expressed it, "he argued that the living word was the breath of history, of human life, without which there could be no history on earth" (Drews, 1995, p.9). For Grundtvig, education needed to avoid a cold and inflexible intellectualism which focused solely on the written word and should encourage storytelling and debate, across a broad range of subjects. This is the concept of the 'living idea', where education is animated by, and responsive to, issues of current concern to society and to the individual.

In 1936, W.E. Williams sought to understand the purpose of adult education through the eyes of the students, in his book *Learn and Live*. He concluded that adult education should be about helping people to think, and, specifically, to think about their role in their world:

> To give them a broad world outlook on the problems of today, and in general to help them *think* – not vaguely, *in vacuo*, as it were, but *about* the things that matter to them as responsible persons, whether in relation to the family, to voluntary associations, the State or other states or communities, or in their intimate cultural and individual interests (Williams, 1936, p.11, [original emphases]).

This emphasis on personal responsibility and concern for civil society – our familial, cultural and community networks – finds its response in tutors who can help develop the "living answer to living questions" (Hunter, 1953, p.48), rescuing history from the intellectuals of the past and making it of contemporary relevance and social purpose to everyone. This perhaps found its best expression at the SAEC in the evolution of local history and industrial

archaeology and the dialectical tension between the SAEC as promoting 'history from below' and custodial patronage of concepts of history and culture by the ruling elite.

Course Trends Analysis

I have undertaken an analysis of the residential courses over the three decades the College spanned to enable me to explore emerging trends – shown in Appendices Four and Five – and covering the periods 1949 to 1960 (described as Early Years) and 1961 to 1971 (Second/Later Years), which was the end of Trevelyan's tenure as Warden. The analysis represents courses taking place within the respective calendar year rather than split over academic years. Firstly I listed every course from the course programmes, both those provided directly by the College through Trevelyan or the adult tutors and those offered by external partners, principally the WEA and Birmingham University Extra Mural department. I then analysed and categorised the courses using thematic headings. I used as my starting point the course headings the H.M. Inspectorate utilised in their 1958/1959 Report on the SAEC, which were Local History, Music, Literature, Drama (excluding Shakespeare – which was transferred into Literature), Arts and Crafts (which includes Creative writing), Art and Architecture, Archaeology, History, Religious and Scientific Thought (including Sociology, Psychology and philosophical thought), Agriculture and Nature Studies and Current Affairs. I also included a 'miscellaneous' category to capture courses which fell outside the HMI categories. These were more numerous in the first period from 1949 to 1960, and particularly in the first three years of the College, when a number of courses were specifically focused on Family and Home issues, industry or young people, such as *Attingham Adventure*, which was a recurring outdoor pursuits course.
The Inspectors appear to have based the categories into which they assigned the courses on offer at the SAEC on well-established categories in use at this period by bodies such as the WEA[10].

The need for standardised categories was particularly important given the diversity of the College courses on offer at the SAEC and the eclecticism within the broad course themes, which made it difficult (in my own experience) to determine where courses belonged. During

[10] An example of the categories can be found in the Ashby Report (1954), Appendix 7, p.62.

the 1960s, with the rise of Trevelyan's interest in the New Age, numerous courses retained a generic name but developed an esoteric element. As stated previously, this was deliberate on the part of Trevelyan and Ruth Nesfield-Cookson to avoid undue scrutiny from the Board of Governors.

As Derek Tatton has commented "subjects…can fluctuate quite dramatically in the adult education 'popularity ratings'" (Tatton, 1987, p. 200). Tatton examined trends in adult education subjects from the 1940s to the 1970s, and particularly courses delivered by the WEA. He observed that in the immediate post-war period of reconstruction interest in social and economic studies was high, at "68% in 1944, going back to between 50% and 60% in the late 1940s and the 1950s" (Tatton, 1987, p.200). Later, by the 1960s and 1970s, it had declined to between 20% and 30%. According to the course trend analysis for the College, Current Affairs – which encompassed social and economic issues, often with a strong international focus – accounted for 5% of the courses on offer between 1949 and 1960, though, at this stage, it was supplemented by courses in the Thought category, which encompassed Religious and Scientific thinking. By 1971, Current Affairs had dropped to 3%.
Local History reached 10% by the end of the 1950s and then dropped considerably to 4% in the 1961 to 1971 period. This may be due to the post-war heyday for this area of interest during the early to mid-1950s. I have included Archaeology in my narrative analysis of this course theme as the two subject areas seem to have interconnected at the SAEC, with considerable local interest in sites at Wroxeter and Uriconium. Archaeology accounted for only 2% of the courses in the first period, however, and saw only a slight uplift to 3% in the second. The focus was primarily driven by Birmingham University Extra Mural Department, who used Attingham as their residential field work centre.

Agriculture and Nature Studies included courses for farmers, land management and animal husbandry, largely led by the LEA, and also encompassed Natural history courses which included, for instance, Trevelyan's famous course which involved rising at dawn to listen to the dawn chorus, bird watching and bee keeping. The Soil Association were also an important presence at the College, and, as explored below, were vitally important to Trevelyan's developing ecological and esoteric thinking. The courses shift noticeably from open courses to closed 'special' conferences. By the mid to late 1960s, Trevelyan was exploring the esoteric

in other ways and the Soil Association presence diminished. Between the first period and the second there was a shift from 9% to 4%.

Music was a key element of the offer at the SAEC and became slightly more prominent in the second period with a shift from 12% to 15%. It was one of the main attractions at Attingham throughout the College period and became closely associated with it. Music drew in the local public, who came to attend concerts and choral performances which usually followed from course delivery. These were charged for and were promoted in the College course programme but are not part of this analysis.

Drama increased between the first and second period, rising from 8% to 11%. This is largely the result of a growing association with local drama groups, primarily the Shropshire Theatre Guild. In a similar fashion to the approach used in the Music programme, there were stage productions promoted through the course materials, which, again, were open to the public and, together with music concerts, provided an additional income stream for the College. Trevelyan was recognised as a Shakespeare scholar and many of the productions were of Shakespeare plays.

Literature remained constant at 8%, though it changed considerably in terms of the offer between the two periods. Earlier courses focused on great writers of the canon, such *as T.S. Eliot* (1950) and *Ezra Pound* (1954). There was also a series of eight themed courses entitled *The World's Great Books* between 1956 and 1957 which included 'Piers Plowman', Homer's 'Odyssey', James Joyce's 'Ulysses' and 'The Dynasts' by Thomas Hardy. Shakespeare was a key area of focus throughout but the latter period saw an increase in emphasis on writers such as Blake, Goethe and Schiller, which reflected Trevelyan's growing interest in using literature to underpin his esoteric beliefs and tended to exclude other writers. In 1956 *Innocence of Experience* utilised the work of William Blake, as did *The Doors of Perception* in spring 1961. The focus on Blake culminated in the week-long residential *Doors of Perception* summer school in Trevelyan's last course at the College in 1971, immediately pre-retirement. In summer 1965 *Imagination and Poetry***,** and in summer 1966 *Allegory and Romanticism*, used the works of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Goethe and Schiller as a means of exploring the importance of the imagination. He described this approach:

> Poetry began to play an ever greater part in my lectures. The poem, after all, is a creation of the right-hemisphere of the brain, that gateway to Oneness vision. Here was a real example of the Living Word (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p. 50).

In winter 1967, as part of the Twelfth Night Festival, Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World' and George Orwell's '1984' are the key works examined as part of a course entitled *The Free Individual in the Community***,** which focused on spiritual freedom for the individual in an increasingly complex 'world society'.

Arts and crafts shifted from 13% to 11%. These courses met a demand for painting, sculpture, creative writing, together with gold and silversmithing and mosaic making. The *Creative Leisure* courses, which started in the 1960s, became a mainstay of the course programme. As with other elements of the programme, the creative writing courses seem to have spawned an active Writers Group, which met monthly at Attingham Hall.

Art and architecture rose from 9% to 13%. As I have shown, Trevelyan was an important exponent of architecture and was able to attract important figures such as Pevsner, who, by the 1960s, was achieving celebrity status. This period coincided with a growing awareness of medieval vernacular architecture in Shropshire generally and in Shrewsbury generally. Trevelyan was a key figure in – and later President of – the newly-formed Shrewsbury Civic Trust, along with his friend Clough Williams-Ellis of Portmeirion, "the maverick conservationist", who had written against "urban encroachment and rural spoliation" (Cannadine, 2002, p.230), in 1928 in *England and the Octopus*. Both played a key role in helping preserve, amongst other buildings, the Bear Steps at the heart of Shrewsbury, a complex of alleys and buildings dating from the 14th to the 16th century:

> Sir George Trevelyan, Bt, Chairman and later President of the Shrewsbury Civic Society, said in 1972 … "when restored these Bear Steps cottages will provide a considerable tourist attraction in the quiet centre of the town. They can be put to economical and social use … while manifold educational uses can be found for the hall" (Shrewsbury Civic Trust website[11]).

Much of the architectural and local history offer at the SAEC related to the built heritage of Shropshire. *The Historic Houses of England* National Trust Summer School remained a constant from its inception in 1952. Other associated courses with the same focus were delivered by Pevsner and, latterly, co-presented by Trevelyan.

[11] http://www.shrewsburycivicsociety.co.uk/bear-steps/ Accessed March 15th, 2017

History grew from 7% to 9%. The WEA presented a number of history courses, as did the Birmingham University Extra Mural Department. Many of these had a social and economic history bent, including courses on *The Chartists*, in spring 1968, led by Barrie Trinder, and the Birmingham University-organised *Oliver Cromwell* course (Spring 1959) – "a course to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Cromwell's death and to assess his achievement and his place in English history". By contrast, in autumn 1960 a course entitled *When the King Enjoys his Own Again* commemorated the 300th anniversary of the restoration of King Charles II to the throne, through the music, architecture and drama of the period and examined the "transition from Cromwellian puritanism to the gay court" (Autumn 1960 course programme). This course is not attributed to a specific partner organisation and was probably delivered by the College. In autumn 1966 *Fire, Plague and Plot* exemplifies Trevelyan's sense of fun, as the course programme states "this is serious history, students are encouraged to bring fireworks".

I examine the Thought courses in greater detail below, in the section on *Thought – Spiritual/Religious thinking*. These courses saw a rise from 15% to 19% over the two periods examined.

The Courses – Areas of particular interest

I have chosen to focus on certain key course themes in my commentary in order to address points of analysis I want to make and to examine the courses within a social and political context. The areas I am highlighting are strongly associated with Trevelyan and also his team and are ones for which the College has become best known.

Family, children and the home

> Tradition is a great retarding force…the *vis inertiae* of history (Engels, 1892 [English Edition]/2012, p.43).

A number of the earlier courses reflect a distinct sense of post-war moral and philosophical urgency in their subject matter, a tussle between tradition and new thinking at a time of great social change. Engels described this as the *vis inertiae* of history, a process which prevents progress by creating resistance through inertia.

The place of women in society was clearly an issue of contemporary relevance in this period. Many women had been active during the war in different industries and professions. An HM Government report from 1943 identified that 46% of all women aged between 14 and 59, and 90% of all able-bodied single women between the ages of 18 and 40, were engaged in some form of work or National Service by September 1943 (HM Government, 1943, p. 3). At the end of the war, many women found themselves going back to their pre-war lives in the home as men sought to return to their former positions and the unions expressed concerns about women taking men's jobs on a longer-term basis. In the very early College programmes in 1948 and 1949 there was a clear emphasis on courses which were designed to attract women. However, every course of this kind had an emphasis on family, children and the home. Courses covered children's development, including *Growing up: our children, their needs and our difficulties* and *The Infant School* and focused on the experience of being a housewife, including *The Housewife in English History*, *The Articulate Housewife* and *The Art of being a Woman: how to remain human*. A crèche was made available for women attending such courses, which appears to have been a very genuine effort to make the courses accessible to them. Other courses related to post-war austerity, such as - *Housewives, your home in spring - planning your home with good taste on limited means* and *Holidays on small incomes***.**

Figure 7.1 – Creche for 1949 course - Growing up: our children, their needs and our difficulties

Trevelyan described the approach to women in the community in the Warden's first Annual Report to the Board of Governors on 16th March 1949, in which he stated, "We have run a great many courses this summer, often for women's organisations. These have been our most positive contact with the common folk". His use of language is interesting. The word "common" may have been intended to convey nothing more than the sense of ordinary

people. It may have referred to standard, prevalent or mainstream interests. However, it also has a meaning which is suggestive of *de haut en bas*.

The College appears not to have offered debate on the position of women post-war even if it attempted to cater to their potential interests with some care. Instead, the focus shifted to examining issues relating to children, including child development, through a psychological and sociological lens. Courses such as *The Problems of the Adolescent in Modern Society* and *Growing up in a Difficult World* focused on "the maladjusted child" and on juvenile delinquency. The latter course explicitly discussed growing concerns about the breakup of the family and what this implied, suggestive of a growing sense of unease in the face of social change.

Where the College appears to have facilitated genuinely pioneering debate was in the area of care for older people. An early course in autumn 1957 was entitled *Homecare for the Elderly*. This course was aimed at nurses, doctors and welfare workers who were caring for older people in their own homes. The initial course was organised with the Shropshire Medical Geriatric Committee and the Shropshire Old Folks Welfare Committee. Later, in autumn 1958, a similar course was run, entitled *The Way of Retirement – The Homecare of the Elderly***.** This was organised, again, for practitioners but also for family members and those dealing with ageing relatives. In autumn 1965 Trevelyan led a course on *Positive Attitudes to the Third Phase of Life***,** along with F. Le Gros Clark from the Pre-Retirement Association. This course was genuinely ground-breaking, offering a positive and life-affirming view on the 'third phase' in life: "it is a period full of creative opportunity in which understanding and perception should deepen as physical energy declines" (Course programme).

Ecology and Agriculture

Ecology and agriculture, and farming interests, were major areas of focus for the SAEC, and they perhaps represent the movement, after the esoteric courses, with which it became most closely associated. I have covered this development in some detail in Chapter Four in which I identified how the early movement was closely connected with the political far Right. Leading

figures in the English Mistery, the English Array and Kinship in Husbandry such as Rolf Gardiner and Gerard Wallop, the ninth Earl of Portsmouth (1898–1984), were founder members of the Soil Association. Lady Eve Balfour was also a founder member. Balfour appeared regularly at the SAEC and was an important advocate for organic farming as opposed to conventional chemical-based farming. She had established the Haughley experiment on her farm in Haughley, Suffolk, which attempted to generate scientific data to support the notion that human health and welfare were dependent on how the soil was treated. The Haughley experiment was later taken over by the Soil Association. Balfour does not appear to have shared Gardiner and Wallop's right wing sympathies and she may have been the acceptable face of the Soil Association. She was a close associate of Trevelyan's and also shared his esoteric beliefs and his interest in Steiner-influenced biodynamic farming which may account for her frequent appearance at Attingham. As Erin Gill has suggested, "the list of early Soil Association members known to have held unconventional religious beliefs is a long one…Indeed, in *The Occult Establishment*[12]*,* Webb uses the term "illuminated farmers" to describe…Gardiner and Wallop, as a way of highlighting their exploration of esotericism and occultism via agriculture" (Gill, 2011, pp. 210,211). Biodynamic farming, as Conford described it, was a "theory of agriculture based on astral and zodiacal forces" (Conford, 2001, p.66).

After Steiner died, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, a German soil scientist and anthroposophist, became an advocate for his work on biodynamic farming and his work and thinking were well-known to Balfour and to Gardiner and Wallop. Balfour was an admirer of Wallop's book *Famine in England* (1938) and wrote to him in September 1943 to acknowledge that "there is no one in the country whose opinion I value more than yours, the man who started me on the humus trail".[13]

As Philip Conford has described it, "Wallop and his associates resisted the erosion of rural life and culture. They believed the nation to be too dominated by urbanism and industry, and

[12] This is a reference to James Webb's book *The Occult Establishment,* which examines the prominence of occult thinking amongst notable members of the establishment. The book was first published in 1976, by Open Court Publishing Company: Chicago

[13] Quoted in Conford, 2005, p. 88 - HRO, 15M84/F152, Eve Balfour to Wallop, 28 Sept. 1943

suffering from the social instability consequent upon that perceived imbalance" (Conford, 2005, p.80). They also believed that modern farming was leading to degeneracy in human health and that nutritional change was vital, moving away from "tea, black coffee, refined sugar and white bread" (ibid, p.94) which were considered particularly harmful. Conford suggested that the war was a decisive factor in this thinking:

> If the British were to avoid becoming a 'C3 nation' – that is a nation of substandard physical specimens, judged according to the categories used by the army's recruiting board – then it was literally vital that they should adopt an improved diet, by which the organicists meant a diet of fresh foodstuffs produced from humus-rich soil (Conford, 2005, p.80).

The idea of physical supremacy was closely allied in the minds of Gardiner and Wallop with concepts of racial purity and 'breeding', in the sense of an innate, natural or biological aristocracy which conferred a rightful upper class position. Nutrition was a bulwark against degeneracy and degenerate classes – specifically the working class.

The LEA led a number of courses in the early years of the College aimed at improving land management and farm productivity in the post-war period. In contrast, The Soil Association - with input from Trevelyan - was interested in soil quality and in extensive rather than intensive farming techniques, so this was an interesting area of tension. The Soil Association made an appearance in the course programmes as early as the late-1940s and early 1950s and the courses at this stage were open. Courses offered included *Modern Farming and the Threat of World Famine* (1948), *The Case for Compost* (1949) - a "challenging and controversial" course, according to Trevelyan (Board of Governors' report, Summer 1949), in which Lady Eve Balfour put forward the Soil Association's case, *Humus on the Farm* (1950) – again, a course led by Lady Eve Balfour with a focus on organic husbandry and *Farm Management* (1950). In 1952 Viscount Newport chaired the *Soil and the Nation's Health*. Viscount Newport was a leading player in the Country Landowner's Association, which remains made up landowners, farmers and rural businesses. Currently, in 2017, its 33,000-strong membership own or manage over 50% of the rural land in England and Wales. Lady Eve Balfour and Dr George Scott Williamson, who led and ran the experimental Pioneer Health

Centre, known as the Peckham Experiment, were the key speakers[14]. Williamson and other colleagues involved in the Experiment were supporters of organic farming, and they had become involved with the Soil Association in 1946. From the 1950s onwards the Soil Association conferences became closed and were listed as 'special' conferences. However, on the SAEC public programme in autumn 1968 Rolf Gardiner himself chaired the *Upland Catchment Management* conference, which was a closed conference and by invitation only, except that interested suitably qualified professionals could apply to attend. The conference was pioneering in its emphasis on the management of rainwater run-off, flood plains and rivers. Dr Karl Koenig and speakers from the Nature Conservancy Council also featured.

Social and Current Affairs

A number of courses between 1948 and 1960 examined Britain's changing social and economic infrastructure in light of the landslide victory of the Labour Party in 1945. The period between 1945 and 1951 saw the establishment of the Welfare State and a comprehensive programme of nationalisation. Labour took control of the economy and in particular of manufacturing industry. They set about nationalising the fuel and power industries, such as coal mining, inland transport, and iron and steel. The Labour Party was explicit about its socialist agenda - "The Labour Party is a Socialist Party, and proud of it – free, democratic, efficient, progressive, public-spirited, its material resources organised in the service of the British people" (The 1945 Labour Party Manifesto[15]). Courses at the SAEC such as *Nationalisation and Socialisation – what has been achieved and where is it leading us?* attempted to provide space for discussion of such issues. The sense of a world order upturned is palpable. One of the courses about which there is little information is tantalisingly entitled *Adjusting to a Changing Social Order*. This was a course for the Quaker Society of Friends. The emphasis in such courses appears to have been on fostering and allowing for debate, so different perspectives could be articulated. For instance, in 1949, there was an open evening when parliamentary candidates of the three parties spoke on the subject of *Which way to the*

[14] The Peckham Experiment took place between 1926 and 1950. It offered an innovative approach to addressing rising public concern over the health of the working classes by monitoring the health of a group of 950 people who had access to the Centre's events, which included activities such as physical exercise, swimming, games and workshops.
[15] The 1945 Labour Party Manifesto - Labour Party: 1945, Let Us Face the Future: A Declaration of Labour Policy for the Consideration of the Nation.

Welfare State? However, equally strong is the sense of danger inherent in this new socialist-led Britain, as exemplified by courses such as *The Stand against Communism* in autumn 1950. Around this time a series of weekend courses under the banner of 'The Human Situation' took place, including *The Economic Crisis and what is at Stake* and *The International situation – USA and Russia.* The Cold War was growing in intensity by this point, following the start of the Korean War in 1950. There was also a growth in interest in European partners, including courses on *Germany and the Germans*, a course from 1952, and *Background to Modern Germany* and *Background to Modern France***,** both in 1958.

Britain's own role in the world post-war was also of primary concern. In summer 1952, there was a course entitled *South Africa and the Coloured Problem* which dealt with 'the story of South Africa as it relates to the present day situation, attempting above all to get an objective view of relations between white and coloured peoples, since this presents one of the gravest world problems of our time'. The focus on the "coloured problem" and issues examining immigration and globalisation were repeated throughout the life of the College. In 1955 anxieties about Britain's role in the world and its declining power were articulated in *The Retreat from Empire***,** a course which offered 'a study of events from Malaya to Suez, attempting to assess the strategic importance of recent withdrawals and to discuss where the responsibility for backward peoples ultimately lies'. A later course in October 1968, entitled *Britain's task in shaping a new society* considered the role Britain should play in the world in light of its loss of status as a great power, with the emphasis on being an engine for creating human unity. The 'innate genius of the race' was described as Britain's ability to take the moral lead, due to our status as a founder of democracy, in fostering 'peace, a multi-racial society, new educational forms for world citizenship and new safeguards for human rights'.

By the end of the 1950s Trevelyan commented that "general courses" were becoming "difficult to fill" whilst arts, music and archaeology were growing in popularity. Speight (2003) has suggested that this was indicative of wider trends in adult education at the time, with a shift away from history, economics and more generalist courses and towards specialist interest group subjects such as local history and archaeology. She argued that such changed expectations from adult education showed a move away from "social reform and religious service as driving forces, and their replacement 'the motive of personal culture'" (Speight,

2003, p.150). This concurs with my own findings, which suggest an increasing interest in leisure pursuits by the early 1960s, as evidenced in the Russell Report (1973), and borne out by a growth in arts and crafts courses and 'hands-on' experiential study, such as archaeological activity .

Archaeology and Local History

This emphasis on 'personal culture' is amply evidenced by a growing number of courses in Local History and Industrial Archaeology. Michael Rix, in his roles as both resident Tutor at the SAEC and, later, as a visiting lecturer, was a leading exponent of industrial heritage issues at the College in the early 1950s, speaking on the value of industrial monuments as documents of economic, cultural and social history. He is widely recognised as the person who coined the term Industrial Archaeology, in an article in the journal *The Amateur Historian* in 1955. As the tangible remains of industrialisation vanished, local interest groups brought their historical impact to light, and Rix was directly involved in a number of influential field trips which both catalysed and advanced these interests. In 1950 there were two courses led by Rix at the SAEC – *The World Significance of Coalbrookdale* and *Shropshire - the Cradle of the Industrial Revolution.* There was also a number of general archaeology courses, focusing on the Roman remains at Wroxeter, Uroconium, and by 1954 Trevelyan commented that archaeology "will always fill the house" (Board of Governors report, summer 1954). There was also a significant number of Local History courses in the first four years of the College, including, amongst others, *Old Shrewsbury; Summer School for Shropshire Studies*; *The Olden Days in Shropshire*; *The Shropshire Story*; *Shropshire in English History*, of which there were three courses; *Old Buildings of Shrewsbury* and *Tudor Shropshire*.

Figure 7.2 Sir George Trevelyan, Michael Rix and Gwen Orgill

Sarah Speight has argued that adult education played a vital role in developing the academic disciplines of both archaeology and local history. Whilst history courses had accounted for 4% to 12% of courses run by the WEA during the previous four decades, the post-war period saw an increase of up to 24% but this was accounted for entirely by local history (Tatton, 1987). Speight suggested that there were two reasons for this shift. Firstly, there was "evidence to suggest that the curriculum of adult education moulded itself to the locality" and in a predominantly rural county such as Shropshire, with its network of small villages, local history offered a lens on one's own community, with "villages seeking retrospectives on their own pasts" and looking to embrace the "local history and folklore courses of the villages" (Speight, 2011, p.152). Speight suggested that there was also a discernible shift at this time within adult education as a whole from more generalist arts and humanities activities towards intensive, hands-on single subject courses in local history and archaeology, which involved field work and local research. As Raphael Samuel expressed it, "if history was thought of an as an activity rather than a profession, then the number of its practitioners would be legion" (Samuel, 1994, p.6). Local history, in Samuel's view, was history practised by the people and expressed the idea of 'history from below', which Samuel developed in his concept of History Workshops.

The speed of physical change was intensifying in towns and villages in the post-war period. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 aimed to place restrictions on growth and urban sprawl but this period saw the inception of major building programmes, with the creation of new towns, slum clearances and the redevelopment of blitzed areas. Samuel argued that notions of 'heritage' broadened and transformed beyond the picturesque and the Palladian as a result, to include terraced streets, railway cottages and the covered market. People perceived "a Malthusian sense of destruction rampant and everywhere" (Samuel, 1994, p.6) and sought to capture and retain memories of their own communities and culture. There was a growing group of what Samuel called 'Britain's memory keepers' (Samuel, 1994, p.10). By contrast Patrick Wright (1985) and Robert Hewison (1987) argued that local history played into the increasing 'heritagisation' of Britain, creating a sanitised and comforting version of

the past, where the past can become a form of entertainment and can distract people from engaging with both the problems of their present and the plans for their future.

Hewison suggested that the "nostalgic impulse" comes to the fore in times of crisis, acting as "a social emollient" which "reinforces national identity when confidence is weakened or threatened" (Hewison, 1987, p. 47). The 1950s and 1960s saw a rise in a whole series of different movements which celebrated the past – the development of the museum movement, industrial parks, the preservation of monuments and canal and railway restoration. The College celebrated this development, with courses on *The Age of Steam* and *Railway and Canal History* in summer 1956. In my view, such developments tie in with responses to both rural and industrial issues and the tensions which emerged between conservation and progress in the inter-war years, which were still being worked through in this period.

Music

Music was a dominant theme within the College courses, as shown above, throughout the entire life of the College. Even after Trevelyan left in 1971, the music courses continued under the Wardenship of Geoffrey Toms. They became a staple of the College and one of its biggest draws. Most of the music courses were led by Mary Firth, a pianist, writer and teacher, who was a friend of George Trevelyan and shared his interest in the spiritual. She led the students on the Music Discrimination courses through a complex and demanding process of musical appreciation and deconstruction, taking a symphony or a concerto and breaking it down into its constituent parts until it could be understood and played. By the time the College reached its second year of operation, Trevelyan had already concluded that the first Music summer school in 1949 should become "a tradition and should be repeated annually" (Warden's First Year report, October 1949). The music courses became an important part of the calendar, with longer courses held at both Eastertime as well as the Music Summer School**.** Early courses included *Understanding and Enjoying the Great Composers*; *Discretion in Music*; *Basilionsis Consort of Violins*; *Purcell Weekend* and *Orchestral Playing***.** As Roger Orgill suggested, engagement with this kind of musical process required a very high degree of skill. Jill Dodds recalled her own experience from the early 1950s, which indicates the intricacy of

the approach: “there were also many Music analysis courses run by Dr Mary Firth, and in particular we had four separate weekends each studying just one of Brahms’s symphonies” (Written memoir, Jill Dodds, received 8th August, 2015, Attingham Archive). The music was always of a classical and choral nature and many of the people who attended were musicians. Trevelyan also regularly invited quartets such as the Allegri and Amadeus which proved a considerable attraction for the general public and not only the College course students.

Livingstone had said, in his address at the opening of the Wedgwood Memorial College in July 1947, which was the first of the short-term residential colleges to open, that he believed such colleges had a pioneering purpose. He argued that they were “an arsenal” in the battle to make democracy a success, handing out arms to promote “knowledge, intelligence, character and vision”. This, he argued, would counter culturally lowbrow pursuits which he argued were prevalent at the time, such as “football pools and betting”, “very indifferent films” and interest in poor quality newspapers. His argument was that such a “low level” democracy would create a civilisation “without any significance”. With an increase in leisure time, he argued that such colleges had a duty to equip people to use their leisure appropriately: “A college like this hopes to give people, I would almost say, the right understanding of the world, and new ways to employ leisure[16]” (Livingstone, 1947). My sense from the music programmes, and other arts-based activities at the SAEC, was that this was also Trevelyan’s purpose. Whilst the general population, at least the younger generation, were beginning to tune in to the new sounds of rock and roll or were making their own music in the pubs and parlours of the country, the College promoted only one type of music and of a culturally defined nature. As I have suggested, heritage and cultural values are not intrinsic. Value is attributed to an object, place or practice by particular people at a particular time, and for particular reasons. As Hewison commented:

> The definition of those values must not be left to a minority who are able through their access to the otherwise exclusive institutions of culture to articulate the only acceptable meanings of past and present. It must be a collaborative process shared by an open community which accepts both conflict and change (Hewison, 1987, p. 144).

This is also true of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), which was a constant presence and clearly of high cultural value at the College from the early years onwards. The

[16] Lecture at the opening of Wedgwood Memorial College, 27th July, 1947 – Sir Richard Livingstone

Folk Song Society, established in 1898, had merged with the English Folk Dance society in 1932 to create the EFDSS. The express objective of the organisation was to "preserve and promote the best of folk"[17]. There is not space here to unpick this closely, however, many folk musicians and singers have argued that the folk traditions and music of the people did not need preservation but were happening on their own, without patronage or support. Samuel described the "modernisations of our time" as creating "a pole of opposition" (Samuel, 1994, p.55) to change. This was a key feature in promoting the revivalist movement in music and dance which the EFDSS manifested and which many saw as a middle class takeover of music and dance traditions which belonged to the people.

Architecture, Art appreciation and Conservation

> Conservation, whatever, the doubts about the notions of 'heritage', is one of the major aesthetic and social movements of our time (Samuel, 1994, p.55).

Art and Architecture was another very important strand of the course programme. Trevelyan himself led many of these courses, given his own interest and background in this area. Courses included *A New View of the Renaissance*; *An Understanding of Architecture*; *The Gothic World*, *Country Houses of England* and *German Baroque*.

By 1952, Trevelyan had been approached by Helen Lowenthal, the Education Officer for the Victoria and Albert museum (V and A) from 1953 to 1969, who had conceived of the idea of a Summer School when on a lecture tour in the United States in spring 1951. She had had tea with Mr and Mrs Robert Woods-Bliss, charter members of the newly formed American National Trust, at their home near Washington and they had told her that many Americans had an interest in English cultural heritage and would welcome the opportunity to visit and study some of the great historic houses of England.

On her return to London, Helen approached the National Trust and then George Trevelyan. Attingham was selected as the residential venue for two reasons – firstly, because of its ample residential accommodation and, secondly, because its Warden was understood to have

[17] From the EFDSS website - www.efdss.org/efdss-about-us/history. Accessed 2nd February 2017.

excellent connections with the aristocratic owners of other great English houses. Initially, the three-week long Summer School on *The British Country House* was jointly sponsored by the National Trust and the Education Committee of Salop County Council. The *Historic Houses of Britain: National Trust Summer School*, as it became known, could accommodate 60 people. On the first course, which started on the 10th July 1952, there were 30 delegates, of whom 22 were American, one was Danish and seven were English National Trust members.

The National Trust Summer School course fees in 1952 were $150, plus $2 (equivalent to £2 14 s 3 ½ d) to the National Trust. This covered accommodation, lectures and field trips (which often themselves included dinners and teas hosted by the landed gentry in their own country houses). According to Measuringworth[18], $150 would be worth £53.76 in GBP. That equates to a 2015 'real value' of £1395 and an 'income value' of £4994. Initially, perhaps given the costs, the Summer School tended to attract a predominantly older group of wealthy Americans but later it drew younger curators and was seen as a vital space for learning about conservation. The course was expressly aimed at "introducing American students and teachers working in the Fine Arts to a closer knowledge of the great houses of England from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century" (course brochure, 1952). It included accompanied visits to other great houses including Chatsworth, Hardwick, Keddleston, Haddon in Derbyshire, which were visited each year, and places like Great Missenden, Ditchley Park and Wilton House in Wiltshire, as well as historic towns such as Bath and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Arts and Crafts

Crafts, or handicrafts, was another prominent subject in the early years of the College and remained so throughout the life of the College. Trevelyan recognised that arts and crafts-based courses were particularly attractive to local people and that, whilst people may not acquire a skill in a particular craft or arts-based activity over a weekend, a weekend 'taster' could inspire people to want to learn more. In the Board of Governors' report of 19th March 1949, he stated:

> It is obviously out of the question to teach a craft in a short course. The aim of the Centre should rather be to inculcate some standard of taste in order to help people to distinguish between good articles and bad.

[18] http://www.measuringworth, Accessed 22/2/17.

Here, again, the spectre of conferring standards of taste on people raises its head. However, Trevelyan was himself a key tutor in the arts and crafts courses, along with other tutors of a very high calibre. A number of the courses in the programme reflected his background as a craftsman and furniture maker. Far from focusing on inculcating discrimination, he seems to have demonstrated a generosity of spirit in his encouragement and development of others and an engaged teaching style which received particular praise from the H.M. Inspectors in 1959, who saw in such courses the imprint of Trevelyan's own skill as a craftsman.

> Working individually, but in the atmosphere of an atelier, the members of such courses take courage and learn from each other, as well as from their teachers. One of the main reasons for the success of such courses is that the Warden himself is an outstanding craftsman and also a generous critic of the work of others (Ministry of Education, 1959, p.11).

Courses included: *Looking at Furniture* (two); *Furniture*; *The Coming Age of Wood*; *Design in Furniture* and *Pictorial Photography*. Garth Reynolds, whose father Trevelyan had approached to make the beds for the college and other bedroom furniture, found himself trying to maintain the family furniture making business at the old mill in Ludlow when his father died suddenly at only 58. Without being asked, Trevelyan stepped in and helped Garth, as he was struggling as a young man on his own. Garth remembered Trevelyan's "immaculate cabinet making" and "absolutely brilliant" skills as a furniture maker, saying "if you paid for the amount of work that he must have put into it'd be costing an incredible amount of money because – well, call it a labour of love" (interview Garth Reynolds, 10th July, 2014). Trevelyan's kindness had been an enduring memory for many years. He described Trevelyan as "generous, friendly, gentle, perfectly prepared to go at my pace, which was good" (ibid).

Catriona Tyson commented on her father's broader influence in pioneering creative leisure activities, as well as drama, particularly as the College focused more on this area into the 1960s. There was a whole range of different crafts-based courses, including *Needlework*; *Outdoor Sketching*; *Creative Leisure* (four), *Painting Weekend* and *Pictorial Photography*, amongst others. Catriona commented that the Creative Leisure programmes, in particular, which saw whole families come along to join in, was both wide-ranging and immensely enjoyable in a time when such interests were relatively new:

> I think he started all that leisure thing. There was a brilliant summer school called Creative Leisure which people adored and they'd camp…. And you could do anything. You could do fabric printing, you could do carving, you could do sculpture. I don't know if he just had a good imagination. Nobody else did it then. Now you can do painting every day of the week, if you wanted to, can't you, but that was the very beginning of that. Or you could bring a family for 10 days and all camp and the kids could do one thing and you could do another and it was lovely (Interview, Catriona Tyson, 18th June, 2014).

Courses in areas like photography, and also film – especially film appreciation – grew in number over the years, reflecting the growth in popular interest and increasing opportunity to engage in such pursuits through changing technology. Drama was also very significant. Courses included *Producing Plays; Improvisation and Experiment in Drama*; and *The Craft of the Actor* (twice). Several external theatre groups also used the College as a rehearsal and a performance space. In 1951 the College hosted an open air performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' to 650 people in Attingham Park grounds. Trevelyan performed in many of the plays himself and one of the students who performed with him in the Shropshire Theatre Guild, Pam Turner, said, with affection:

> He had to be included, and they did a lot of shows, and a lot of restoration drama. And he was just dreadful at learning lines. He would take lines from Act Three and interpose them in Act One so that people could never rely on him for cues and people would say they wouldn't act if he was in it because he was impossible to act with. And he was very good, but he was making it up as he went along (interview Pam Turner, 4th December 2014).

Amongst the broader history and local history course programme Trevelyan also began to lead a series of courses on *Heraldry*. In spring 1957 the course programme offered 'an opportunity to study Heraldry by painting shields of Shropshire families and learning how to blazon coats of arms'. The emphasis on such courses was to create an enjoyable and creative atmosphere. This led to the mosaic-making activities which were led by Molly and Jasper Kettlewell, which are still displayed in the Mansion House and are shown in Chapter Two. However, by autumn 1970 the mosaic course was an exploration of the symbols of the Zodiac and their meaning, led by Trevelyan. Heraldry was now a means of understanding encoded runes, which presented the secret heritage of the aristocracy in cryptic form. This is a good example of how courses from different parts of the course programme became part of the esoteric course trend.

Thought - Spiritual/Religious thinking

Trevelyan began to take tentative steps towards education for spiritual enlightenment in 1949 with a course entitled *What Can we Believe* and a further course entitled *The Great Stories of the World*, which examined Arthurian legend. Both courses followed on from a distinctly esoteric course entitled *Growing up in a Difficult World* earlier in the same year. *Growing up in a Difficult World* had been unsuccessful because Trevelyan had invited several close associates from the anthroposophical world, and particularly those with an interest in alternative education, to speak at the event and they had failed to convey their beliefs to a lay audience. Speakers included Basil Henriques on juvenile delinquency and Dr Karl Koenig on the maladjusted child. Koenig was an Austrian paediatrician, who founded the Camphill community, which was an international movement of therapeutic communities for children and young adults with special needs or disabilities. He was a practising anthroposophist, and had previously been a paediatrician at the Rudolf Steiner-inspired Schloss Pilgrimshain institute in Strzegom. Dr Ernst Lehrs, who had taught Trevelyan the principles of anthroposophy, was also part of the same course, speaking on curative education. Dr Walter Johannes Stein, whose lecture had first fired Trevelyan's interest in anthroposophy in 1942, also attended the course as a speaker. Roger Orgill has described this course as a moment of realisation for Trevelyan. He had invited such speakers as "his heroes" but found that their elevated, or at least esoteric, language had been difficult for the audience to understand:

> Quite early in the life of the College, Trevelyan invited his heroes, as he called them - Dr Stein, Dr Lehrs and Dr Karl Koenig founder of the Camphill Communities, from the Anthroposophical Movement as lecturers. However it was clear to him that the idiom of anthroposophical lectures was not right for the setting as he saw it (Orgill, 2014, p.2).

Trevelyan had to find new ways of presenting the spiritual or esoteric courses, and of making them more attractive, and understandable, for a lay audience. For a while, he managed to achieve this under the banner of 'philosophical courses' and had held a number of philosophical and religious courses at the SAEC since its beginning. These included: *Religious Education; What can we Believe?*; *Why a Divided World?; Christianity and Politics*; *The World Today* and *The Book of Job***.** Generally, at this stage, the course titles were kept deliberately

‘neutral’ to avoid scrutiny or opprobrium from the Board of Governors. Ruth Nesfield-Cookson confirmed that this was the approach that she and Trevelyan took to avoid undue scrutiny (interview Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, 5th November, 2014).

In March 1953 a course on *William Blake* was clearly aimed at a “select” group. Trevelyan explained this to the Board of Governors in the following way: “this drew a select audience and led to continued meetings of a small group for deeper study. Such groups can well be fitted in with a larger course and are a partial answer to the problem of continuity and ‘follow up’” (Warden’s Report, January to June 1953).

By 1953 it appears that Trevelyan was deliberating between two strands for further development of the College: one was the esoteric strand and the other was positive citizenship. Both utilised small group discussion as the primary teaching style. Trevelyan proposed to the Board of Governors that consideration be given to the establishment of a School for Citizenship. His ideas for the School were creative and even pioneering, in that he contemplated creating a space in which smaller groups of interested participants could be brought together to debate issues: “the plan would be to develop small groups using ‘discussion group’ techniques, since the wide subject of citizenship is one which lends itself to these methods, involving individual contacts and exchange of views” (Warden’s report for January to June 1953). As stated at the beginning of this chapter, his primary objective in “teaching positive citizenship” was to ensure that the college “could justify its claim to a serious social purpose” (ibid).

It is noteworthy that such study groups were deliberately intimate and appeared to offer a deeper kind of intellectual engagement. This is interesting on a number of levels. By 1954, with the appointment of Gerald Richards as Deputy Warden, Trevelyan had found a means of capitalising on a small selective discussion group methodology in a way which bypassed the need to focus on “social purpose” or citizenship. Richards began to lead sessions on “philosophical problems”, which were not outlined for the Board of Governors at this stage. However, in later reports the “philosophical problems” study groups appear to be connected with Trevelyan’s developing esoteric thinking. By 1955 Trevelyan had started to openly offer spiritually-orientated courses, beginning with a course entitled *The Darkness and the Light*,

for which the principal lecturer was Dr E. Graham Howe, who promoted a doctrine of acceptance of reality and the discarding of morality – "'the essential quality of love is that it is prepared to accept what it does not like, i.e. to accept reality as a whole" (Howe, 1934, p.385). The course title showed a new kind of daring. In the Warden's Report for January to June 1955, Trevelyan described the course as of a "general, thought-provoking" nature, and as a "study of symbolism and ritual in religion, psychology and art". He went on to say that:

> The inspiration of these two courses gave the impetus to the launching of the Discussion groups by Gerald Richards. These may well prove a valuable development in Attingham's work and influence as they are a real attempt to meet the problem of continuity in a programme of short courses.

Trevelyan did not say any more on this subject at the time. By 1956 Richards had left and a new Deputy Warden was being sought.

In the Report by H.M. Inspectors on Attingham Park of 1958/1959 the general view was the College was doing well, with exceptionally high quality lecturers. Trevelyan was described as a very positive influence, and his unusual and broad ranging skills, particularly in the area of crafts, were highlighted, as well as the strength of his team. However, one of the key problems identified with some of the general teaching at the SAEC was the large group lecture format and the lack of opportunity for either formal discussion or small group work, where the students could learn and discuss issues together as well as using books to develop their knowledge: "It remains true, however, that in many of the larger courses the contribution of the audience is limited to a few questions at the end of the lecture" (Ministry of Education, 1959, p.11). Small group learning did seem to offer a different pedagogical approach but Trevelyan gradually withdrew from the socially-orientated courses of the earlier years, such as the crafts-based activities. The esoteric courses increasingly saw him taking centre stage as a guru-like figure. His character, an admixture of humility and total self-belief, and the hero-worship response of those who followed him, arguably led to "great man" syndrome[19]. Geoffrey Toms commented that the power of the Warden in many of the colleges could lead to this kind of development and that, in effect, they were run in a "very undemocratic way" as the personality of the Warden held sway (interview Geoffrey Toms, 19th July 2014).

[19] In his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1888) Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish historian, argued that "the history of the world is but the biography of great men" (Carlyle, 1888, p.2), suggesting that history is shaped by men of a certain social standing who are gifted with divine inspiration and the right personal attributes.

Figure 7.3 Sir George Trevelyan as the Pied Piper circa 1970

In 1960 Ruth Bell joined the College as the new Secretary. Ruth has described herself as the squire to Trevelyan's Knight[20] and, as a large number of interviewees remarked, her devotion to Trevelyan appears to have been a decisive factor in the change in courses and new approaches to recruitment. She also offered Trevelyan an enormous fillip to his ego at a time when his own life was changing radically. Ruth and George had talked about Ruth's impact on the College with amusement. She commented on it in her interview with me:

> We once had to produce a list of the courses that we'd done that were esoteric for the Governors, from the beginning. They were very harmless before I went in 1960. He [George] said to me it looks as if all the trouble started when you came, which was a humorous remark because I mean I'd never heard the word anthroposophy (Interview – Ruth Nesfield-Cookson, 5th November, 2014).

My view is that the escalation in the spiritual courses may have been brought about by a combination of factors, including the presence of Ruth Bell and also Bernard Nesfield-Cookson - which I will comment on further - but was also the result of changes in Trevelyan's own personal life. In 1958 Trevelyan lost his father, to whom he had never been close but who had influenced him significantly. This was the point at which he succeeded to the baronetcy but was also a time when his disinheritance perhaps became more apparent. Wallington was no longer his seat as it had been gifted to the National Trust and his father's death must have

[20] Sir George Trevelyan: memories and observations - Memories of Sir George Trevelyan – a tribute to a Knight from his Squire (1960 - 1975), by Ruth Nesfield-Cookson - http://www.sirgeorgetrevelyan.org.uk/mem-ruthnescook.html Accessed 1 November 2016

driven this point home. Within a few short months, in November 1958, Gwen Orgill, his trusted colleague for the whole of the first ten years, his confidante and much-loved friend, left Attingham for New York. Speculations about the reasons for her departure have implied a rift with Trevelyan but this is unsubstantiated. By June 1959 she had died of a stroke. Sir George was utterly devastated by her loss. This cannot be over-emphasised as he started to keep a spiritual diary on the back of a cupboard door in his study. Most of the dates refer back to Gwen Orgill's death and it appears to have marked a period of intense mourning, meditation and introspection for Trevelyan.

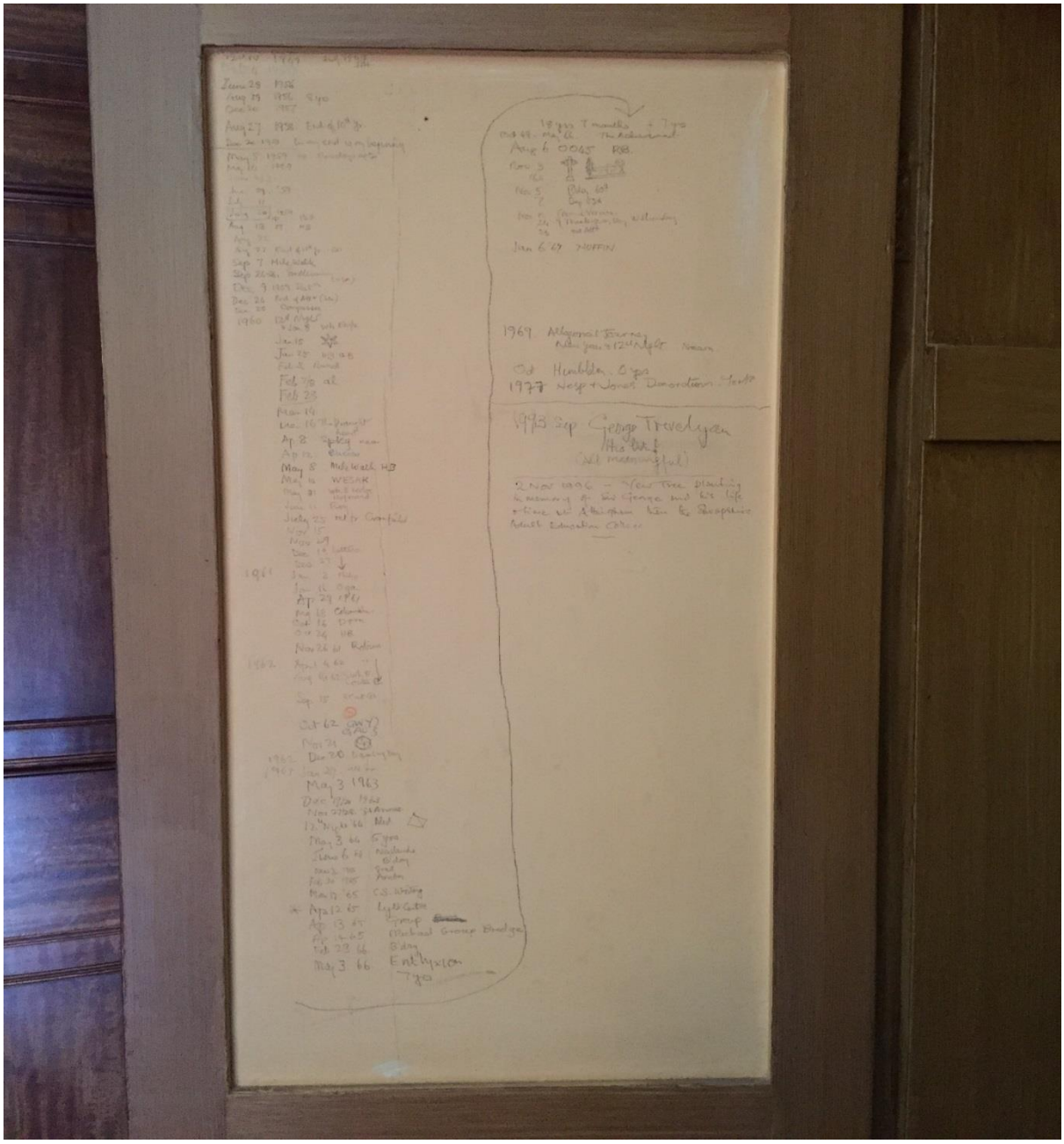


Figure 7.4 – The spiritual diary – in the Warden's study (back of cupboard door)

By 1961 he was able to put on a course entitled *The Doors of Perception*, after Huxley. His comment at the time was that it was “much oversubscribed by people from all parts of the country” and that “it gives a meeting ground where new ideas can be worked out” (Board of Governors’ Report – Summer 1961).

Three years later he developed the theme with a course entitled *Death and Becoming***,** in 1964. This was the first of Trevelyan’s courses which looked overtly at the interior life, or the development of the self from a spiritual perspective. He shared the platform for this course with Bernard Nesfield-Cookson. He described the course as an examination of “the picture of ‘death’ as a release onto a plane of higher consciousness” and remarked that “we could have filled the house twice over” (Board of Governors Report, autumn 1964). He had touched on higher consciousness and human evolution in earlier courses, as suggested, but this course took the subject to a whole new level, dealing, as it did, with challenging public perceptions of death. This was ground breaking at the time and attracted a record number of attenders as 170 people came on the course. The central tenet of the course was that decay and dying are not endings but “the prelude and necessary conditions of rebirth and becoming, so the passage of death for the essential being of man is seen as a kind of birth into a field of expanded consciousness” (Death and Becoming booklet, June 19th – 21st, 1964).

At a time when death was seldom discussed in these terms, Sir George could perhaps be viewed as brave in putting on such a course, even foolhardy. It certainly attracted comment from the Board of Governors of the College and from outside press and public. Clearly a discussion about death, with some prospect of it not being the final state, offered comfort or succour to those who attended. Like other anthroposophical thinkers, Trevelyan challenged the materialist concept of death as a fear-inducing state of non-being or the precursor to a Christian state of Heaven or Hell. Teilhard de Chardin, who was a French Jesuit priest and philosopher, and influential on Trevelyan’s thinking, described death as a period of transition, in which the physical and the astral planes connect and “a common soul of humanity” is achieved: “The organisation of human energy ... is directed and pushes us towards the ultimate formation, over and above each personal element, of a common soul of humanity"(Teilhard de Chardin, 1962/1969, p.137).

What the course perhaps best demonstrated was an eschatological turn in Trevelyan's thinking which became more marked in courses from this point onwards. The final destiny of the soul and of humankind became something of a preoccupation. In his autobiography he described a growing conviction: "I knew without any shadow of doubt that the spark of divinity in us cannot possibly die...this can bring an absolute certainty and subjective proof of the eternal spirit in each of us" (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p. 48).

In the space of eight years, between 1962 and 1970, a large number of esoteric courses was held, equating to 19% of the overall course programme. The descriptions and details of the courses, including course outlines and lists of speakers, came from Ruth Nesfield-Cookson's collection of esoteric course programmes. As Ruth noted in her commentary on the courses, this list does not include the relevant 'closed' courses, "of which the annual Soil Association conferences were probably the most important" (Ruth Nesfield-Cookson – list of esoteric courses).

Trevelyan drew around himself a coterie of speakers who appeared at the College in support of the esoteric courses on a regular basis. These included Father Andrew Glazewski, a Polish Roman Catholic priest, physicist and musician, Pir Vilayat Khan, a Sufi teacher of meditation who led the International Order of Sufis, Bruce MacManaway, a spiritual healer, Reshad Feild, a leading Sufi, Eileen Hutchins, who was founder of the Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School in Stourbridge and Bernard Nesfield-Cookson. Nesfield-Cookson first appeared in the course programmes in 1962 but his presence became much more prominent over the next few years. He is the author of several books on spiritual matters, including *Rudolf Steiner's Vision of Love* (2000) and *Michael and the Two-Horned Beast - The Challenge of Evil Today in the Light of Rudolf Steiner's Science of the Spirit* (1998) and is described as having had a varied career as a business man, school teacher, lecturer and writer. From 1971 to 1991 he was Principal of Hawkwood College, an anthroposophical college, perceived by Trevelyan and his esoteric followers as the 'daughter' college to the SAEC.

Ruth noted that on a number of occasions Bernard Nesfield-Cookson deputised for Trevelyan and that amendments to the lecturing panel began to be made to accommodate his

involvement. According to Geoffrey Toms, who became the Deputy Warden in 1968 following on from Bryan Podmore, Nesfield-Cookson "supported the New Age courses" and was the "alternative Deputy" (Telephone interview, Geoffrey Toms, 19th July, 2014). He was "literally bussed in to work on Sir George's courses" and there was apparently no attempt to let Toms know. Toms described how unpopular he made himself by pointing up the increasing divisions between the wider courses and the esoteric courses: "I upset the movement a lot, pointing out the division between the New Age movement and the university side" (ibid). He commented on Ruth's particular unhappiness about him airing these views but said that he felt duty-bound to comment as "the bottom line was that Attingham was dependent on public money and therefore the programme should be representative of society in general" (ibid).

When Bryan Podmore left in 1968, there was apparently a concerted effort on the part of Trevelyan to have Nesfield-Cookson appointed as his Deputy. Barrie Trinder gave an account of how, due to a mix up by the Chair of the Board of Governors at the time - Sir Offley Wakeman - the first round of interviews was declared invalid, or at least inconclusive. In the second round, Nesfield-Cookson was not re-invited for interview, the post was re-advertised and Toms appointed. Barrie Trinder suggested that this was absolutely deliberate on the part of the Board of Governors.

Alternative Course Provision

As I suggested previously in this chapter, Barrie Trinder, Bryan Podmore and Geoffrey Toms continued to offer courses in a wide of subjects and much genuinely exciting work was still taking place, though their courses were increasingly running when courses from the esoteric programme were not. The *Arts and Crafts Summer school* continued to be a big draw thought the 1960s and this was supplemented in 1966 with a *New Year art course*, when the famous mosaic panels were created, under the guidance of the glass experts Molly and Jasper Kettlewell. Music courses also continued to run throughout the period and remained an important attraction at the SAEC. A focus on technology and space emerged in the mid to late 1960s, reflecting societal interests in space exploration and the growth in mass communication. These included: *The Exploration of Space*; *Mass Communications and the Modern Society*; *An introduction to Cybernetics*; *Computers and Automation* and *Television –*

Escape or Reality? In the area of Psychology there were a number of ground-breaking courses, including *The Importance of Sex Education in emotional maturation* and *The Psychology of the Mature Adult.* The latter was important as this course focused on emotional maturity for the general population rather than on those with a mental illness. The course also looked at the relevance of maturity to adult education.

Courses on literature included Bryan Podmore's *Ibsen's Wild Duck* in 1962. There was also a new programme developed in January 1969 which offered *Creative Writing* and which built on the success of the Attingham Writer's Group.

Barrie Trinder continued to attract important speakers in the fields of both sociology and industrial history and archaeology. Michael Rix spoke on Telford's Holyhead Road and Barrie led a course on *Popular Recreation during the Industrial Revolution*, to which E. P. Thompson and Raphael Samuel contributed, focusing on "the culture-conflict". In spring 1966 Trinder led on an important course addressing contemporary issues of poverty and inequality, *The Problem of Poverty*.

One course which Barrie Trinder commented upon deserves particular mention as I come to the end of the course commentary. In autumn 1965 a course entitled *The Education of specially gifted children* took place. According to Trinder, it attracted a group of "hard headed educationalists" who came into direct conflict with "an element on the course who were from Sir George's esoteric followers". The central tenet, as described in the programme, was that:

> True education is always concerned with the release of the great and often untapped potential of creativity in the individual. However, a new factor is observable in our time. Specially gifted children seem to be appearing in our midst, as if sent as potential leaders in the complex world order now evolving. Their exceptional talents make them often as ill-adapted to normal schooling as handicapped children. Do we not owe them special care and protection?

According to Trinder, these 'potential leaders' were described as "children of gold" and discussion centred on how they needed to be segregated. He stated that "some of us thought at a low mercenary level that this was a way of boosting private education saying 'they've got to be privately educated'" (interview with Barrie Trinder, 22nd July, 2014). The standoff between the educationalists and the esoteric group appears to have become ideological.

Trinder went on to say “You know, bring in the Yehudi Menuhin School. I quite accept that if someone is going to be a great string player they need to be playing the string instrument at four - or whatever. But it's hardly so in the wider world” (ibid). Ultimately the educationalists argued that this was a real educational problem and that there were ways of tackling it which did not involve segregation or private education. Trevelyan, whose own educational experience had given him a passion for alternative education, who had spoken of the need for ‘new educational forms for world citizenship and new safeguards for human rights’ (October 1968, course programme *Britain's task in shaping a new society*), had aligned himself with the notion that “specially gifted children seem to be appearing in our midst”. He had also started to attract increasing negative attention to his activities by the LEA. Pam Turner, a student at the SAEC in the 1960s whose husband worked for the Education department at this time, attested to their growing anger. Her husband had described “huge arguments” between the LEA and the College as the esoteric courses grew in number, and attracted a declining number of local people, and when anxieties about funding were starting to mount (interview Pam Turner, 4th December, 2014). To return to Drews’ comments at the beginning of this chapter, Trevelyan’s increasing insulation from reality and the shield which his coterie offered, left the College itself vulnerable and gave ample “food for thought” to any “potential enemies” (Drews, 1995, p.232).

Figure 7.5 The last course under Trevelyan’s Wardenship, July 1971

The College closure and beyond

Geoffrey Toms' period at the College as Warden marked a turning point for the College, with a concatenation of events within the wider country and at the SAEC itself which resulted in moves towards its closure. Toms described how the UK was hit by a major oil crisis in 1973 and also commented on soaring inflation, which spiked during the final years of the College, peaking at 24.2% in 1975[21]. Financial issues at the College were also coming to a head. It was apparent that the College could not continue on the basis of fee income alone and the budget for Local Education Authorities was itself being squeezed by inflationary pressures. Every year there was a demand on Shropshire County Council to increase the College grant and they eventually would no longer do it. At the same time, the College needed to keep fees low to make it as accessible as possible. Student numbers became a priority, with a drive to "double, treble the numbers of students". Toms commented that it "all got politically very nasty" (interview, Geoffrey Toms, Sarah Kay and Brenda Hough, 29th June, 2000) and that he began to feel increasingly like he was running a failing business rather than a college.

Toms described to me how he felt he was being used by the Board of Governors "as a counterbalance" (interview Geoffrey Toms, 19th July 2014) to Trevelyan, who had been perceived as increasingly maverick and unmanageable by the Board of Governors. Toms himself was uncertain about following in Trevelyan's footsteps and commented that he was "really quite concerned myself that everybody would look to the days of Sir George – but they didn't" (ibid). His view was that only the students who had been attending the College since the beginning viewed him unfavourably.

The loss of the esoteric course students with Trevelyan's departure saw an immediate drop in student numbers, but Toms rapidly achieved success in attracting more local people and numbers were actually healthy: "When he retired, overnight the student population changed – suddenly people started coming and the New Age people filtered out" (interview Geoffrey Toms, 19th July 2014).

[21]Retail Price Index: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/czbh/mm23, Accessed 24/4/17

Whilst the existing LEA staff and the University of Birmingham were "the most amazing supporters", the Shropshire County Council councillors were "a different beast". The councillors were not interested in its popularity, despite good support from the Education Department. Toms tried to garner their interest by inviting local politicians to visit the College but "not one of them came". His view was that they were "looking for an excuse to close it" (ibid).

Ironically, at the end of a long and sometimes troubled relationship with some parts of the local community, for whom it had been the 'unwanted college' and the 'hippy college' at various points, Toms felt he succeeded in turning these perceptions around at the very end. He commented on the "amazing support" of local people who fought against its closure. This was the point, he commented, that the College had more contact with the citizens of Shrewsbury than at any other point in its life.

From July 1975 no more courses were to be arranged and the College formally closed on the 30th November 1975. The next few months saw it being wound down and its resources and affects dispersed. Staff remained loyal to the very end, with all staying on until the last day.

The College closed at a time when other short-residential colleges were also folding and Toms remarked that many other institutions were closing in the mid-1970s, including teacher training colleges. For Toms, this was the end of an era, with the "charismatic personalities" represented by people like Trevelyan being "replaced by 'managers' who are never seen in the life of the college" (interview Geoffrey Toms, 19th July 2014).

As the College was in the process of closing, between 1975 and 1977, the Bell Concord Educational Trust Ltd, the Trust which managed Concord College, an independent international day/boarding school, began negotiations with the National Trust. At this time the educational Trust was seeking space for female students for the new girls department at Concord, which was based in Acton Burnell, a village outside Shrewsbury. The girls were taught separately at Attingham Park until the early 1980s, when they were integrated into the site at Acton Burnell. Marion Wood worked at Attingham during its Concord College period. She was saddened to see the former SAEC become a school for "business studies and

well-heeled overseas students" (telephone interview, Marion Wood, 4th February 2015). In a *Shropshire Star* newspaper article entitled 'Museum or Mausoleum' (n.d, circa 1975, written by Richard Edmonds), the loss of the SAEC is lamented. Instead of "an open educational establishment, neither awarding qualifications nor requiring any", the article described the girls school offshoot from Concord College as a "cramming establishment for pre-university students....at £2000 plus a head". The article also criticised the speed with which the National Trust had restored the house to its pre-College condition and accused the NT of creating a "mausoleum". David Brown, the first Regional Information Officer for the National Trust, responded in the article by reminding readers that the NT had leased the property to the College and had always been involved, quietly, in the background. He stated that the National Trust had a duty to restore the property – "It's got to have some sense of a living presence about it, otherwise the public will think we are not doing our job properly".

By 1986 all links with Concord had been severed. David Brown was interviewed for the Attingham Archive at the time (interview, David Brown by Edward Payne, 1986, Attingham Archive). He said that the National Trust did not want any further institutions of this nature to use the building. In the same year the National Trust Regional Office was located in the house.

As a postscript on the SAEC, it feels important to reiterate that this research project has enabled a renewed focus at Attingham Park on the College period. It has also demonstrated the College's enduring appeal. Despite most of the physical traces of the College having been covered over or removed – in many instances straight after the College closed – former student and staff visitors to the house and park come back to remember their own experiences at the College, over 40 years ago. It has become apparent that Attingham is still much more than a stately home to those who lived or studied there. It is a place of memory and remembering, a part of people's intimate history.

Chapter Eight – Conclusion – Impact and Evaluation

Affairs are now soul size.

The enterprise is exploration into God.

Where are you making for? It takes
So many thousand years to wake...
But will you wake, for pity's sake?

From Christopher Fry, (1951) 'A Sleep of Prisoners', (New York: Oxford University Press)

Any consideration of the legacy and impact of the Shropshire Adult Education College must acknowledge the central role of Sir George Trevelyan as Warden as well as the College itself. As we have seen in the previous four chapters, Trevelyan was a complex and even contradictory man but there is no doubt of his enduring influence in New Age thinking and in the environmental and sustainable development movements. He remains significant now for his many followers, for whom he has achieved something akin to the status of a "spiritual father" (David Lorimer, Wrekin Trust final gathering, 21st March, 2017). Trevelyan's conviction that we should tread lightly on the earth, and hurt as few people as possible on our journey in order that we can more swiftly make our way "back towards the Divine", was powered by fellow feeling, even love. His intention was to spread a message of positivity and to harness the mind to that end:

> You will cut out from your vocabulary any words or thoughts associated with the negative emotions. Simply refuse to use then and watch that you use only a vocabulary of courage, sympathy, joy, tenderness, love, hope. Remember that you are the vocabulary you use. As you think, so you are (Trevelyan, 2012/1991, p. 95).

His beliefs and values were the result of a genuine and heartfelt conviction that he had a duty to help people "wake" and to turn away from a materialism which he understood as damaging the planet and the people who inhabit it. There is a sense of responsibility conferred with this belief system.

At the same time, he had a passion for the trappings and infrastructure of the aristocracy, the statements of power and material wealth which were represented by the great country houses, of which Attingham was one, and Wallington, which was ultimately denied to him, was another. This is where his essential paradox lay. He was an aristocrat whose conception of himself as living by a chivalric code harked back to a pre-First World war period when the order of society was very different, a "mythical organic society", as Goldman described it, powerfully juxtaposed against "the embattled present", in which "the emphasis was on an educated minority, producing and preserving great works of art and a quality of response to life against the disintegrative pressures of a polluting, commercial culture" (Goldman, 2000, p.303). Trevelyan was pre-eminently a gentleman, keen to preserve the beauty and values of the past whilst simultaneously embracing an alternative future. His concern to conserve can be seen in his devotion to architecture, a central focus of so many of the courses at the SAEC, and his involvement with the Attingham Summer School - The Historic Houses of Great Britain, of which he was very proud, and which still continues today. He was also one of the founder members of the Shrewsbury Civic Trust and was responsible for helping to protect some of the finest medieval buildings.

Chivalry, with all its ideals of "physical bravery, mental purity, respect for women, frankness and modesty" (Jan Morris, the New York Times, October 11th, 1981[1]) was part of Trevelyan's own self-conception. Arthurian legend, including the family folklore about Sir Trevillian, one of King Arthur's knights, emerging from the sea on his white charger as the land of Lyonesse sank, was a theme he returned to repeatedly in courses on heraldry, the Holy Grail and Allegorical journeys. It was a personal mythology which conferred on Trevelyan a direct lineage with the noble Aryan people of Albion, or the British Isles. These beliefs converged within the anthroposophical system of thinking, with its emphasis on spiritual and racial hierarchies and led him towards a group of people – such as Gardiner – who embraced the notion of cultural and spiritual supremacy and notions of a 'natural aristocracy' without caveat.

[1] Article entitled "The Things a Fellow Don't Do", Review *of The Return to Camelot – Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, by Mark Girouard.

His status as a gentleman also conferred on him a gravitas which made some of the more recherché aspects of New Age belief palatable. As Geseke Clark, a long-term friend of Trevelyan's, stated:

> He had such a good touch across classes. Many people of the middle classes, academia and so on, would talk about the New Age as nebulous, possibly even occult. What he did was make it respectable. He made it so people of education or upbringing could listen (Geseke Clarke, quoted in Farrer, 2002, p. 153).

At the same time, as Frances Farrer commented, there is a sense in which his convictions made him "inadvertently dangerous, a preacher, like a travelling medicine man" (interview Frances Farrer, Frances Farrer, 28th July, 2014). By the 1960s, his ideas found a reflection in wider societal concerns, at a time when the Vietnam War and a variety of protest movements were at their height. The attraction of his mystagogue status for young people, in particular, as a propounder of mystical knowledge, was an increasing attraction at the SAEC in the last two years of his period as Warden.

Trevelyan's time at Attingham was in many ways a period of experiment for his later work in developing the Wrekin Trust. He acknowledged that he was not totally free to deal only with spiritual education at the SAEC "as I was always having to please the governors, but now I could be free" (Wrekin Trust booklet, 2017). His continued public lectures after leaving the College focused on promoting a spiritual education of an internationalist nature. As Barrie Trinder has written:

> Though smitten by arthritis, he travelled extensively, addressing conferences (including an annual gathering of 'Mystics and Scientists'), helped to set up many groups in Britain and overseas, and readily conversed with many who saw themselves as 'New Age' thinkers and acknowledged him as a prophet (Trinder, 2004, ODNB entry).

His thinking as early as the 1930s and 1940s was ahead of the curve. It is noteworthy that many of the ideas which seemed the preserve of 'cranks' when he first mooted them have now become largely mainstream. His views on nutrition, for instance, and the proper use of the body, which he first experimented with in the 1930s, are now accepted as part of complementary approaches to physical health. As well as being a proponent for the Alexander Technique, he was also an early exponent of veganism – to manage the rheumatoid arthritis which he developed in his early 60s. He later claimed considerable success in reversing the

condition with this method. At various points of crisis in his own life, illness made him stop in his tracks and his view was that each period of ill health marked an opportunity for personal transformation and a change in the trajectory of his life, with a spiritual message communicating with his physical body to effect this change. As a believer in reincarnation and karma, Trevelyan espoused Steiner's philosophy that illness facilitates personal development, through which the individual pays off their karmic debt – if not in the current life, then in a future life.

The Wrekin Trust, after 45 years since its creation by Trevelyan in the early 1970s, has now decided to cease its functions as a charity. Roger Orgill at the Wrekin Trust Celebration Event on the 21st March, 2017, said that "it has fulfilled its vision". Some of the more radical developments Trevelyan oversaw have become globally recognised, such as the utopian Findhorn Community which has now been re-designated as the Findhorn Foundation, and is described on its webpage as "an NGO associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information, holder of UN Habitat Best Practice designation and co-founder of the Global Ecovillage Network and Holistic Centres Network"[2] (Findhorn Foundation website). Similarly, the Soil Association is now accepted as part of a humanistic response to "the plight of the planet" (Roger Orgill, Wrekin Trust final gathering, 21st March, 2017) and has entirely lost the Right wing taint with which its early years were associated. It is now part of an accepted response to intensive agriculture in the form of organic farming, to such a degree that its certification label has become the hallmark of purity and quality on food stuffs.

The global growth in Steiner education has meant that many of its teaching practices, which were earlier seen as 'alternative', are now being adopted across state-funded schools. Sliwka has commented that this has included "student-centred and independent learning, project-based and cooperative learning," (OECD, 2008, Sliwka in chapter 5, p. 2). It has also included an emphasis on mindfulness, a practice drawn from both yoga and Buddhist philosophy, which involves "paying attention to what's happening in the present moment in the mind, body and external environment, with an attitude of curiosity and kindness" (Mindful Nation UK report, October 2015, p.3) by using a series of simple meditation practices. In October

[2] Findhorn Foundation website – About Us; https://www.findhorn.org/about-us/ Accessed March 24 2017.

2015 the *Mindful Nation UK Report* was produced, the result of the work of the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (MAAPG). Mindfulness techniques are now being used in education, the criminal justice system and, most importantly, in health services, as a means of countering anxiety and depression. This approach is part of a wider drive towards a values-based education ethos which emphasises spiritual, moral, social and cultural values, or SMSC. This was reflected in the 2014 Department for Education report *Promoting Fundamental British values as part of SMSC in Schools*, a document offering 'advice' to maintained schools, and describing British values as "democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs". Nicky Morgan, the then Secretary of State for Education, declared her ambition in 2014 to make Britain a "global leader of teaching character"[3].

As I hope to have shown, adult education has been a space of contest and tension. It has always been used, due to its voluntary nature, as a means of examining issues of culture, values and citizenship and about who should lead our intellectual, philosophical and moral development. Trevelyan took a particular route, entering the arena of spiritual education, but the same questions emerged in the activities and interests he promoted. The battle for a conception of British culture still rages – and the martial imagery is entirely deliberate. The SAEC is an important example of a place in which some of these tensions converged. In a country now where elitism is so prevalent, where our political and social systems continue to be dominated by the privileged classes, much of the New Age thinking which was so radical in its early days has been colonised as part of this domination. Steiner stated that capitalism "will become a legitimate capitalism if it is spiritualised" (Steiner, quoted in Divis, T., 1994 [4]). Bauwens commented that, whilst New Age thinking may have started out as "a corrective reaction to the excessive rationalisation and mechanisation of Western life", its individualistic approach liberates its devotees from "any feeling of solidarity with their fellow human beings", creating a "spiritual elite of entrepreneurs in the making" (Bauwens, 2013, no pagination).

[3] Speech made by (then) Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan on 16th December, 2014
[4] Rudolf Steiner und die Anthroposophie in *ökoLinx* #13 (February 1994), p. 27

Raymond Williams' call for a 'long revolution' to examine the "democratisation of knowledge generation and societal participation in decision making" (Mahony and Stephansen, 2016, p.2) is still absolutely relevant, if not more so in our post-Brexit environment, in which decision-making has become divorced from public debate or discussion in an increasingly debased form of democracy. The 'country house' version of adult education which Trevelyan embraced became part of a broader process in the heritigisation of national culture which decouples the political from the educational. Raymond Williams argued that adult education should be transformational at both an individual and a societal level. Much of the emphasis of the SAEC was on spiritual change and, in a real sense, spiritual education disengages from the societal to focus on the personal and the internal world. The whitewashing of emancipatory forms of adult education – the forms I recognise from the experiences of my father and grandfather – is almost complete. In 2012, Ruskin College destroyed large parts of the archive of student records and other materials which it held and has recently taken the decision (March 2017) to close its International Labour and Trade Union Studies BA and MA courses. This has been described by a number of commentators on the Ruskin website as not just a break with the past, but as equivalent to deleting the history of radical adult education for working class learners.

Stuart Hall, like Williams, argued for an urgent need to unmask dominant perspectives on class and culture, our customary modes of address and behaviour, in his essay, *In the No Man's Land*:

> Surely there has never been a greater cleavage between the tone of our society, its manner and forms, and the gross realities. What happens to a society, rigidly class bound, which uses continually the language of equality? What happens to an oligarchy which conceals itself behind the rhetoric of the popular democracy? What happens when larger numbers are trained each year for responsibility and participation, but where the sources of power and decision grow everyday more remote? All our energies are expended in creating and consuming a culture whose sole purpose is to cover up the realities of our social life (Hall, 1958, p.1).

Even though Hall was writing in 1958, his commentary is remarkably prescient today. He suggests that control by the oligarchy still prevails and that the "gross realities" of our cultural

life are accepted as incontestable, part of the natural order, seen through the distorting lens of a "debased political language" which uses democracy as a smoke screen (Hall, 1958, p.1).

The need to extend "critical and creative forms of learning, communication and self-governance to non-elite groups" (Mahony and Stephansen, 2016, p.2) as Williams urged is ever more vital. Our remaining "resources of hope" partly lie in the global networks to which we now have access, through the internet and social media, with their help in supporting the development of "cosmopolitan psyches" (West, 2016, p.17). They also lie in informal learning - the family, churches, libraries, museums, radio networks, pubs and kitchens of the ordinary citizen – in order that we can reclaim our life long educational process as "part of the process of social change itself".

> The true position was, always essentially was, that the impulse to Adult Education was not only a matter of remedying deficit, making up for inadequate educational resources in the wider society, nor only a case of meeting new needs of the society, though these things contributed. The deepest impulse was the desire to make learning part of the process of social change itself (Williams, 1989, p.178).

The SAEC, too, was part of this social change and through the people who were part of it, continues to remain a 'resource for hope'. The power of a liberal arts-based education is its capacity to grapple with the social, the individual and the philosophical, to examine what it is to be human. The use of the arts – literature, poetry, music, art – to stimulate individual learning and to stir the imagination offers a particular kind of emancipation which connects us with the collective experience of humanity. This is where the SAEC excelled. Its courses were designed to stimulate and engage the 'whole person'. Its true legacy and impact is to be found in the people who studied and worked at the College and were in many ways transformed by it, and who took out their own individual learning into the work they have subsequently done, the relationships they have forged, and through their attitudes and values. Their testimony as part of this research has helped celebrate their individual life histories within a wider social context. Working collaboratively, we have created a new inter-textual and inter-contextual account of one College as a lens on a particular community and a particular history. To return to Christopher Cauldwell's quotation:

> One man, alone, singing a song, still feels his emotion stirred by collective images. He is already exhibiting that paradox of art – man withdrawing from his fellows into the

world of art, only to enter more closely into communion with humanity (Cauldwell, 1937/1977, p.36).

Appendices

Appendix One - Interview Schedule and Listings

Date	Interviewee – name and role	Location	Recorded or noted	Unaccompanied or with volunteer	Duration
8/5/14	Mike Threadgold, former Head Gardener	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed	With Elaine Bradburn	1 hour
9/5/14	John Hassall – former student	Rackham's, Shrewsbury	Recorded and transcribed	With Andrew Petch	1 hour
9/5/14	Roger Orgill – son of Gwen Orgill, Domestic Bursar	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed	With Andrew Petch	1 hour 30 minutes
19/5/14	Merrion Wood - son of caretaker, Henry Cyril Wood	The tower, Attingham	Partially recorded; the rest noted and transcribed	Unaccompanied	1 hour
20/5/14	Jancis Mander, former student	At Bridgnorth care home	Recorded and transcribed	With Elaine Bradburn	1 hour 30 minutes
21/5/14	Bryan Podmore, former Deputy Warden	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed	With Elaine Bradburn	1 hour
23/5/14	Tony Herbert – former Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) employee	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed	With Andrew Petch	1 hour
Initial 9/6/14 27/6/14	Diana Prowse (nee Cameron), former Domestic Bursar	By telephone Wallington park, Northumberland	Noted Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied With Saraid Jones	30 minutes 1 hour 30 minutes

Initial 13/6/14 Follow up – 24/6/14 Tour of the house - 30/10/14 Final tour of house – 17/9/15	Sian Griffiths, former Domestic helper	By telephone By Skype Around the Hall, Attingham	Noted Noted Recording failed – notes taken Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	1 hour 30 minutes 2 hours 2 hours
17/6/14	Kathy Cadwallader, former Junior Clerk	At her home, in Shrewsbury	Noted only – Kathy did not wish to be recorded	Unaccompanied	45 minutes
18/6/14	Catriona Tyson, daughter of Sir George Trevelyan	At the café, Attingham park	Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	1 hour
19/6/14 4/12/14	Sally Stote, former student and daughter of Dr Lawson-Stote	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed Noted only	With Elaine Bradburn Unaccompanied	1 hour and 20 minutes 1 hour
27/6/14	Robin Dower, nephew of George Trevelyan	Wallington	Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	30 minutes
27/6/14	Nigel Todd, Labour Councillor and WEA Tutor/Historian	Newcastle coffee shop	Noted only	With Saraid Jones	1 hour
2/7/14	Mary Beard, former domestic helper	By telephone	Noted only	Unaccompanied	30 minutes
10/7/14	Garth Reynolds – son of furniture maker who made College furniture	At his home, Highley, Shropshire	Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	1 hour

19/7/14	Geoffrey Toms, former Warden, 1971-76	By telephone	Noted only	Unaccompanied	30 minutes
22/7/14	Barrie Trinder, former tutor	In Melton Mowbray	Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	1 hour and 30 minutes
28/7/14	Frances Farrer, journalist and writer	By telephone	Noted only	Unaccompanied	3 hours
7/8/14	Neville Jackson of the Midlands County Photographic Federation	At Trowell Services	Recorded and transcribed	With his wife, Pat Jackson	1 hour
24/9/14	Michael Ray – former student	By telephone	Noted only	Unaccompanied	45 minutes
24/9/14	Paul Fletcher, worked with Sir George in the Wales Network from 1979-1989	By telephone	Noted only	Unaccompanied	45 minutes
14/10/14	Marcia Taylor, former Head Cook	At Wheatlands care home	Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	1 hour
14/10/14	Liz Thomas, former student	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed	Recorded and transcribed	1 hour
5/11/2014	Ruth Nesfield-Cookson (nee Bell), former Secretary	Her home, near Spode, Gloucestershire	Recorded and transcribed	With Elaine Bradburn	2 hours
4/12/14	Pam Turner, former student	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	1 hour
15/12/14	Michael Barratt Brown, former Principal of Northern College	His home, in Primrose Hill, London	Recorded and noted	With David Browning	3 hours

4/2/15	Marion Wood, knew the Trevelyans when her husband David worked at the NCC	By telephone	Noted only	Unaccompanied	30 minutes
4/3/15	Tony Vettise, former tutor	The tower, Attingham	Recorded and transcribed	With Peter Francis, later in the interview	1 hour and 30 minutes
20/3/15	Martin Bulmer, Sir George's half brother	At Waterloo station, London	Recorded and transcribed	Unaccompanied	2 hours
1/4/15	Michael Dower, Sir George Trevelyan's nephew	By Skype	Noted only	Unaccompanied	30 minutes
17/7/15	Dr Diane Barr - University of Birmingham administrator for the Attingham programme	The tower, Attingham	Noted only	Unaccompanied	1 hour
10/10/16	Derek Tatton, former Warden of Wedgwood Memorial College	By telephone	Noted only	Unaccompanied	30 minutes
21/3/17	Pamela Tawse, friend of Kitty and George Trevelyan; former student on the esoteric courses	At Hawkwood College, Stroud, Gloucestershire	Noted only	Unaccompanied	1 hour

Appendix Two – Interview Questions

Preparation

Date/time and location - test equipment
Participant consent form and info sheet – background and context to research
Dissemination and usage

Interview questions

Name, relationship to College – role

Period involved in College

Where did you come from at the time – geography and origins/professional/social background
How old were you at the time?

What kinds of backgrounds did the people in your group/staff come from?

What are your memories of Sir George Trevelyan?

What did you think about the types of courses that were offered?

What was the long-term impact of being involved with/studying at the College, if any?

For academic staff - Did you have a hand in developing the courses and/or inviting speakers?
For all – do you have any memories in relation to the physical layout/ plan of building?

If recorded before, have your feelings/perceptions changed – do you still feel the same?

Appendix Three – Interview Participant Consent form

Researcher's name Sharon Clancy

Supervisor's name John Holford

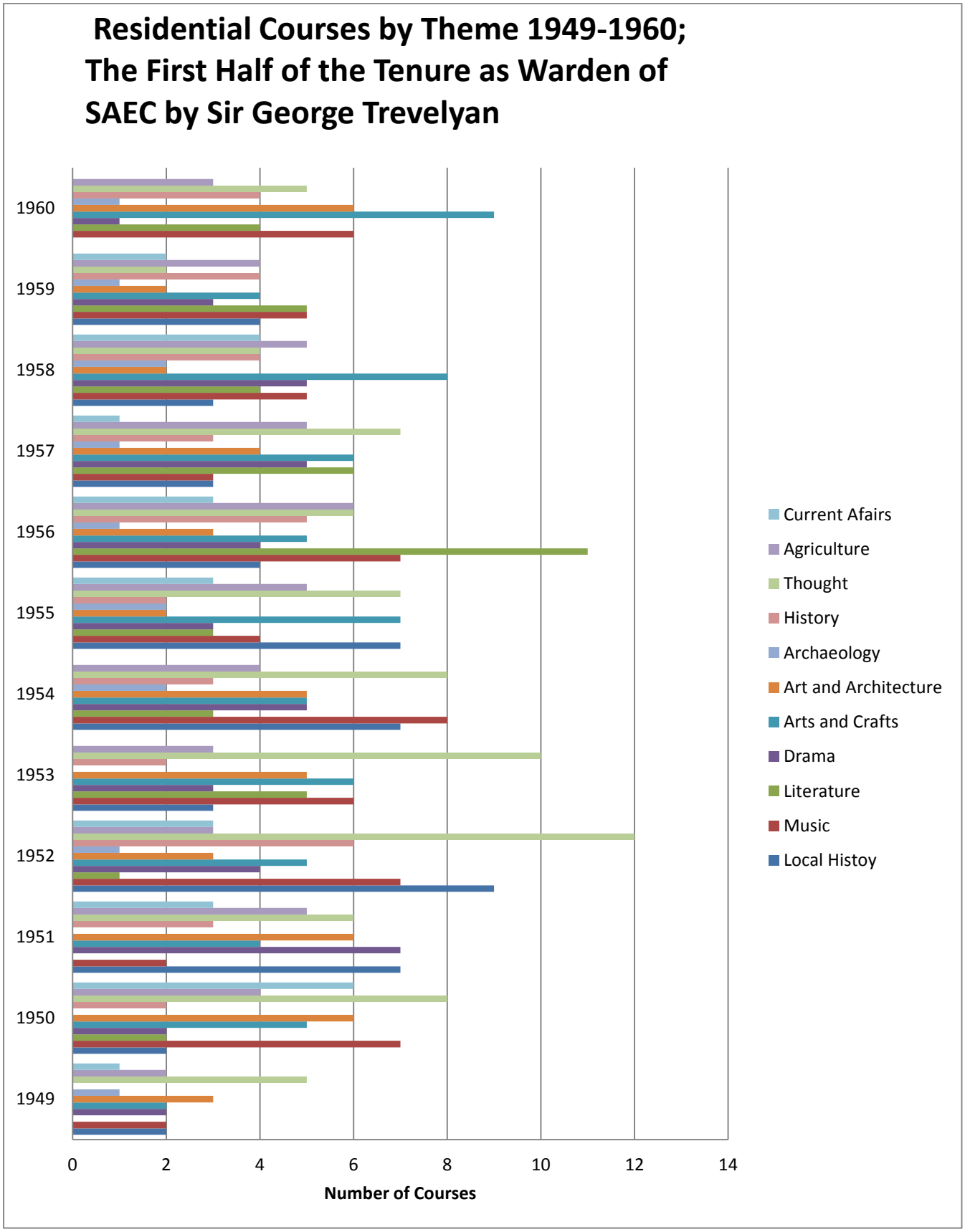
- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audio-taped during the interview.
- I understand that data will be stored on Sharon Clancy's PC and as part of the oral history collection at Attingham Hall, on behalf of the National Trust. Hard copies will also be kept by Sharon Clancy. This material can only be accessed in full by specific staff at Attingham Hall and future researchers, and only with permission.
- Materials such as photographs and recordings may be used by the National Trust at Attingham for future displays on the College and I understand that my permission will be sought by the NT should this be the case before anything is used.
- I understand that any recorded material will be archived with the British Library, in line with National Trust protocols, and I give my consent for this to take place and in perpetuity, beyond my death.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

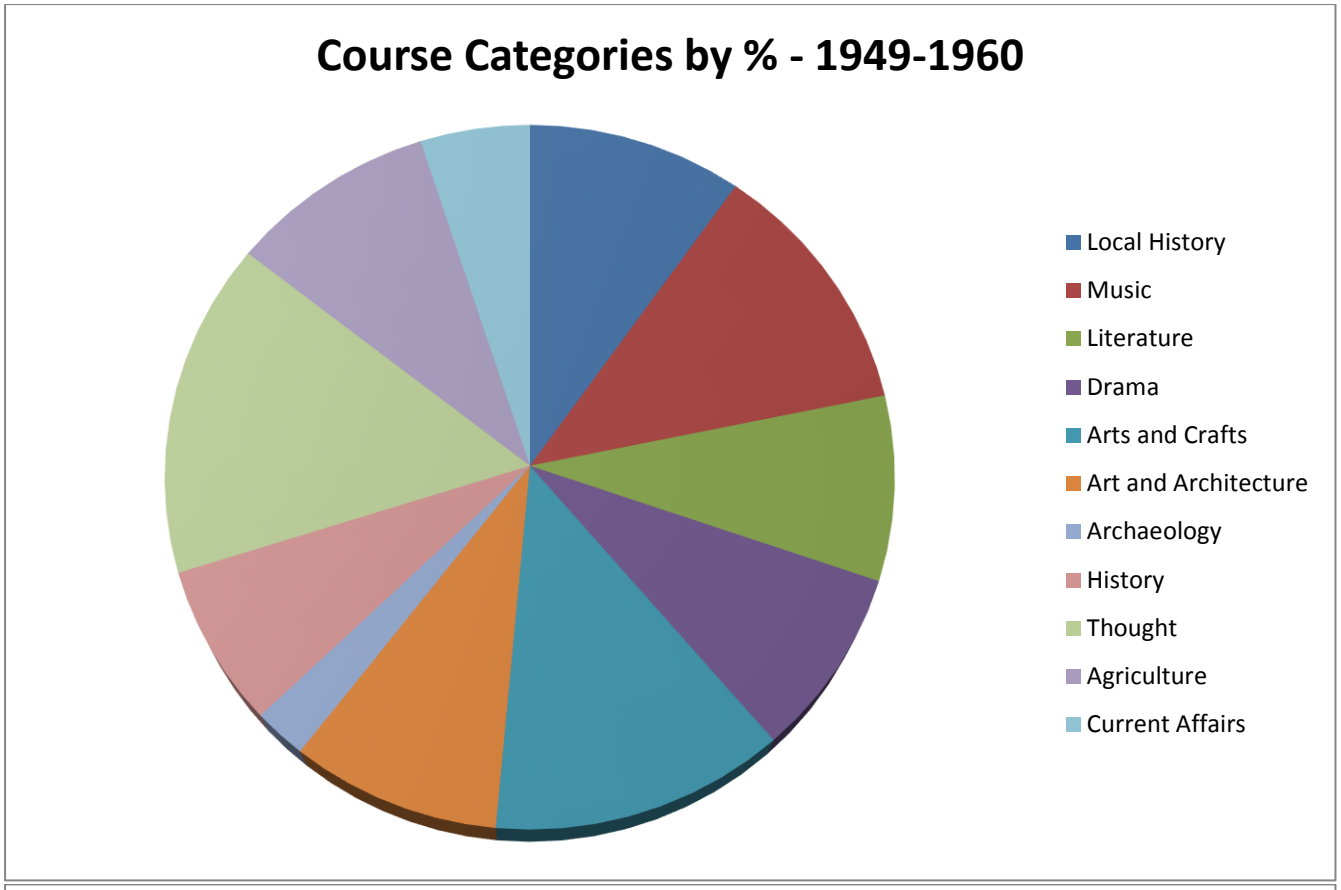
Signed …… (research participant)

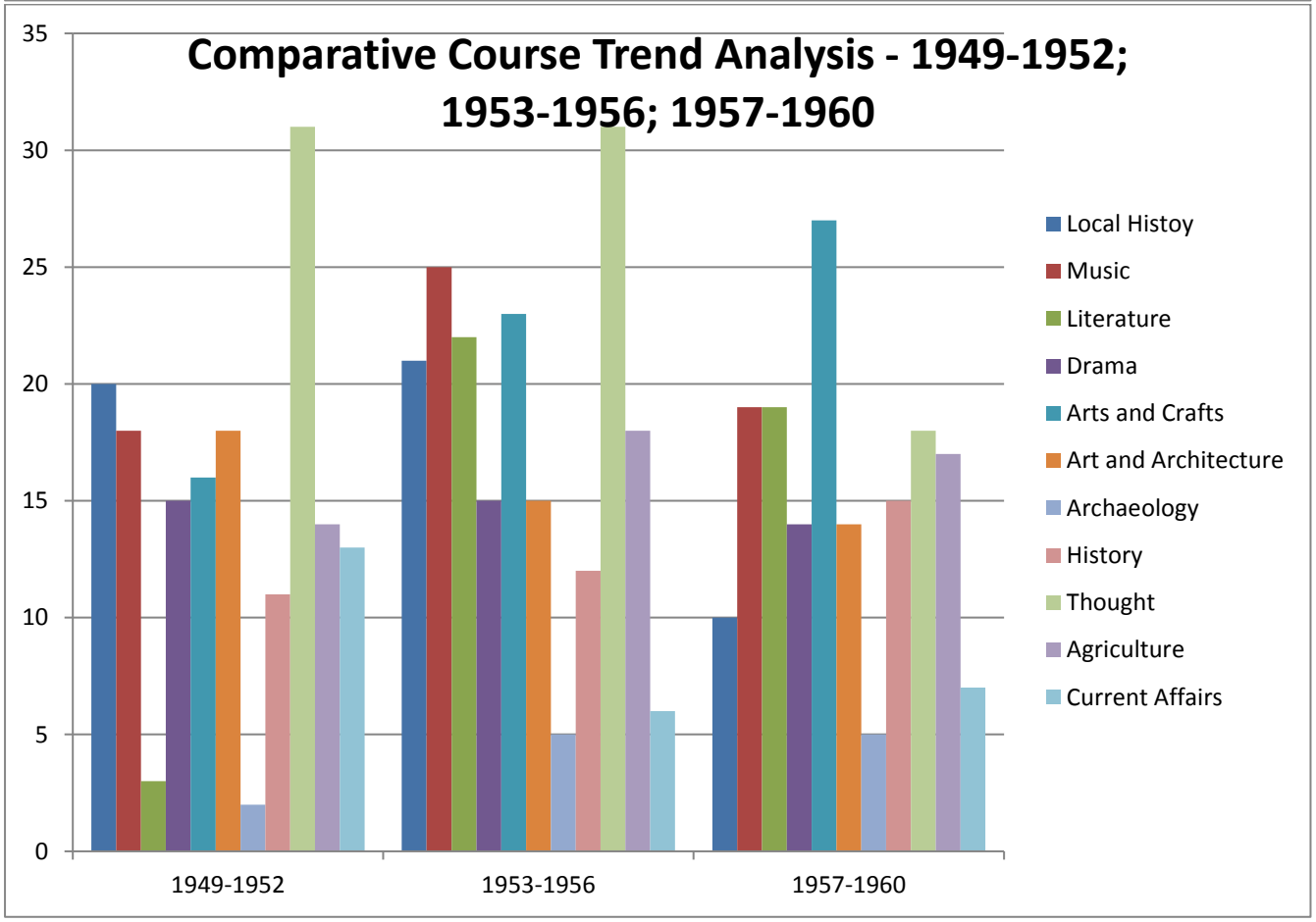
Print name …… **Date** ……

Contact details - Researcher: *sharon.clancy@nottingham.ac.uk;*
Supervisor: *john.holford@nottingham.ac.uk;*
School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator: *educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk*

Appendix Four – Course trend analysis – 1949 - 1960




Course Categories by % - 1949-1960
Local History
Music
Literature
Drama
Arts and Crafts
Art and Architecture
Archaeology
History
Thought
Agriculture
Current Affairs

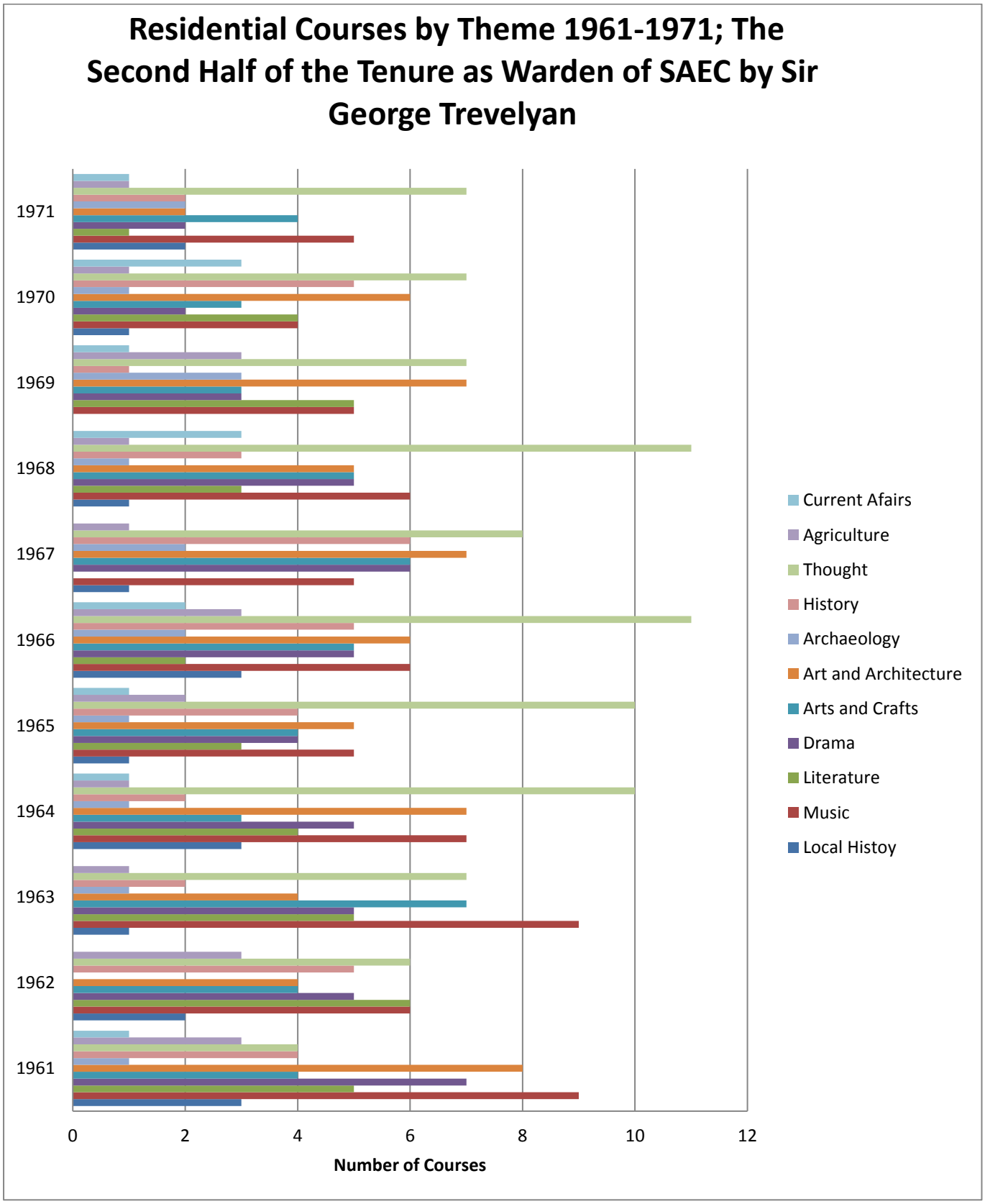

Comparative Course Trend Analysis - 1949-1952; 1953-1956; 1957-1960
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1949-1952
1953-1956
1957-1960
Local Histoy
Music
Literature
Drama
Arts and Crafts
Art and Architecture
Archaeology
History
Thought
Agriculture
Current Affairs

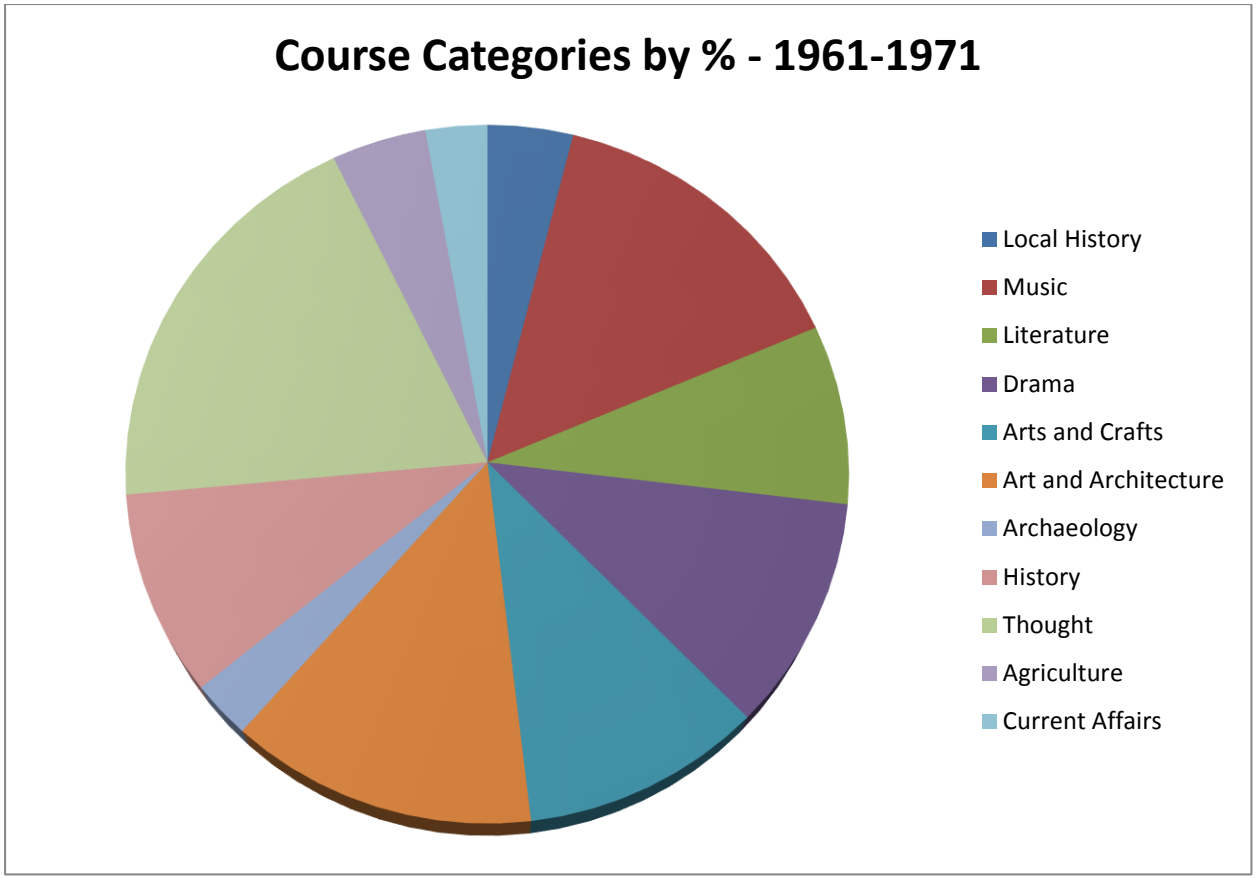
Theme/Date	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	Total All Years
Local History	2	2	7	9	3	7	7	4	3	3	4	0	**51**
Music	2	7	2	7	6	8	4	7	3	5	5	6	**62**
Literature	0	2	0	1	5	3	3	11	6	4	5	4	**44**
Drama (excluding Shakespeare)	2	2	7	4	3	5	3	4	5	5	3	1	**44**
Arts and Crafts (including Creative Writing)	2	5	4	5	6	5	7	5	6	8	4	9	**66**
Art and Architecture	3	6	6	3	5	5	2	3	4	2	2	6	**47**
Archaeology	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	**12**
History	0	2	3	6	2	3	2	5	3	4	4	4	**38**
Thought including Sociology and Psychology	5	8	6	12	10	8	7	6	7	4	2	5	**80**
Agriculture, Nature Studies etc.	2	4	5	3	3	4	5	6	5	5	4	3	**49**
Current Affairs	1	6	3	3	0	0	3	3	1	4	2	0	**26**
Miscellaneous	6	8	8	10	10	6	4	3	4	7	4	0	**70**
TOTAL FOR YEAR	26	52	51	64	53	56	49	58	48	53	40	39	**589**

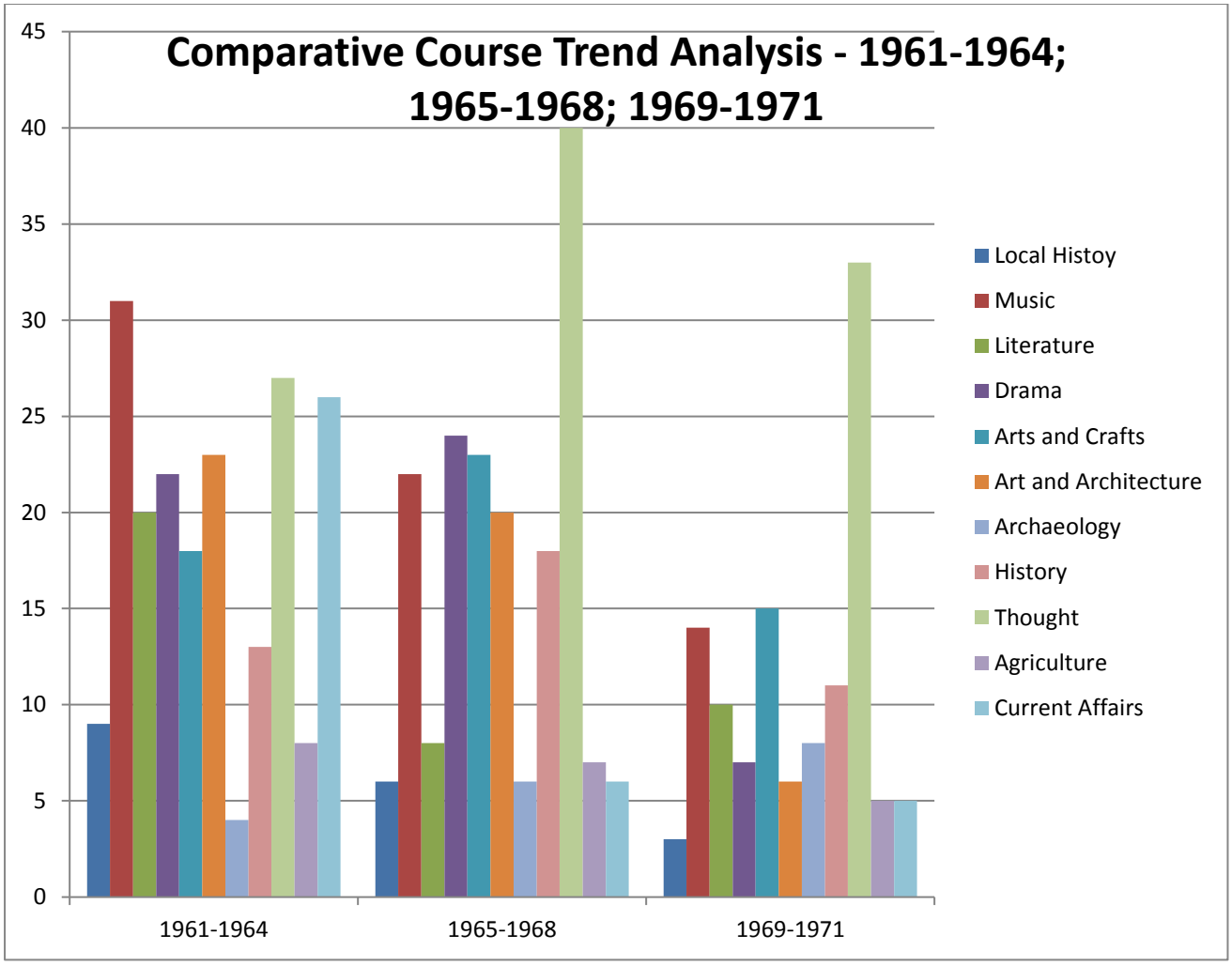
Notes:

1. The category descriptors above mirror those used within the HMI report on the Shropshire Adult Education College for the academic year 1958/1959;
2. The analysis presented above has been made using actual college programme course details, and represents courses taking place within the respective calendar year rather than split academic years;
3. The 'Miscellaneous' category was not used by the HMI as only a single course fell outside the broad descriptors used in their report;
4. For this reason and to illustrate the profile of courses categorised by HMI, the 'miscellaneous' courses have been excluded from the analysis;
5. 'Miscellaneous' in this analysis includes courses related to Industry, Family & Home, Culture and other non-specific subjects;
6. Entries for Shakespeare have been credited to Literature, in line with the HMI report.

Appendix Five – course trend analysis – 1961-1971




Course Categories by % - 1961-1971
Local History
Music
Literature
Drama
Arts and Crafts
Art and Architecture
Archaeology
History
Thought
Agriculture
Current Affairs

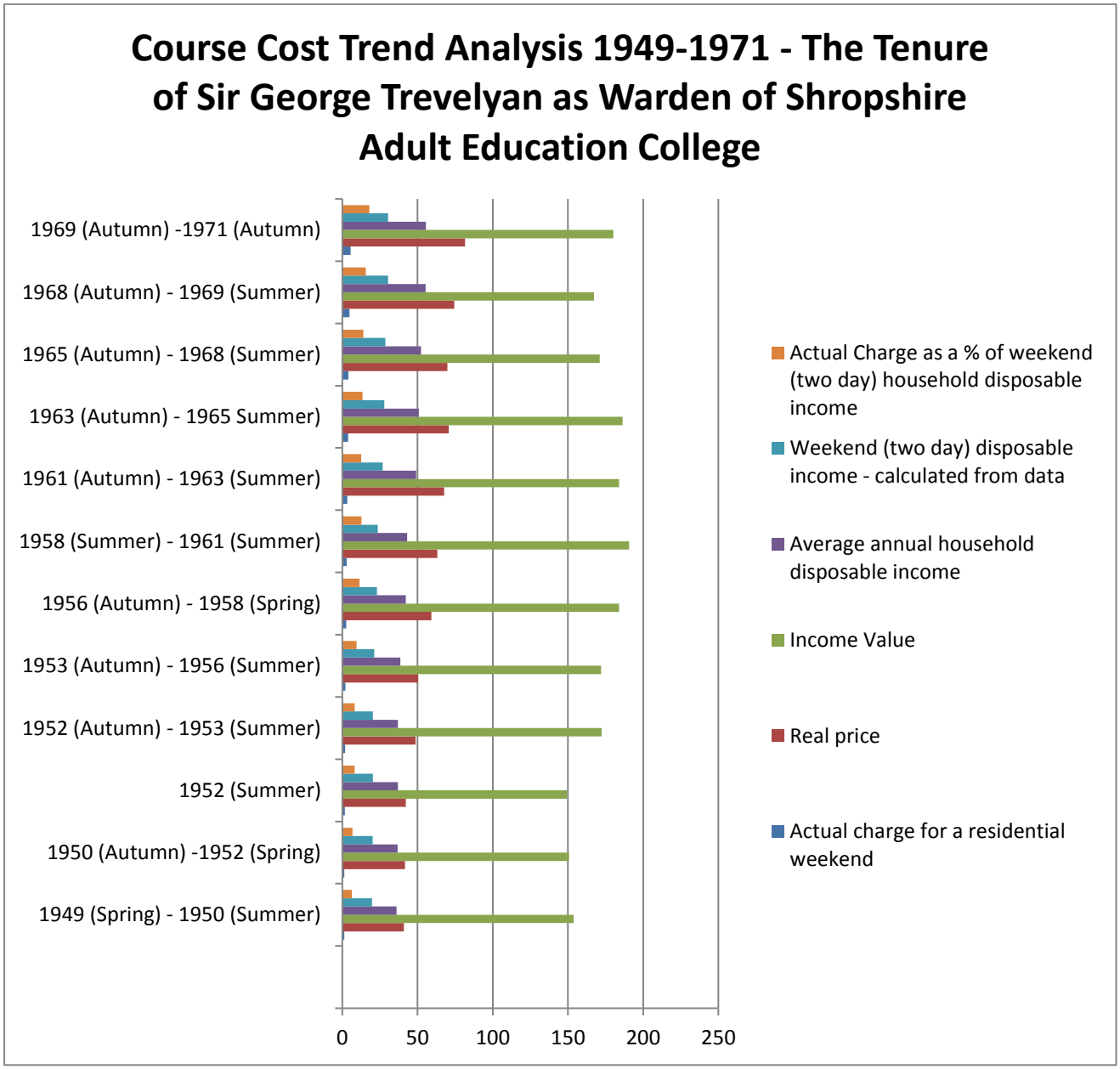


Notes:

7. The category descriptors above mirror those used within the HMI report on the Shropshire Adult Education College for the academic year 1958 – 1959;
8. The period 1969 to 1971 comprises an analysis of programme content spanning only three years rather than four in other segments;
9. The analysis of programme content for 1971 comprises information for the Spring and Summer terms only; Sir George Trevelyan retired as Warden of SAEC at the end of the Summer Term 1971;
10. The analysis presented above has been made using actual college programme course details, and represents courses taking place within the respective calendar year rather than split academic years;
11. The 'Miscellaneous' category was not used by the HMI as only a single course fell outside the broad descriptors used in their report;
12. For this reason and to illustrate the profile of courses categorised by HMI, the 'miscellaneous' courses have been excluded from the analysis;
13. 'Miscellaneous' in this analysis includes non-specific subjects, and declined significantly in the second half of Sir George's tenure;
14. Entries for Shakespeare have been credited to Literature, in line with the HMI report.

Theme/Date	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	Total All Years
Local History	3	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	0	1	2	**18**
Music	9	6	9	7	5	6	5	6	5	4	5	**67**
Literature	5	6	5	4	3	2	0	3	5	4	1	**38**
Drama (excluding Shakespeare)	7	5	5	5	4	5	6	5	3	2	2	**49**
Arts and Crafts (including Creative Writing)	4	4	7	3	4	5	6	5	3	3	4	**48**
Art and Architecture	8	4	4	7	5	6	7	5	7	6	2	**61**
Archaeology	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	**12**
History	4	5	2	2	4	5	6	3	1	5	2	**43**
Thought including Sociology and Psychology	4	6	7	10	10	11	8	11	7	7	7	**88**
Agriculture, Nature Studies etc.	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	1	**20**
Current Affairs	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	1	3	1	**13**
Miscellaneous	1	0	2	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	0	**15**
TOTAL FOR YEAR	50	41	45	45	41	52	45	45	41	38	29	**472**

Appendix Six – Course Cost Trend analysis



Notes

1. The charges indicated within the chart are the standard residential weekend charge levied by Shropshire Adult Education College (SAEC) for non-Shropshire or contributing authority residents;
2. The residential weekly charges have been extracted from the printed course programmes published by SAEC from its inception to the retirement of Sir George Trevelyan in Autumn 1971;
3. In most cases revisions to the costs of the residential weekends were implemented from the commencement of the 'Autumn' term. There is, however, a single term increase in Spring 1952, and a pre-Autumn increase from Summer 1958 has been identified.

4. Where residential weekends costs span more than one year the comparative analyses of the 'actual charge', 'real price' and 'income value' have all been made using the first year in which the cost was implemented;
5. The comparative data relates to values at 2015; the latest date for which data sets are held;
6. The calculations were made using Measuringworth.com and their definitions are paraphrased as follows; **Actual Charge** – represents the actual cost to the student (of a residential weekend at SAEC); **Real Price** – represents the 2015 adjusted price of the course as a commodity*; **Income Value** – represents the 2015 value against the income of the individual*
7. The figure for Daily Disposable Income is interpolated from annual UK-wide household disposable income – source ONS – using data collected annually from 1948 onward. The figure used is per head. As above, the indicated disposable income.

Date range (by term)	Actual charge for a residential weekend £ (converted to decimal currency)	Real price £	Income Value £	Average annual household disposable income £	Weekend (two day) household disposable income (calculated from data) £	Actual Charge as a % of weekend (two day) household disposable income
1949 (Spring) - 1950 (Summer)	1.25	40.99	153.8	3595	19.70	6.4
1950 (Autumn) -1952 (Spring)	1.35	41.72	150.7	3684	20.19	6.7
1952 (Summer)	1.63	42.17	149.40	3695	20.25	8.1
1952 (Autumn) - 1953 (Summer)	1.88	48.65	172.40	3695	20.25	8.1
1953 (Autumn) - 1956 (Summer)	2.00	50.36	172.10	3860	21.15	9.5
1956 (Autumn) - 1958 (Spring)	2.63	59.09	183.90	4209	23.06	11.4
1958 (Summer) - 1961 (Summer)	3.00	63.21	190.70	4308	23.61	12.7
1961 (Autumn) - 1963 (Summer)	3.38	67.75	183.90	4906	26.88	12.6
1963 (Autumn) - 1965 Summer)	3.75	70.82	186.30	5077	27.82	13.5
1965 (Autumn) - 1968 (Summer)	4.00	69.85	171.2	5223	28.62	14.0
1968 (Autumn) - 1969 (Summer)	4.75	74.29	167.30	5540	30.36	15.6
1969 (Autumn) -1971 (Autumn)	5.50	81.64	180.10	5565	30.49	18.0

Appendix Seven

Interview Transcript

Transcription of interview with Barrie Trinder by Sharon Clancy – 22nd July 2014, Melton Mowbray

SC: Interview between Barrie Trinder and Sharon Clancy on 22nd July in Melton Mowbray around 12 o'clock. If I stick it there Barrie, It should pick up both our voices up hopefully. So, the main questions I wanted to cover, were the period you were involved with Attingham and what your memories of it are. Your memories of George Trevelyan himself and what kind of influence you had on the course development; any connections with Geoffrey Toms, which I know we've just touched on but for the purposes of recording; any long term impact that the College had on your own life as well as those around you from your observations and the other key question I'm personally interested in is what your feel was about the democratic profile – if I can call it that – of the students who attended, because that's proving really thorny and quite complex (Yes I'm sure) *and I'm really interested in that given my own background, so I'm trying to sort of elucidate it a little bit further.*

BT: Yes, well I can provide a few bits of evidence, I'm not sure I can provide the answers.

No, that would be brilliant. So just initially then, so what period were you involved at Attingham?

Yea, well I was appointed as an Adult Education Tutor with the County Council as from 1st May 1965; actually, the title of the post changed but we don't need to bother about it very much, it was changing from an area to a subject responsibility over a year or so and part of the Adult Education Tutor's job description was to sit on a committee at Attingham and to organise courses roughly speaking one every term, plus a bit. The bit might be participating in someone else's course or being involved with the Summer School or something like that.

And was Sir George Trevelyan on the panel that appointed you?

No, no.

OK.

It was purely a County Council appointment.

Sure. Right OK.

The great Martin Wilson's last appointment.

Was it? Yea, 'cos he seems to have been amazing and he seems to have been the inspiration behind the College in lots and lots of ways.

Yea, yes, yes, yea.

A formidable kind of Education Officer.

Yea. Have you seen his, well a sort of memoir?

No.

Well, I've put the reference to it in there, I won't go through it now because you've got it written there.

Oh that's brilliant.

It doesn't say that much about Attingham but there's quite a lot incidental and it certainly gives you a very good impression of what education was like in the years just after World War Two.

After the War, yea.

No, so George wasn't involved with that at all. And we would meet well really once a term to plan the next and, I think I said this in the DNB article. I mean George was very open. He would produce a programme of certain things in it, various sort of commercial lettings and of course his own courses which divided into two. They were courses which were at least on the surface thoroughly respectable academically, like Mary Firth on music.

Yes. Which was supposed to be really very good.

Very, very good musician but she did tend to attract George's groupies so to speak.

Did she?

As well as other people and Leslie Harris on architecture who John Pilgrim – did I mention that – rather disapproved of, but they were very pretty slide shows and I mean I never saw any of them so it's not for me to judge but they were more or less fixtures in the programme and there was a sort of overlap with George's courses. But *(It's getting noisier in here!)* by 1965 and Ruth Bell's memoir on the internet absolutely confirms this.

Yes.

George's own rather esoteric courses were becoming very well established *(Very well established, yea)* and they were fixtures which were just not to be discussed, you know. They were as much a fixture as say letting it to the National Trust for a weekend.

They were an absolute certainty.

It's been agreed, not - but beyond that, I mean, very open and marvellous opportunities for me. I mean I was only 26 when I was appointed and being able to pull in really distinguished historians to lecture was marvellous.

Must have been.

If you're asking for its impact on my career I mean it's a key element there. I got to know Edward Thompson that way, Brian Harrison and Raph Samuel I knew anyway. But the programme was made clear who was there anyway - there's no need for me to list them; but it was a marvellous opportunity and I think my colleagues felt much the same. I mean Geoffrey Parker who did courses on international relations, Colin Taylor perhaps not so much so. I don't know if you've come across him yet.

I've heard of his name, that's all to be honest.

Strange. I think I've said, "a perpetually lost soul" but, you know, if Colin couldn't make much of Attingham then that's his fault not George's.

Absolutely. Yea, yea.

So George was very open to suggestions and not too censorious about what was being offered, you know.

No. And how did you find him in person, as a character?

I only really saw him at Attingham to be honest. I mean I saw the facade of him as the Warden of Attingham with whom I got on very well, you know, very well indeed. When first edition of 'Industrial Revolution in Shropshire' came out he wrote me a very nice little note saying he'd read it. I mean not his field but.

Oh that's great. So he was supportive.

And he'd just retired by then and he was, well yes he had, yes.

Yes, yes – '71 I think it would have been.

Yes, so yes. It was published '73 so, I mean, I got on extremely well with him.

Yea. Yes.

The one thing I do feel, and I know a number of colleagues felt it was that to some extent George was manipulated.

Manipulated. Yea, yes I'm picking that up too.

By the people who were most enthusiastic about his rather esoteric courses.

Yea, yea.

'The Primal Oneness of Being' or, whatever that means.

How did that manifest itself in your observations?

I mean, I don't know. Ruth Bell tended to tell him what to do or to sort of keep him on the straight path. I was only ever there one weekend when Bernard Nesfield-Cookson was, but he seemed to have a very, you know, sort of manipulative influence on George.

Did you get the sense that there was a degree of vulnerability about George at that point?

Oh yes.

That's kind of what I sense as well.

Yes, yes, yea. Very much so.

It's very interesting 'cos his nephew who I met, he's great. He looks like him as well. It's quite strange. I went up to Wallington in Newcastle to meet him. And he basically said that he thought that Sir George played with the whole 'New Age' thing, that he was enjoying it, butterfly-like. And I can see that might have been part of the picture, but I can't believe it was the whole because my sense too is that people were not exactly exploiting him but certainly manipulating him.

Yea, yea. Yes, well I certainly felt that but it's very difficult to offer evidence on it. Because it was, sort of George let me do what I wanted to do.

Yea.

And, you know, I did that, you know, in terms of my own career anyway, very successfully you know – my courses drew in people who seemed to enjoy it.

Yea.

And they rarely coincided. I think there was only one incident when a course of mine coincided with one of the others. But that's because most of the esoteric courses took the whole house so there was nothing.

Did they? I mean, they were very popular, weren't they?

They were popular, yes. Or with their own people anyway. So, you know I mean, I rarely saw very much.

Geoffrey was very interesting on the point, because he said that, in effect, Sir George – whilst he was deputy – made it very clear there was a demarcation between Geoffrey's courses and Sir George's courses, and that's how they agreed to operate. In effect they agreed to disagree.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Because Geoffrey was totally, well was dis-, not, was slightly well uncomfortable about the courses I think.

Yes, well, I'm sure. That was a wide-spread feeling.

Very definitely. As a scientist and pragmatist as he put it. Yea.

Yes. Yes. You know, young me a Marxist historian, you know.

Quite, yea.

I was, but there was no real reason to fight against it. I mean I didn't have any particularly strong authority as a member of the team who made up the public programme.

Yes.

I mean I could do, as I say, more or less what I wanted to do.

Yea. Within your own, sort of, area.

Yes, yea and, you know, people like Ruth Bell might have disapproved of it a bit to some extent, but.

How did she come over? Did you meet her?

Oh, I saw her frequently, yea yea.

Yea, yea. What was she like?

Umm. She seemed to control George in many ways and other people thought that. I mean, I was warned that by my predecessor when I took the job on.

Interesting. Interesting. Yea. I've yet to interview her. I'm slightly nervous about it.

Ah. That'll be interesting. She's older than me so she must be approaching 80.

She's quite a lot older than you, I think. Yea.

Yes. Is Bernard Nesfield-Cookson still alive?

He is, but he's in a care home. I think he's something like 96 or something. Because he's about 20 years older than her I believe.

Oh well, he'll be a huge age then, probably beyond interviewing.

Yea, absolutely. She's still willing to be interviewed but I'll pick my moment
.
Well that's good. Well I thought the piece on the internet was very very revealing. I mean as a piece of history, as an account of what happened *(It's well written isn't it?)* it follows exactly my own feeling, that, you know, back in the '50s things were a bit different. But I, you know, I'd no experience of that, but from – she was appointed '61 was she?

Yes, I think that's the date.

Yea. From then, you know, things began to change and those esoteric courses *(started to take)* became solid and take the college over. But they – it was a sort of college within a college. Well, it was very interesting first that she called herself a knight and her his squire.

Yes. Absolutely.

And then she says, after one of the first of them George was saying more or less, "Well, we got away with it".

Yea. Do you think, and he said, "Don't ever let me do that again". Do you remember that section?

Umm. Yes.

"I've gone too far" he said. I think that might have one of the early courses, in the late '50s: Death and Becoming. And he said something like, "Don't ever let me be that brave again".

Umm. Yea.

Because he obviously realised he was on, not dangerous terrain, but getting into the realms of where he might be unpopular in some way.

Yea. Well, yea, I mean certainly people like Tony Parsons had a very hostile view of what was going on and with reason in a sense because, you know, it was giving more and more a reason for hostility.

Absolutely. And it's interesting because Geoffrey, Geoffrey Toms, when he talked to me about the kind of viciousness of the County Council, which is pretty much how he described it, as he was drawing the college to a close. And he basically said that the knives were out, and the Education Officer – I don't know whether it was H Martin Wilson. I doubt it.

No, he retired a term after I arrived in '65.

OK, right, so a lot later.

I'm not sure whether John Henry, who was later Director in Surrey, followed Martin Wilson but only for two or three years and his successor was John Boyes who was there for a long time.

Ah. So it might have been him.

And I knew John. He, a strange man – not at all assertive. *(No)* I mean I could.

Push him over.

You could tear a, you could win the arguments in the meeting with him all too easily but not necessarily did you get what you wanted at the end of it.

No, no.

But, he wasn't a powerful figure although people liked him I imagine. I mean, I didn't see that much of him, but.

Whoever it was, Geoffrey said he was a real ally but he warned and whoever it was warned him that the knives would be out very quickly and so they were.

Yea, yes, yea.

And it does seem to have been quite ruthless.

Yes, well I mean it was very weak, weak basic set-up with three partners and if one of them pulls out and the others are not really the same – put in a lot more money, then that's it.

I think finances were becoming very problematic by that stage as well, from what he said. But I wondered how much of it, I know they used the Sir George Trevelyan sort of line as an argument for closing the college.

Yea.

Geoffrey felt that they brought him in as a kind of counter-balance to Sir George's more recherche courses. But he felt he couldn't win in that, like you said earlier on, that they'd made their mind up basically.

Yea well, I mean a lot of the, a lot of those basically anti-educational views were there on the County Council long before and I mean Martin Wilson's piece brings that up nicely. There's another clergyman from Weston-under-Lizard, that end, who was sort of against education right through but I think had largely gone by then. I never came across him. But there were people like that who Martin could deal with.

Yea.

Very powerful intellect but you know there were much more intelligent anti-educational people who were appearing by the mid-seventies.

And it's interesting because they were there already, probably waiting in the shadows because Catriona Tyson – Sir George's daughter – I interviewed her a month or so ago and she gave me a brilliant article from the Shropshire Chronicle, from Shrewsbury Chronicle from 1956 which completely excoriates the College as this place of luxury and, which I know it wasn't physically, but you know in terms of the students who, and we should be spending our money differently, and so on and so forth.

Yea. Who wrote it?
I don't know, I'd need to look at it again. I've taken some photographs – I'll send you them if you're interested – but there is a kind of rebuttal from Sir George.

Yea.

So they give quite a lot of space to Sir George's response and it's quite a balanced article but it's clear there's a lot of ill-feeling.

Yea. Well you see Martin Wilson was quite repute (?) I mean it didn't affect me, I was only there three months when he was Head. But was very very supportive at the start and Philip Barker the archaeologist stayed there for the first three months I was in Shropshire. Philip lived in an old vicarage in the country and one of the local farmers had it in for him as a County Council employee and complained that he wasn't out working at certain times of the day and Martin Wilson invited this farmer in to his office with Philip and these are Philip's response – that we'd got a perfect record of how he worked, which is not surprising but occasionally on a Wednesday morning he's not out is he? Do you work that many hours?

Yea. No. Good for him. So he was a supportive employer as well.

Yes. Yea.

But there wasn't that much support coming from the top by the '70s.

No. No. No. No.

What strikes me as a very crucial thing is the appointment of Deputy Warden before Geoffrey was appointed.

Yes.

Brian Podmore left and the interview, the whole appointment process went through and Bernard Nesfield-Cookson was one of the people on the short-list.

Oh, was he really?

And George very much wanted him.

Yea. Yea.

But from what I was told, Sir Offley Wakeman, who was chairman of the Governors and all that, he was an aristocrat and a very good guy who fluffed his lines. He was comparably old, a bit forgetful, I think as a result of a First World War wound, and they just had to abandon the process.

Right.

And I'm not even sure that Geoffrey was in the hat at that time. But they went through it again and Geoffrey was appointed. But the person who probably can tell you about that is Bob Machin.

Bob Machin?

I don't know the contact details but you should be able to get them from Bristol University. I've really lost contact with him. I knew him quite well. And he got a job at Bristol soon after this bit of a fiasco and then went off and became a great specialist in vernacular architecture and never had that much to do with Attingham. But he may well be able to tell you some details of *(What happened)* that appointment process.

So Bernard was in the hat, as was Geoffrey, you think.

I'm not sure that he was even.

No. Geoffrey may not have been initially.

He may have applied the second time it was advertised. I just don't know that. It's not particularly relevant anyway because, you know, the real issue was whether to appoint Bernard Nesfield-Cookson.

Absolutely. And he wasn't appointed, clearly.

And the various bodies, I think, were all I suspect quite firmly against it. I don't know. The University certainly would be, the local authority would be. I don't know who represented the Walker Trust but.

Almost certainly they would have been. Yea.

Yea.

So just going back to your experience. So you were there for how many years?

Well, from '65 till it closed.

Really. Right to the end. Right to the end.

Yes, well I was in Shropshire for over 30 years.

Wow!

I've brought, I don't know whether these, you've got all these presumably.

I've got all those, the course programmes. But we won't have some of the course materials, supplementary course materials, definitely. I know that.

So you want one of those but you won't any of these. I think you've got most of the courses that I did there. I mean, I don't really want these.

Do you want me to photocopy them Barrie?

Oh no, no.

Are you sure? Because they're invaluable they are, really.

There's a few bits of sort of mail - I don't think there's anything.

That's completely brilliant. So they're course materials about your own courses particularly.

Well courses I was involved with, they're not.

Not all.

Some of them are college courses.

Yea. 'Cos Geoffrey Toms also lectured as well didn't he, yea.

Yes, yes. Oh yes, yes. A good Roman archaeologist.

Did you work with him at all? I know your areas are very different.

Not a great deal. That's from Bob Coates at Nottingham as it happens…

Oh wow. From the University of Nottingham.

Because Nottingham economic history used to have a midweek course there most years.

I didn't know that. That's really useful to know. So there's links with University of Nottingham going back to the College days.

Yes. Yes, yes.

That's interesting, how it's come full circle then with me doing this now. I know about Birmingham being represented regularly.

Yes, well there's an organisational link with Birmingham obviously but Nottingham I mean, purely informal. Bob Coates used it as a useful place to take students for an extended field trip.

Great, great.

Yea. Stanley Chapman lectured once or twice. I think Stanley is still about in economic history. Well it's no longer economic history is it?

How interesting.

He will be approaching 80 now.

That is so interesting.

Well, if you'd like to photocopy these.

Yes I will photocopy those.

There is one from Lord Newby no less.

I could perhaps get them photocopied here.

Yea, there's one from Bob Mayall, a very eminent labour historian who had a spell at Warwick.
University of.

When Edward Thompson was there.

Fantastic.

There's one here from - ah, there we are. I forget what exalted position Howard Newby now occupies but House of Lords.

Really?

University Grants Commission was it?

Oh, these are brilliant. Maybe we could photocopy them while we're here if there's anywhere to photocopy.

Yes, well if we can see anybody. Well, those you can keep, I certainly don't want to.

Thank you so much. That is fabulous. 'Cos I haven't got much in the way of supporting course materials actually.

Yea. I might just have one or two from Sir George's courses which I used for carbon copies, notes or something.

Yea. Absolutely.

There's one in particular, a really weird one about relationships with animals.

Really?

Yea, there's a marvellous lecture entitled 'Parrots are not so Dumb'. I remember John Pilgrim's reaction.

(Laughs) Which sounds quite good actually. Oh marvellous.

But you know, I mean if they survived, that will be; I mean I don't have many notes going back to that far, I don't think. Well, they'll have been on, when paper was cheap and I.

You kept things.

Just used the backs for carbon copies.

Well it will be useful, certainly there is a good You Tube lecture of Sir George's which is really interesting, yea. My brother and I were digging around last weekend, couple of weekends ago, and I must admit I'd been told there was some Pathe footage of him, which I figured was quite a lot older.

Yea.

But there's some footage from the early '90s, '91 or so- not long before he died – entirely about esoteric matters. But he's very articulate, he's incredibly charismatic.

Oh yes he was, yes he was.

And it's fascinating to listen to. It kind of changed my perception of him because he comes over as being; going back to my comment about whether he was vulnerable or not, he comes over there at least as in command of the situation and his subject.

Oh yes, he would be – yes, yes, yes.

So by that time he's presumably, what's the word, learnt to live with the whole role.

Yes, yes. Well I mean I think I learnt a lot about taking command of a meeting and so on.

So did he do the introductory, the chairing or the introduction s at your lectures as well?

No, no he would umm, well probably you've picked up from other sources the sort of ritual of Friday night dinner. He welcomed people first of all.

Oh right. I didn't know. I don't know about that.

More or less as they were sitting down.

Yea.

And then made a great show of offering cider, which was free.

Yes.

But he would welcome a contribution. And then I think at the end of dinner he would just say something about who was doing what course and where they were. And that was a about it.

Right, yea. So he didn't come into – he did at some of the other courses, he was always the opening kind of speaker and keynote.

No not at all. I mean I…

Perhaps cos it wasn't his area.

He might have strayed in for the odd lecture but.

Yea, yea.

But be very unobtrusive if he did. You know, he left whoever was running the course to run it.

So you said he had some interesting thoughts on the kind of students who attended. I'd be really interested to hear that.

Well there was a certain group of George groupies in a sense. Elderly, I suspect many of them older than he was.

Yea.

There was one in particular – a man called Guy Baker.

Oh right.

I really never knew much of him, but he was only a student and yet sort of part of the establishment.

Yes, yes.

A big friend of Ruth Bell's.

Really?

I've no idea what he did for his living but I should something like an accountant or something of middle class background. I mean on my courses, you know, quite a lot of recruitment from established areas of interest, that is in industrial history, so: retired engineers and so on, and their ladies. On more social history courses, the sort of labour history following – people who would be able to quote Marx fairly accurately, which *(chapter and verse)* I'm not sure that I could – but there was a certain following there – and a lot of teachers from broadly the West Midlands region.

Yes, yea. That is obvious, yea.

Not just from Shropshire. In fact that's how I first went there because I think I was set down here. My predecessor was a man called Albert Hunt who was a sort of film and drama critic. And Albert did, amongst other things, some film courses at Attingham. And a former colleague of his – Tony Adams – became my head of department, well at least in English, but I really taught history in West Bromwich but I did teach some English.

Did you? Oh right, OK.
And as a result of that we came over to various things in Shropshire. Albert produced plays and so on.

Right.

And came to some Attingham courses and that's how I first got to know the College.

So what courses did you attend? Films?

There was a course on film. It was on films. Almost certainly it would be on the Bunuel films.

Yea, yea.

And I think there may have been a course on 'la valette de jour', Jean Renoir films. But again you can trace that from the programmes.

Yes, I can yea. There aren't very many extant music – sorry – film programmes, but there are a few. And I think they're that sort of period. Yes. Very- so very eclectic. Very interesting programmes of cult films actually.

Yes. So I think there's a broad recruitment on that. I kind of did my own teaching. A lot of teachers from there and there, and there were a few people who stood out. There's a man called Albert Baker who was a kind of caricature. Tall with dark floppy hair, I suppose had been 60ish – around the time of retirement.

Yea.

In the '60s. And from Wolverhampton. Worked for Manders, the paintmakers factory - long since closed - and would always say, in a sort of Black Country accent, you know, "The working class opinion of this was…."

Amazing.

He never seemed to bring friends with him or anything.

No. Quite isolated then.

And you know he wasn't a labour history fiend either because you recognised that – they're like trainspotters.

Absolutely. Yea, yea. (Both laugh.) Brilliant. So there were some, sort of, fairly eccentric people as it were, who returned as well.

Yea. Yes, yes. Yea. Well I mean both the Bakers, both Albert and Guy, they're totally unrelated and totally different. They were both there for a lot of courses. If I'd gone up on a weekend when it was someone else's course, they might well be there.

It's interesting for different reasons. I spoke with Mary Beard, the classicist.

Oh good.

Yea. 'Cos obviously Mary was there as a young woman and knew Geoffrey. I don't know whether she met you or not.

Oh, I knew Mary very well.

Yea, yea. I can't remember what she said about you. We only had 20 minutes on the phone. It was a bit quick.

I was going to suggest you might contact her.

She was great. She was very helpful. But she said that she thought that the New Age courses attracted people who had some kind of deep psychological need and it was meeting some need in them that needed filling basically.

Well that may well be true. I mean I really didn't see.

You didn't see it.

Enough.

It's kind of interesting.

Enough of them. Even if I was there at the same weekend, you know. I mean I went to talk to my students.

Sure. Exactly. You'd got to focus. But she also said that she thought that students were attracted to – similar students came back for a lot of the other courses as well.

Yes they did, yea.

That there was a kind of almost a group that returned and would try different kinds of courses.

Yes. Well I think that's the Mary Firth and Lesley Harris side of things.

Was that true for you as well do you think?

Not really.

No. You'd have a more diverse group wouldn't you, I guess.

Yes, yes. Well I mean people came back but they wouldn't, I don't think, having come to a course of mine on a late Victorian city or something like that, they'd necessarily want to go to Mary Firth or to Lesley Harris.

No, like you say, yours is more of a specialist emphasis isn't it?

Yes.

I mean I'm kind of wondering if the crafts and arts based activities were the type of programmes that attracted the same people back in different configurations for different courses.

Yea. I mean I think they did. I don't know what the records of students, whether.

We've got Visitors' Books but they only cover, unfortunately – it's a real shame this – they are an absolute, they're marvellous, but they cover 1948 to about '57.

So it's too early really.

Only about the first ten years, which is a real shame. There's nothing after that. But they give you a sense of the demographics i.e. particularly I was interested in the professional or class background as a proxy, and they are all pretty much professional. There's very very few what you might call 'blue collar' workers.

Well, I would think that's so.

Though obviously they did have conferences for bodies like the NCB and others midweek and engineers and geologists.

Yea, in my case that's true – and a few local people who were involved with history courses and other adult education locally.

Yea. Would you say you had many of the WEA-type audience?

Some, but not a huge number.

Not a vast number. So they were nearly all what you might call professionals, engineers or ex-engineers, teachers.

Yea. And the WEA in Shropshire had more or less disappeared by 1965 and it was in Shrewsbury very much a middle-class body centred on Shrewsbury School.

Really, really? God, bizarre.

It had gone, you know, and there were vague attempts to get a WEA branch going in the Telford area but they never came to much.

Never really happened.

There was a branch in Bridgnorth which didn't do much more than hold an Annual General Meeting and debate what sort of course might be put on.

And then not do it.

Yes, well either not do it or fail to attract a quorum and I have an idea there was one in Ludlow as well but, you know, it's not a powerful organisation.

So, would you say that the area is – obviously I've been there quite a lot now because I've been staying at Attingham itself and getting to know Shrewsbury a little bit – is it quite a middle-class area? It does seem to be.

Well it's changed. It was, in the '60s it was quite an industrial town.

Was it?

Seen by my eyes of course

Yea, yea, it will do.

But, you know, manufacturing industry has effectively gone.

Well yes, absolutely.

I mean there was a lot of engineering which has boiled down to a small operation now. What used to be called Halls Engineering and a little bit left at Rolls Royce but it's tiny.

Tiny.

Compared with what it was.

So you think the demographics have changed a lot. I mean it comes over as very sort of bijou if you know what I mean.

Yes. Oh yes, yes. I mean so many commercial premises in the middle have become retirement flats in the last 20 years. It's changed a great deal.

Yes. Absolutely. Yes. But it did have an industrial focus.

I mean, engineering probably employed five or six thousand people.

Oh God, that's enormous, in the area.

Yea.

Isn't it, yea?

I mean Rolls Royce employed, what, three to four thousand something. It's a lot of people.

It is a lot of people isn't it?

And Corset Silhouette was again a very big concern until they were - you know – and expanding through the mid '60s anyway.

So it wasn't just a sleepy rural town.

Oh far from it. Umm. Umm. It was quite an important engineering area as well. Certainly also furniture-making, cabinet-making and so on. I know that might sound a bit sort of strange but all the furniture that was created for the College was made locally by local craftspeople, who had fairly big. Yes. It was a big thing of George's of course. I mean George was a wonderful craftsman.

Oh wonderful craftsman. Beautiful, yea. Some of his stuff is sublime really, isn't it?

Yea, yea.

So yea. That's, well, that's very interesting. I did wonder what it was like then, 'cos you don't get any sense of that now at all.

No. No.

It does seem to be very sort of middle-class, very – almost commuter-belt -ish if that's.

Yea, yea. Well that's; if you'd been anywhere to the north you would need to avoid hitting Harlescott at about half past four because all of Rolls Royce would be pouring out, you know, there was endless congestion you know, which there isn't now.

No, no. Not at all. No. So that's – oh, I'm just trying to think what else I particularly wanted to ask you.

Well I've brought you a list of dramatis personae.

Oh brilliant, excellent. I've obviously heard of Michael Rix

I mean John's quite important there, but I don't know quite how you get at his views.

Yea.

It would be helpful to you I think, just to get the feel of the time to read Anthony Burgess – that post-war period.

OK.

I only know of that because Burgess taught at my secondary school in Banbury. He went to Malaya after that. He never actually taught me very much but I'm interested in *(Oh that's great)* the repercussions because he produced a book more or less set in Banbury which had to be withdrawn because of the portraits of various people at the school, *(Fantastic!)* so I've always been interested in Burgess and just happened to come across that.

Is this the one: 'Little Wilson and Big God'? Yea, Interesting.

Yes, yes. Yea. It's just this very – I mean he's been in the Army, he's done nothing very much and he's looking for something to do and he's, you know, pretty fed-up with it.

I mean Sir George seems to have got into it through Adult, Army Adult Education as well.

Yes, well I think a lot of people did. I don't know – John was in the Army and I suspect he was at that place with Anthony Burgess that had been in the Education Corps as well, but it's a very big influence. I think John was gay, but I don't know.

No. You don't know for sure. Yea.

Except that – I've got the name later – there is a lady called Diane Barr who would be younger than me and was a lot younger than John. I would think has just about retired, possibly a few years back at Birmingham University.

Right.

Now she had a sort of friendship with John. You know, I don't know the details at all. In the period after John moved to become Deputy Director of Extra-Mural Studies.

Yea.

And it would have been in that period that Attingham closed. So, Diane's a very very pleasant, very sharp person.

Oh that'd be good. That'll be really good.

If you can find her.

Yes, yes.

She will be very useful indeed - I think - as long as she's not embarrassed to talk about her, it was obviously a fairly short friendship with the man who was more than old enough to be her father I suspect.

Yea, yea. Oh no, that sounds good. And Bob you've mentioned, Bob Machin

Bob is only important to you for this one incident.

Yea, about the appointment. Yea.

But it's a very critical incident.

No, no it is, it's extremely important.

Michael (inaud) spring he was there.

I didn't realise. Was he Deputy Warden?

He was Deputy Warden for a time. Not very long.

OK. 'Cos somebody mentioned someone who, well several people have mentioned someone who went to France. And I don't know who they can mean.

Who went where?

Who went to France, and I can't think who they mean. I got the feeling it was post Brian Podmore and pre Geoffrey but I can't think who on earth it was.

No, no. There wasn't anyone really between them. It might be Norrie Hearne who was.
So that's it.

Who was Geoffrey's deputy. I don't know what happened to him.

OK, possibly. Yes, I think it's Norrie Hearne, yea.

Yea. Robin was Deputy Director for a while. You can look at these notes.

I will. I'll look him up there.

Tony Parsons is, you know, alas beyond talking to but, you know, is a very important figure.

Yea.

John Tomlinson alas has died and it was John who had been Tony Parsons' deputy, invited him to Chester to become Deputy Director of Education for Chester.

Right, right.

Cheshire.

Martin Wilson.

I've given you the reference to that memoir.

I'll certainly look at that.

Well, yea, I mean that's very important indeed. Albert – I've no idea whether he's still alive or not. He's older than me but not that much older. I mean, I'd have thought he was in his early 80s.

Yea. Yea.

And he used to review northern productions for the Guardian from time to time – you know one, two or three a month or something – but no longer does so. And there is an interview with him but that won't be useful to you. I think it's about the approach to dramatic productions he took up after he'd left Shropshire.

OK.
I couldn't get it when I tried. Tony Adams is linked with Albert.

Oh yea, his name's come up.

And Tony did do one or two courses there but, you know, important for me but less important for Attingham. Colin I don't think will be terribly useful to you because he basically didn't do much there but you can trace that from the programmes.

Yea, yea.

Andrew, who was a colleague I got on very well with, I don't know his current state of health. He had a terrible car accident about ten years ago and – I haven't checked Scenesetters on the internet, but if Scenesetters is still running and active then he's approachable.

Yea.

But he lives now in the depths of Wales somewhere. Peter's still about and would be very well worth talking to.

OK.

What you need to know from Peter is not so much the courses he ran there, which wouldn't have been that many 'cos he was appointed '71 so, you know, it's only a few years.

Yea.

But Peter will certainly have been briefed by the Department about Attingham.

Yea. So, certainly talk to him about that.

Without any doubt whatsoever.

Oh, interesting.

So that is something that would be helpful. Diane I've talked to you about. Howard Layfield was Tony Parsons' successor and didn't stay in Shropshire long but would have been involved - if not in the actual closure, in the run-up to it. And had a letter published in the Guardian just a few weeks back.

Oh really.

From a Newcastle address, and he came from Newcastle.

OK so he might be worth pursuing. Yea. He might give me some insight into why the decision was taken or albeit I guess we know but it's worth finding out more.

Yea. Yea. Brenda was another Education Officer. You know, with those three my mind's a bit fuzzy as to the chronology.

Yea, yea.

But she might have been involved. Robin might have been involved and Robin also was Secretary of the Attingham Park Film Society which continued for some time after the College had closed.

Yea, yea.

So, and Robin's a bright guy.

Worth talking to.

And John Till who, you know, a very nice man but a quite hopeless administrator.

(Both laugh) I'll excise that!

Do record that. Again, I'm not sure of the timing and it may well be that by the time John arrived the College had gone. Norman was also an Adult Education Tutor but I don't know whether he had some physical problem – thyroid or something – but did very little.

Did very little as well. Yes.

And it's not worth bothering with as far as Attingham is concerned. Norrie Hearne, I've just lost track with altogether.

Yea. He was the one I think has gone to France, I think.

Yea. Jim Davies I think still is about. He wouldn't have been involved for the closure because it wasn't his sphere of activity.

But he might know about it

But there's a course there that Jim ran when Geoffrey was Warden, which is useful for the Schools' In-service Education aspects of it.

Philip Barker I've heard of

You know quite a lot there. Sarah Speight has done something on archaeology and adult colleges. There is a Wroxeter edition of the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society which has a memoir in it. I wrote a piece following it, correcting one or two points, but they weren't really about Attingham and I think there the point is: yes, Philip is an enormously important archaeologist. I mean much more so than Graham.

Yea.

Who transforms many aspects of British archaeology but how much that is directly linked to Attingham I don't know. 'Cos Philip left in the September after I'd arrived in the May so I didn't work very much with him in Shropshire. I know what he thought of George's courses and there's this wonderful incident which I repeat there. George had a rather esoteric New Year course.

Oh, I heard about that yea. Twelfth Night course was it? Was it something like that or.

No, no, it was New Year.

Oh it was New Year.

And Philip said, "Well, you know, get Philip Rahtz to come, he's excavated at Glastonbury, you know, all sorts of …They came for very straightforward lectures. Philip's excavation at Glastonbury, Philip Rahtz's excavations at Glastonbury were on a Saxon palace. Nothing to do with the tour or Joseph of Arimathea at all.

No, no, no.

Straightforward lecture on the exceptions of holes, post holes, re-construction of things and at the end well they were excavating a pit and right in the bottom layer they found this, brought up a battered old sports car.

Ha ha. Excellent. Did Sir George take it well?

I don't know. *(SC laughs).*

I think both Philips went off to the pub very quickly.

*(Laughs) I bet they did! I bet that was funny. (Laugh*s) I'd like to have been party to that.

Yes, yes. You've heard of it from elsewhere which I'm glad of because It confirms it, but.

Yes, yes.

And then that was really an afterthought, Tony Vettise he's still about and.

He was the guy with.

He was a lecturer at Shrewsbury School of Art and would have used Attingham quite a lot and, you know, might have some opinions on some of the public art courses.

That would be very helpful actually – all of it – because, obviously, I've done about probably 17 interviews thus far – really mixed bag. So, people like Catriona obviously and Robin his nephew. But I don't want it to be focussed just on Sir George because that's not the point of the collaborative award. It's much more about the College. So I've spoken to, obviously, Geoffrey, several former students spanning different periods which has been really interesting, including someone who was on the first ever course in 1948.

Oh, right.

Which is pretty amazing.

That's good.

Quite diverse in terms of subjects they were drawn to or interested in. Fairly congruent in terms of what people are saying about the types of people who attended the courses. What you're saying seems to confirm a lot of what other people have felt – that it was people who were probably educated already, which is the way that Geoffrey Toms described them.

Yea, for the most part, yea.

Or specialists in their given area who were drawn because it was a specialist subject that they were interested in and they may or may not have been professionals but were certainly, you know, sort of skilled in their area. But what I'm curious given your interest in – you know, the way you described yourself as a young historian, as a neo-Marxist. Did you get any sense that Sir George had any kind of political interest whatsoever?

Not really.

No.

Not really.

Because that I find fascinating – you know his father; I don't know if you know about his family at all, Sir Charles.

Well yes, yea.

Because he was a radical socialist and I mean really seriously a radical socialist to the point where he no longer believed in aristocratic ownership of property and gave Wallington to the Trust.

Gave Wallington to the National Trust, yea.

Very early on. Very early on. I think it was the first, or at least one of the very earliest.

Yea, you've read David Cannadine on.

No.

Well David Cannadine on George Macauley Trevelyan.

Oh GM Trevelyan. No I've not yet.

Is good. I think I quote him in the DNB article anyway.

Yea, you do make reference to him, I'm sure. That's where I've seen it. I must check that out. Certainly the family were very interesting and I can afford probably - I guess we can't get away from – probably want to do a chapter on the family, because the family were sort of philosophical and social.

Yea, yea. Now someone else you might – there are various people I thought might be worth contacting, although their acquaintance would have been passing. Now Brian Harrison, Sir Brian Harrison as now, editor of DNB amongst other things, was working with me on Temperance Movement in the '60s and came and taught on a course – (rustling of papers) this might tell us what else was going on – oh I was going to photocopy that. But Brian was the historian of the Temperance Movement and was very interested in Sir Walter who was, I think, George's grandfather was it?

OK. I've not come across him. I thought his grandfather was also called Charles, but I need to check that. I will – Sir Walter.

Anyway, we felt George really clammed up, 'cos I mean Brian's a very pleasant, well-mannered person and, you know, Brian said, "I'm interested in your ancestor".

And Brian, what Brian...?

It would be interesting to get Brian's.

Did George seem uncomfortable with that then?

He seemed very uncomfortable indeed.

Really?

We were puzzled

Oh, indeed. That's interesting. Well his father, certainly his relationship with his father was ambivalent I think. But I was curious because there's this kind of strong political thread throughout most of his forebears.

Yes.

They were either Liberal politicians. Ultimately his father was a Labour politician and expelled from the Labour party at least at one point for his radical belief and then on the education board which you probably know. So he's very interesting. And then everything he seems to come into seems to be almost de-politicised. I don't know if that's true.

Yea. Well I never remember hearing him express a political opinion at all.

No, no.

We had suspicions about Ruth Bell and Bernard Nesfield-Cookson about sort of far right tendencies.

Really?

But they didn't, you know, they were suspicions.

Really. Rather than. Yea.

They didn't march up and down.

With jackboots.

With jackboots and waving St George's flag or anything.

(Laughs) That's so interesting though.

But, you know, don't take that as more than just a suspicion.

No, no, of course not, no. As speculation, yea yea. No, I mean I'm very interested in that. I don't get any sense – most people said he was fantastically urbane and friendly. He never used his aristocratic title to put them down or talk down to them.

Oh no. Good gracious, no.

He was a genuinely nice man.

Oh yes, yes.

Yea. I'm still drawn back to your comments about feeling he was vulnerable in some way.

Well I'm sure he was.

Do you think it was connected with his arthritis or anything to do with that, or?

Well, oh it was before that, before that.

Before that, yea.

Yes. Oh yes, yes, yes.

So what made you see that, as it were?

Well, you know, just the way Ruth Bell and what little I saw of Bernard Nesfield-Cookson with him, you know, seemed to.

Control him.

Yes, yea. But you know again that's not much more than suspicion.

Certainly other people have said the same though.

I couldn't give hard evidence.

No no, other people have said similar on basic points, yea.

On that. And what colleagues told me when I moved there. There was quite a change in personnel in Shropshire Adult Education at the time, but sort of Albert thought that. John Golby who went on to work for the Open University, who's now dead. But that was certainly his view.

Impression.

'Cos in fact I got to know John quite well, and he came back to speak on one or two courses for me, so was seeing Attingham again after.

After he'd gone.

The time when he'd worked there.

And he felt the same way as well.

Yea.

Yea.

But I think – you know, it certainly would be worth just having a; I don't know whether I've got Brian's telephone number but.

I will certainly look into these areas. I've met Bryan Podmore by the way.

Oh yes, you said.

Yea, yea. I met him. That was very helpful.

Yes, it would be. I mean, I saw Brian in Shropshire before I left. Umm, I don't have a number but I do have an email.

Thank you. I'll try that. So how come you ended up writing the article for the DNB, Barrie?

Well I knew Bryan, you see.

Yea, yea. So that was the connection.

Yea. 'Cos George Trevelyan died in, what, '97 was it?

'96. Yea.

So it was a bit of a rush.

Yea.

A rushed thing.

It was a very good entry. It was so enlightening.

With Brian. But, you see Brian, Colin Matthew was editing DNB and then died suddenly at, well less than 60 I think, and Brian was drafted in to take it over. And I mean Brian is the most organised historian I have ever known. And, you know, I know people who were at St John's when – 'cos we were contemporaries and I know people who were at St John's with him. Everything was meticulously organised when he was an undergraduate.

Yea, yea.

The plan to get his First through an appeal – special subject and things was, you know.

Was already in place.

And I mean he's very very well organised so was a good person to bring in.

Yea.

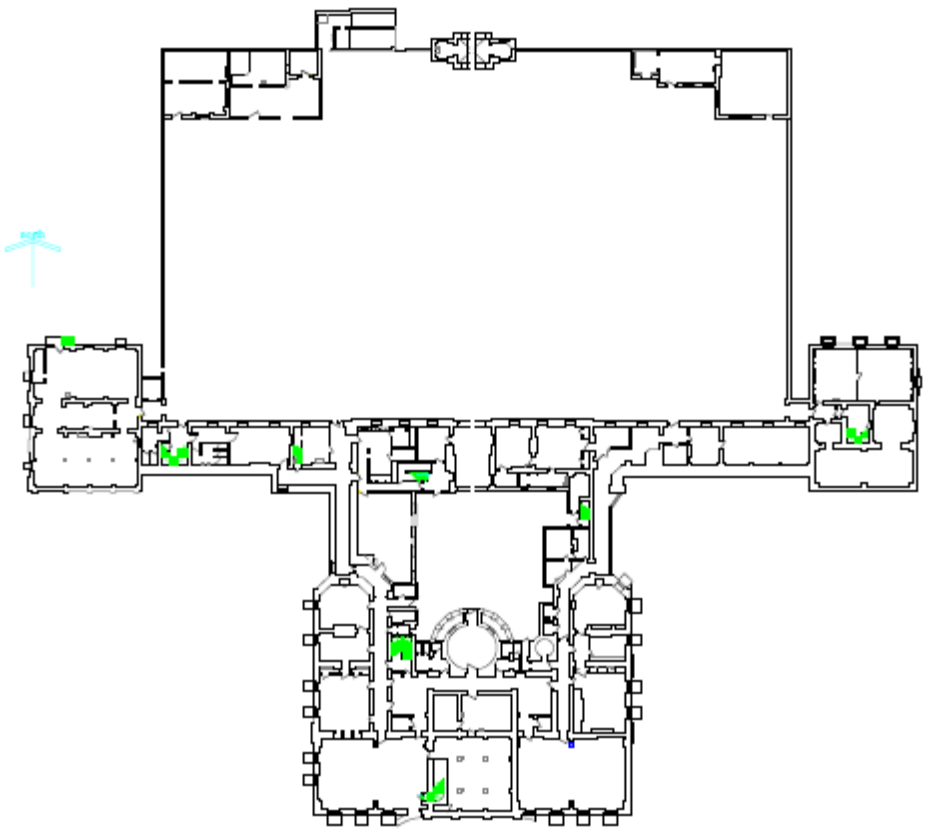
And he just; we got in touch really quite out of the blue and said he knew that I knew Sir George and they could supply the obituaries out of the Times and Guardian and so on and, you know, some …..

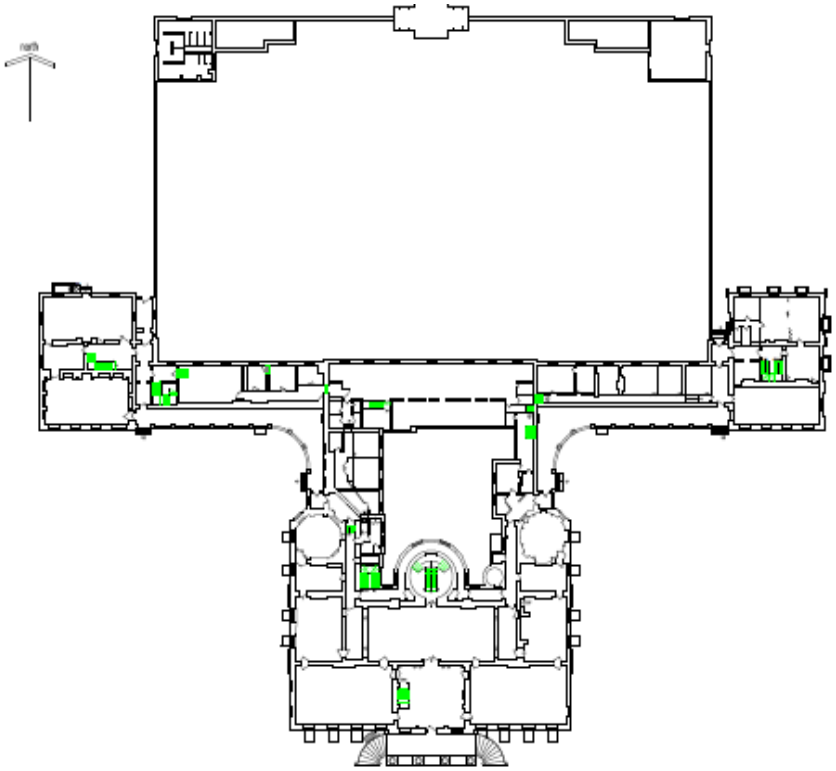
End of track one.

Appendix Eight

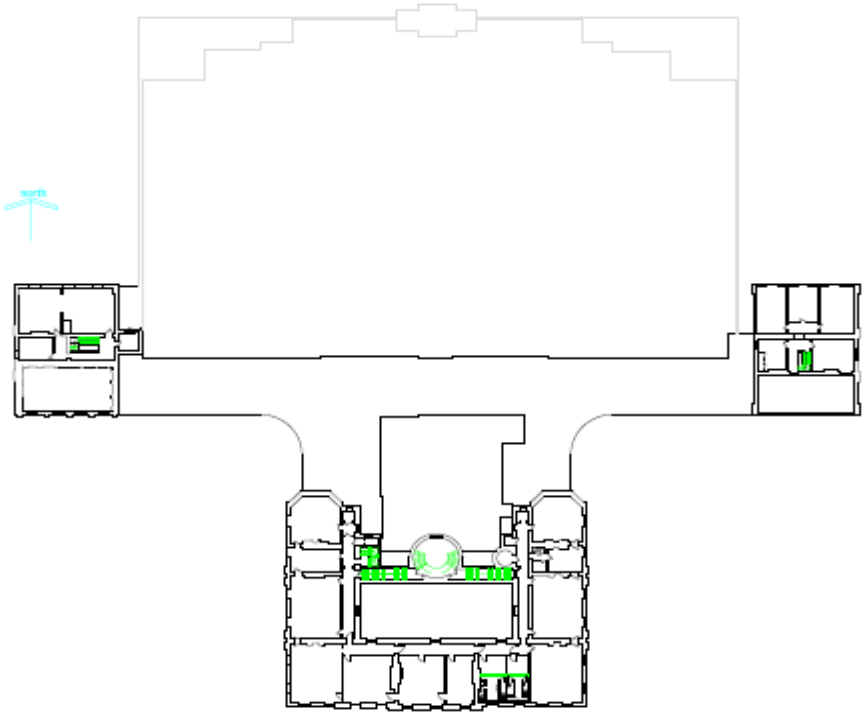
Maps of the House:

Ground floor of the house



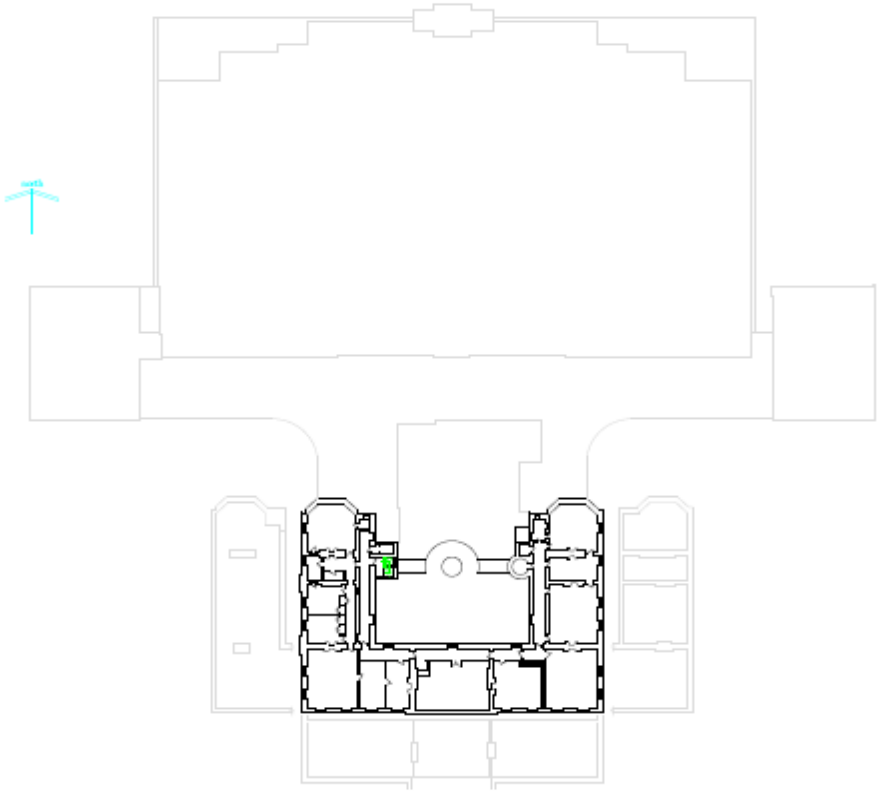


Lower Ground Floor



First Floor

Second Floor



Bibliography

ADRIAANSE, K., BARNES, S. and HUGHES, D. (2016) *Adult Education—Too important to be left to chance.* Research Report for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Adult Education (APPG) – Inquiry into Adult Education, Warwick Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick.

ADRIAANSEN, R-J. (2015) *The Rhythm of Eternity—The German Youth Movement and the Experience of the Past*, *1900-1933***.** New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

AHIER, J., BECK, J. and MOORE, R. (2003) *Graduate Citizens*: *Issues of Citizenship and Higher Education*. London: Routledge Falmer.

ALLEN, A. (2012) *Using Foucault in Education Research*. British Educational Research Association on-line resource. <https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Using-Foucault-in-education-research.pdf> (Accessed 8 November 2014).

ANNAN, N. (1955) *The Intellectual Aristocracy*. In *The Dons: Mentors, Eccentrics, and Geniuses*, (1999). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 304–41.

ARMSTRONG, K. (Ed.) (2008) *Awakening Consciousness – Selected Lectures of Sir George Trevelyan*. Oxford: Godstow Press.

ARNOLD, M. (1869) *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. Oxford: Project Gutenberg.

ARNOLD, M. (1888) *The Study Of Poetry.* In *Essays In Criticism, Second Series*. London, New York: Macmillan and Co.

ASHBY, E., *et al.* (1991) *The Ashby Report (1954) Reprinted with Foreword and Introductory Essays by Lord Ashby, Lord Briggs, and Michael D. Stephens*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham, Department of Adult Education.

BAILEY, A. (1927) *Modern Esoteric Movements*. In *The Beacon*, October 1927. <https://www.lucistrust.org/books/the_beacon_magazine/reprinted_from_the_beacon/modern_esoteric_movements> (Accessed 17 April 2017).

BAILEY, M. (2009) *New Ventures in Adult Education in Early Twentieth-Century Britain: Pastoral Government and the Pedagogical State*. C.R.E.S.C. Working Paper, January 2009.

BAUWENS, M. *(2013) Is There Any Value in New Age Thinking?* openDemocracy.net. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/michel-bauwens/is-there-any-value-in-new-age-thinking> (Posted 7 October 2013, accessed on 1 October 2014).

BLAVATSKY, H. (1888/2009) *The Secret Doctrine, the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy.* California: Jeremy P. Tarcher.

BLOM, P. (2010) *The Vertigo Years: Europe, 1900-1914*, New York: Basic Books.

BOCHNER, A. (1997) *It's about time: narrative and the divided self*. In *Qualitative Inquiry,* 3 (4), pp. 418-438.

BOCHNER, A. (2001) *Narrative's virtues*. In *Qualitative Inquiry,* 7(2), pp. 131-157.

BOHM, D. (1980) *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. London*:* Routledge and Kegan Paul.

BORISH, S. M. (1991) *The Land of the Living: The Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark's Non-Violent Path to Modernization*. Nevada City: Blue Dolphin.

BORLAND, K. (1998) *'That's not what I said': interpretative conflict in oral narrative research*. In PERKS, R. and THOMSON, A. (eds.) *The Oral History Reader*. 2nd ed., New York: Routledge, pp. 310-321.

BOURDIEU, P. (1984) *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste.* London: Routledge.

BOURDIEU, P. (1986) *The forms of capital*. In J. RICHARDSON (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood, pp. 241-258.

BOURDIEU, P. (1994) *Sociology in Question*. London: Sage Publications.

BOURDIEU. P. and EAGLETON, T. (1992) *Doxa and Common Life***,** in *New Left Review* I/191, January-February, pp. 111-121.

BRADLEY, D. (1992) *Understanding Rock 'n' Roll*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

BRENDON, P. (2012) *Eminent Elizabethans: Rupert Murdoch, Prince Charles, Margaret Thatcher and Mick Jagger*. London: Random House U.K.

BRERETON, H.L. (1950) *Gordonstoun*. Aberdeen: The University Press.

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION (1924)*The Guildhouse : a Co-Operative Centre for Adult Education. Being a Report Prepared by a Committee of Inquiry Appointed by the British Institute of Adult Education with a Foreword by Lord Eustace Percy*. London: British Institute of Adult Education.

BULWER-LYTTON, E. (1833) *England and the English*. London: Richard Bentley.

CANNADINE, D. (2002) *In Churchill's Shadow: Confronting the Past in Modern Britain*. London: Penguin Books.

CANNADINE, D. (1992) *G.M. Trevelyan, A life in History*. London: Penguin Books.

CARLYLE, T. (1888) *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. New York: Fredrick A. Stokes and Brother.

CARROLL, L. (1872) *Through the Looking-Glass.* Raleigh, NC: Hayes Barton Press.

CARTER, A. (1992) *Expletives Deleted: Selected Writings*. London: Chatto and Windus.

CAULDWELL, C. (1937/1977) *Illusion and Reality*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

CLARK, G. (2016)"What Were the British Earnings and Prices Then? (New Series) Measuring Worth, URL: <http://www.measuringworth.com/ukearncpi/ > (Accessed 11 December 2016).

COHEN, L., MANION, L., and MORRISON, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th Edition. London: Routledge.

COLE, G. D. H. (1961) *A History of Socialist Thought: Volume V, Socialism and Fascism, 1931-1939*. London: Macmillan and Co.

CONFERENCE OF WARDENS OF SHORT TERM COLLEGES, Reported in *Adult Education* Vol XXXII No. 3, Winter 1959.

CONFORD, P. (2001) *The Origins of the Organic Movement*, Edinburgh: Floris Books.

CONFORD, P. (2005) *Organic society: agriculture and radical politics in the career of Gerard Wallop, ninth Earl of Portsmouth (1898-1984)*. *Agricultural History Review,* 53, I, pp.78-96.

CORBIN, J. AND STRAUSS, A. (eds.) (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory.* London: Sage Publications.

CRAWFORD, M. *As A-level results come out, it's time to look again at our education system.* <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/mark-crawford/as-level-results-come-out-its-time-to-reappraise-our-education-system> (Accessed 19 August 2016).

CRUMP, T. (2010) *A Brief History of How the Industrial Revolution Changed the World*. London: Constable and Robinson.

DENZIN, N. and LINCOLN, Y. (eds.) (2003) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. 2nd Ed., London: Sage Publications.

DENZIN, N. AND LINCOLN, Y. (2005)*The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1973) *Adult Education—A Plan for Development*. London: H.M.S.O.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (2014), *Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools*—Departmental advice for maintained schools, November 2014, Crown copyright.

DESJARDINS, R. and RUBENSON, K. (2009) *The Impact of Welfare State regimes on Barriers to Participation in Adult Education – A Bounded Agency Model*. In *Adult Education Quarterly*, Volume 59, Number 3, January 2009.

DEWEY, J. (1916/2004) *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. Mineola: Dover Publications Inc.

DREWS, W. (1995) *British Short-term Residential Colleges for Adult Education, 1945-1995*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ulster.

DURANT, A. (2006) *Raymond Williams's* Keywords: *investigating meanings 'offered, felt for, tested, confirmed, asserted, qualified, changed*.' in *Critical Quarterly*, Volume 48, Issue 4, Winter 2006, pp. 1–26.

EDWARDS, M. (2014), *Civil Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

EGAN, G., 2011, *Gaia and the great chain of being*. In Bruckner, L. and Brayton, D. (eds.) *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

ELLIOTT, J. (2005) *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* London: Sage Publications.

ENGELS, F. (1892 [English Edition]/2012), *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. Memphis: General Books LLC.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION/EACEA/EURYDICE, 2015, *Adult Education and Training in Europe: Widening Access to Learning Opportunities*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

EVANS, G.E. (1956) *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay.* London: Faber and Faber.

EVANS, G.E. (1970) *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of the Oral Tradition*. London: Faber and Faber.

EVANS, G.E (1983/1985) *The Strength of the Hills: an Autobiography*. London: Faber and Faber.

EVANS, K. (2007) Concepts of bounded agency in education, work, and the personal lives of young adults. In *International Journal of Psychology*, 42 (2), pp. 85-93.

EVANS, K., SCHOON, I., and WEALE, M. (2013) *Can Lifelong Learning Reshape Life Chances?* In *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61:1, pp. 25-47.

EVANS, N. (2003) *Making Sense of Lifelong Learning.* London: Routledge.

FARRER, F. (2000) *Sir George Trevelyan and the New Spiritual Awakening*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

FIELD, J. (2005) *Social Capital and Lifelong Learning*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

FIELD, J. (2006) *Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Order.* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

FIELD, J. (2009) *Able Bodies: Work camps and the training of the unemployed in Britain before 1939*. In *The Significance of the Historical Perspective in Adult Education Research*. University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, 6 July 2009.

FIELD, J. (2013) *Working Men's Bodies: Work Camps in Britain, 1880–1940.* Manchester: University Press.

FIELDHOUSE, R., *et al*. (1996) *A History of Modern British Adult Education.* Leicester: N.I.A.C.E.

FISCHER, J.M.O. (Ed.) (1998) *The Philosopher's Stone – Diaries of Lessons with F. Matthias Alexander*. London: Mouritz.

FINLAYSON, J.G. (2005) *Habermas: A Very Short Introduction.* New York: Oxford University Press.

FRAS, J, *et al.* (2009) *Imponderabilia: speaking and listening: the methodologies of oral history*. 1(1). <http://imponderabilia.socanth.cam.ac.uk/articles/article.php?articleid=26> (Accessed 8 November 2014).

FREIRE, P. (1998) *Teachers as Cultural Workers—Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*. Translated by Donoldo Macedo, Dale Koike, and Alexandre Oliveira. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

FREIRE, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

GILL, E. (2011) *Lady Eve Balfour and the British organic food and farming movement*, Ph.D. Thesis, Aberystwyth University.

GARSIDE, D., (1969) *Short-term Residential Colleges: their origins and value.* in *Studies in Adult Education*, Vol. 1, No.1.

GIROUARD, M. (1981/1985) *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, Yale: Yale University Press.

GLASS, S.T (1966) *The Responsible Society - The Ideas of Guild Socialism*. London: Longmans Green and Co.

GOLDMAN, L. (2000) *Intellectuals and the English Working Class 1870-1945: the Case of Adult Education*. In *History of Education*, 29:4, 281-300; published online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00467600050044662> (accessed 10 November 2010).

GOODSON, I. *Narrative Theory*. <http://www.ivorgoodson.com/narrative-theory> (Accessed 17 February 2016).

GOODSON, I. and SIKES, P. (2001) *Life History in Educational Settings: Learning from Lives.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

GOODSON, I. (2006) *The Rise of the Life Narrative*. In *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Fall 2006.

GRAYSON, J. (2016) Developing the Politics of the Trade Union Movement: Popular Workers' Education in South Yorkshire, UK, 1955 to 1985. In *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 90, Fall 2016, pp. 111–132.

GREAT BRITAIN, MINISTRY OF RECONSTRUCTION, ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE. (1980) *The 1919 Report : The Final and Interim Reports of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, 1918-1919, Reprinted with Introductory Essays by Harold Wiltshire, John Taylor, Bernard Jennings.* Nottingham : Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham. Report originally published London: H.M.S.O., 1919.

GREEN, E. (1953) *Adult Education: Why this Apathy?* London: Unwin Brothers.

HABERMAS, J. (1998) *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

HALL, S. (1993) Culture, Community, Nation, *Cultural Studies,* 7:3, 349-363. Routledge: London.

HALL, S. (1958) In the No Man's Land. In *Universities and Left Review*, Winter 1958, Issue 3.

HARDY, T. (1895/1998) *Jude the Obscure*. London: Penguin Classics.

HARRIS-WORTHINGTON, P. (1987) *Back to the Future: A Study of Short-term Adult Residential Education.* Abergavenny: Hill Residential College.

HARRISON, J.F.C. (1961) *Learning and Living 1790–1960: A Study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement*. London: Routledge.

HELLER, A. (1979) *A Theory of Feelings*. Assen: Van Gorcum, p.183, quoted in WRIGHT, P. (1985/2009) *On Living in an Old Country – the National Past in Contemporary Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.13.

HESSE-BIBER, S. and LEAVY, P. (2006) *The Practice of Qualitative Research.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

HEWISON, R. (1987) *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline.* London: Methuen Publishing Ltd.

H.M. GOVERNMENT (1943) *National Conference of Women Called by H.M. Government: Report of Proceedings: 28th September, Royal Albert Hall, London*. London: H.M.S.O.

HOGGART, R. (1989) Introduction. In ORWELL, G. (1937) *The Road to Wigan Pier.* London: Penguin Classics pp vii-xi.

HOLFORD, J. (1995) *Britain's forgotten minister of adult education: Arthur Creech Jones and a socialist strategy for development and democracy in Africa.* In *Proceedings of the 36th Annual Adult Education Research Conference.* Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta, pp. 171-176.

HOLFORD, J. (2016) *The misuses of sustainability: Adult education, citizenship and the dead hand of neoliberalism*. in *International Review of Education*, October 2016, Volume 62, Issue 5, pp. 541–561

HOLMWOOD, J. (Ed.) (2011) *A Manifesto for the Public University*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

HOLMWOOD, J. (2007) Sociology as Public Discourse and Professional Practice: A Critique of Michael Burawoy, *Sociological Theory*, Vol 25, Issue 1, pp. 46 - 66

HOUSDEN, P. (2015) *So the New Could be Born… The Passing of a County Grammar School*. Edinburgh: APS Group.

HOWE, E. G. (1934) *Morality and Reality*. London: Gerald Howe Ltd.

HOWKINS, A (2002) From Diggers to Dongas: the Land in British Radicalism, 1649-2000, *History Workshop Journal*, Volume 54, Issue 1, Autumn 2002.

HUNTER, G. (1953) *Residential Colleges: Some New Developments in British Adult Education*. Pasadena: The Fund for Adult Education.

HUTCHINS, R. M. (1952) *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education.* Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.

JAMES, C. (1969) *F.R. Leavis in America.* <http://www.clivejames.com/books/metcrit/leavis> (Accessed 17 August 2016).

JEFFS, T. and SMITH, M. (1998) *Henry Morris, village colleges and community schools*. in Infed: <http://infed.org/mobi/henry-morris-village-colleges-and-community-schools> (Accessed 10 September 2016).

JONES, R. (2004) *Blended voices: creating narratives from oral history interviews*. in *Oral History Review*, 31 (1), pp. 23-42.

JONES, W. (1995) *Holding up the mirror: reflections of the education of adults through the pages of* Adult Education *1950-1970*. in S.C.U.T.R.E.A., *Celebrating Adult Education: Conference Proceedings*, Southampton: University of Southampton, pp. 102-107.

KELLY, T. (1992) *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

KEMP, D. (2004) *New Age: A Guide—Alternative Spiritualities from Aquarian Conspiracies to Next Age*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

KERRIDGE, R. *School for Scandal: Roy Kerridge on the last days of Dartington Hall*. *The Spectator*, 24 July 1987, Page 20.

KISCH, R. (1985) *The Days of the Good Soldiers: Communists in the Armed Forces in the Second World War.* London: Journeyman Press.

LAWLER, S. (2008) *Identity – Sociological Perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

LEAVIS, F. R. (1948) *The Great Tradition.* London: Chatto and Windus.

LEAVIS, F.R. (1972) *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope*. London: Chatto and Windus.

LEES-MILNE, J. and BLOCH, M. (2007) *Diaries, 1942-1954*—Abridged and Introduced by Michael Bloch. London: John Murray Publishers.

LIVINGSTONE, R. (1941) *The Future in Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

LIVINGSTONE, R. (1943) *Education for a World Adrift.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

LOGAN, P.M. *On Culture: Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy, 1869*, BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History, Ed. Dino Franco Felluga, Extension of Romanticism

and Victorianism on the Net . < http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=peter-logan-on-culture-matthew-arnolds-culture-and-anarchy-1869 > (Accessed 25 August 2016).

LOVEJOY, A. O. (1936/1976) *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. London: Harvard University Press.

LUMMIS, T. (1998) *Structure and validity in oral evidence.* in PERKS, R. and THOMSON, A. (2006) *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge.

McCULLOCH, G., and WOODIN, T. (2010) *Learning and Liberal Education: The Case of the Simon Family, 1912-1939*. in *Oxford Review of Education,* 36 (2), pp. 187-202.

MACFARLANE, B. (2010) The Virtuous Researcher*, Commentary—The Chronicle of Higher Education.* <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Virtuous-Researcher/64931/ > (Accessed 12 September 2016).

McILROY, J. and WESTWOOD, S. (eds.) (1993) *Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education.* Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

MACKENZIE, S.P. (1992) *Politics and Military Morale: Current Affairs and Citizenship Education in the British Army, 1914-1950*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

McLEAN, M. (2006) *Pedagogy and the University – Critical Theory and Practice*. London: Continuum.

McNEILIE, A. (ed.) (1988) *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Vol. III, 1919-24*. London: The Hogarth Press.

MERRILL, B. and WEST, L. (2009) *Using Biographical Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage Publications.

MESCLE, C.R, (2009), *Process-Relational Philosophy: An Introduction to Alfred North Whitehead*. West Conshohocken: Templeton Foundation Press.

MEZIROW, J. (1997) *Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice.* in *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 74, Summer 1997. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

MILL, J. S. (1859) *On Liberty*, reprinted in *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill,* Ed. Edwin A. Burtt. New York: Random House.

MILL, J. S. (1869) *The Subjection of Women*, reprinted in *On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women* (1912). London: World's Classics.

MILLER, A. (1949) *Tragedy and the Common Man.* The New York Times on the Web. <https://www.nytimes.com/books/00/11/12/specials/miller-common.html> (Accessed 15 February 2016).

MILNE, J.L. (published 2007) Ed. M. Bloch, *Diaries, 1942-1954*, London: John Murray.

MINDFUL NATION UK, Report by the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (MAPPG), October 2015, The Mindfulness Initiative.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1947) *Further Education: The Scope and Opportunities under the Education Act*. Pamphlet number 8. London: H.M.S.O.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, Record of the Inspectorate, ED 149/135/2 1956-1960 Attingham Park, Shropshire Adult College, The National Archives, Kew.

MOORE-COLYER, R.J. (2001) *Rolf Gardiner, English patriot and the Council for the Church and Countryside*. in *The Agricultural History Review*, 49 (2), January 2001.

MORGAN, W. J (1988) (ed.) *Politics and Consensus in Modern Britain*: *Lectures in memory of Hugh Gaitskell*. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press.

MORRIS, A. J. A. (1977) *C. P. Trevelyan, 1870–1958: Portrait of a Radical*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press

MORRIS, H. (1925) *The Village College. Being a Memorandum on the Provision of Educations and Social Facilities for the Countryside, with Special Reference to Cambridgeshire.* (Section XIV).

NESFIELD-COOKSON, R. (No date.)*Memories of Sir George Trevelyan—a tribute to a knight from his squire.*<http://www.sirgeorgetrevelyan.org.uk/mem-ruthnescook.html> (Accessed 22 November 2014.)

NESFIELD-COOKSON, R. (2000) History of Shropshire Adult College for National Trust at Attingham, 17 February 2000. in Attingham College Archive.

NEWBOLT, H. (1921) *The Teaching of English in England*. London: H.M.S.O.

NEWMAN, M. (2006) *Throwing out the balance with the bathwater*. in *the encyclopaedia of informal education*, <www.infed.org/> (Accessed 5 May 2015).

NEWMAN, M. (1979) *The Poor Cousin—a Study of Adult Education.* London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

NUSSBAUM, M. (1997) *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

OFFICE FOR FAIR ACCESS (May 2016), *Outcomes of access agreement monitoring for 2014-15.*OFFA.

ORGILL, R. (2014) The Wrekin Trust and the SAEC, self-published pamphlet.

PAINE, T. (1791/1969) *The Rights of Man* . Harmondsworth: Penguin.

PANAANEN, V.N. (ed.) (2000) *Raymond Williams (1921—1988): cultural production and the labor process*. in *British Marxist Criticism*. London: Routledge, pp. 189—197.

PERKS, R. (Updated 2009) *British Library,* on the Oral History website: <www.ohs.org.uk/advice/getting-started/ > (Accessed 6 November 2014).

RABINOW, P. (ed.) (1986) *The Foucault Reader*. London: Penguin.

RAGGED UNIVERSITY, 1935: Report of Address by Lord Lothian, Founder of Newbattle Abbey College. <https://www.raggeduniversity.co.uk/2014/10/25/1935-edinburgh-settlement-archive-report-of-address-by-lord-lothian-founder-of-newbattle-abbey-college/#more-13504> (Accessed 29 January 2017)

REE, H. (1984) *The Henry Morris Collection.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

RIESSMAN, C. (2008) *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. London: Sage Publications.

RITCHIE, D. (2003) *Doing Oral History: a Practical Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ROBERTS, S.K. (ed.) (2003) *A Ministry of Enthusiasm: Centenary Essays on the Workers' Educational Association*. London: Pluto Press.

ROSE, J. (2001) *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes.* Yale University Press.

ROTHSTEIN, A. (1969) *British Foreign Policy and its Critics*. Lawrence and Wishart, London.

RUBIN, B. (2010) *The Rise and Fall of British Fascism: Sir Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists*. in *intersections* 11, no. 2: 323-380.

RUSSELL et al (1973) *Adult Education: A Plan for Development Report* by a Committee of Inquiry appointed by the Secretary of Staff for Education and Science under the Chairmanship of Sir Lionel Russell CBE. London: HMSO.

RUSTIN, M. (2016) *The Neoliberal University and its Alternatives*. in *Soundings - A Journal of Politics and Culture*, Issue 63, *Spaces of Resistance*, Summer 2016. Dagenham: Lawrence and Wishart Independent Radical Publishing.

RYLEY, P. (2002) *From extra-mural to lifelong learning: U.K. universities and the new lifelong learning agenda. Paper presented to the Athens Institute for Education and Research 4th International Conference, May 2002*. <www.academia.edu/639392/From_Extra-Mural_to_Lifelong_Learning_UK_Universities_and_the_New_Lifelong_learning_Agenda> (Accessed 8 January 2015.)

SALOP COUNTY COUNCIL (1965) *Education in Shropshire, 1945–65*. Salop County Council.

SANGSTER, J. (1994*) Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history*. in *Women's History Review*, 3:1, 5-28, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09612029400200046> (Uploaded 20 December 2006; accessed 13 January 2015).

SAMUEL, R. (1994:2012) *Theatres of Memory – Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*. London: Verso.

SAMUEL, R. (1986) *A Family at War*. in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 24 October 1986.

SAMSON, A. (1992) *F. R. Leavis (Modern Cultural Theorists)*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

SAVAGE, M. (2007) *Changing Social Class Identities in Post-War Britain: Perspectives from Mass-Observation*. in *Sociological Research Online* 12(3)6. <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/3/6.html> (Accessed 12 May 2016).

SAVAGE, M. (2016) *Social Class in the 21st Century*. London: Pelican.

SEAMAN, J. (2016) *Is Group Therapy Democratic? Enduring Consequences of Outward Bound's alignment with the Human Potential Movement. A Response to "How to Be Nice and Get What You Want: Structural Referents of 'Self' and 'Other' in Experiential Education as (Un) Democratic Practice."* in *Democracy and Education*, 24 (2), Article 13.

SEIFERT, R. and SIBLEY, T. (2012) *Revolutionary Communist at Work - A Political Biography of Bert Ramelson.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

SHOPES, L. (2002) *Oral history and the study of communities: problems, paradoxes and possibilities*. in PERKS, R. and THOMSON, A. (eds.) (2006) *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge.

SHOPES, L. (No date) *What is oral history?* From the *Making Sense of Evidence* series on *History Matters: The U.S. Survey on the Web.* <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/oral.pdf> (Accessed 13 January 2015).

SIVARASKA, S. *(1992) Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.*

SLIWKA, A. (2008) The contribution of alternative education. In OECD, *Innovating to learn—learning to innovate,* Paris: OECD/CERI, pp. 93-112.

SMITH, G. (No date) *The making of oral history*. In *Making History: The Changing Face of the Profession in Britain*, Sections 1- 2. Available on line at: <http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/oral_history.html#others> (Accessed 13 January 2015).

SMITH, G. (2010) *Historical Insights: Focus on Research. Oral History*.Published by the Higher Education Academy in conjunction with the Institute of Historical Research, University of Warwick.

SMITH, Mark K. (2008) *Octavia Hill: housing, space and social reform*. In *the encyclopaedia of informal education*. <www.infed.org/thinkers/octavia_hill.html> (Accessed 12/9/16).

SPANGLER, D. (1971) *Revelation: The Birth of a New Age*. Forres: Findhorn Foundation.

SPEIGHT, S. (2003) *Residential Archaeology and Local History in British University Adult Education c. 1940—1980*. In UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education,* 9(2), pp. 149-166.

STAMPER, A. (1998) *Rooms off the Corridor— Education in the W.I. and 50 years of Denman College.* London: W.I. Books.

STAUDENMAIER, P. (2010) *Between Occultism and Fascism: Anthroposophy and the Politics of Race and Nation in Germany and Italy, 1900-1945,* Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, August 2010.

STAUDENMAIER, P. (2008) *Race and Redemption: Racial and Ethnic Evolution in Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy*. In *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, Vol. 11 No. 3, February 2008, pp. 4-36.

STEELE, T. (1997) *The Emergence of Cultural Studies: Cultural Politics, Adult Education and the English Question*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

STEINER, R. (1904/1999) *First Steps in Inner Development,* Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

STEINER, R. (1904/1987) *Cosmic Memory: The Story of Atlantis, Lemuria, and the Division of the Sexes*. Sterling, USA: Steiner Books.

STONE, D. (2002) *Breeding Superman, Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain (Studies in Social and Political Thought)*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

STONE, D. (2003) *The English Mistery, the B.U.F., and the Dilemmas of British fascism.* In *The Journal of Modern History,* Volume 75, Number 2, June 2003, pp. 336-358.

STONE, D. (2013) *The Holocaust, Fascism and Memory – Essays in the History of Ideas*. Chapter Seven - Rolf Gardiner: An Honorary Nazi? pp. 96-110 and Chapter Eight - Rural Revivalism and the Radical Right in France and Britain between the Wars pp.110-123. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

STRINGER, W. (2015) *Much to lose by Revolution: Nothing to Dread from Reform: Education Reform as a Means of Class Alliance in Victorian England*. In *O.U. Historical Journal*, Issue 4, Spring 2015. Department of History, University of Oklahoma.

SWARTZ, M. (1971) *Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

TATTON, D. (1987) *The Tension between Political Commitment and Academic Neutrality in the W.E.A.* PhD thesis: The Open University.

TATTON, D. (2014) *Raymond Williams and 'The emerging landscape of thought and practice.* openDemocracy <www.opendemocracy.net/participation-now/derek-tatton/raymond-williams-and-emerging-landscape-of-thought-and-practice> (Updated 10 March 2014; accessed 8 January 2015).

TAWNEY, R.H. (1931) *Equality*. London: Allen and Unwin.

TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, P. (1969/1962) *Human Energy*, translated by J. M. Cohen, London: Collins.

THOMPSON, E.P. (1963/2013) *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Penguin Classics.

THOMPSON, P. (1978/2000) *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

THOMLINSON, N**.** Race and discomposure in oral histories with white feminist activists, *Oral History* Vol. 42, No. 1, Institutions, (Spring 2014), pp. 84-94

TODD, N. (1995*) In Excited Times: The People against the Black-shirts.* Tyne and Wear: Bewick Press.

TOYNBEE, A. and JOWETT, B. (1884) *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England: Popular Addresses, Notes and Other Fragments*. London: Rivingtons.

TREVELYAN, G. (n.d, early 1950s) *Adult Education and the Living Idea*, self-published pamphlet.

TREVELYAN, G. (1964) *Death and Becoming*, self-published pamphlet.

TREVELYAN, G. (January 1968) *Outer-World –Inner-World*, self-published pamphlet.

TREVELYAN, G. (1977/2012) *A Vision of the Aquarian Age – The Emerging Spiritual World View.* Hove: White Crow Books.

TREVELYAN, G. (1980) *Magic Casements: The Use of Poetry in the Expanding of Consciousness.* London: Couverture.

TREVELYAN, G. (1991) *Exploration into God.* Nevada City: Gateway Books.

TREVELYAN, G.M. (1973/1944) *English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries, Chaucer to Queen Victoria*. London: Book Club Associates for Longman.

TREVELYAN, K. (1962) *Fool in Love.* London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.

TREVELYAN, L. (2012) *A Very British Family: The Trevelyans and their World.* London: I.B. Tauris.

TREVELYAN, R. (2007) *The Golden Oriole—a 200-Year History of an English Family in India*. Minnesota: The Long Riders' Guild Press.

TRINDER, B. (2004) *Trevelyan, Sir George Lowthian, fourth baronet (1906–1996)*. In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

TRINDER, B. (2015) *Shrewsbury in the Twentieth Century*. In The *Victoria History of the Counties of England – a History of Shropshire, Vol.VI, Part 1,* pp. 277-306.

TZANAKIS, M. (2011) *Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Thesis and the Role of Cultural Capital in Educational Attainment: A Critical Review of Key Empirical Studies*. In *Educate: The Journal of Doctoral Research in Education*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2011, pp. 76-90.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD (1908) *Oxford and Working-class Education: being the report of a Joint Committee of the University and Working-class Representatives on the Relation of the University to the Higher Education of Workpeople*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

VOLTAIRE (1764) *Philosophical Dictionary*, edited and translated by Besterman, T. (1972). London and New York: Penguin Books

WAUGH, C. (2012) *Educational History: Gramsci and Independent Working Class Education* <http://www.raggeduniversity.co.uk/2014/08/15/gramscis-balance-sheet-international-working-class-education-colin-waugh> (Accessed 9 June 2016).

WEBER, M. (1958) The Three Types of Legitimate Rule. In Berkeley Publications in *Society and Institutions* 4(1): 1-11, 1958. Volume: 4, Number: 1, Date: 1958, Pages: 1-11.

WEINER, G. *New Era or Old Times: class, gender and education*. South Bank University, Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, (September 11-14 1997: University of York); Education On-line. <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000357.htm> (First published 29 October 1997; accessed 5 August 2016).

WEST, L. (2016) *Distress in the City – Racism, Fundamentalism and a Democratic Education.* London: U.C.L., IOE Press.

WHITE PAPER: Educational Reconstruction (1943). London: Board of Education.

WHITEHEAD, A. N. (1929) *The Aims of Education.* New York: Macmillan.

WILLIAMS, R. (1957) *Working-class culture*. In *Universities and Left Review*, 1(2), pp. 29—32.

WILLIAMS, R. (1958/1989) *Resources of Hope – Culture, Democracy, Socialism*. London: Verso.

WILLIAMS, R. (1961/1990) *An Open Letter to W.E.A. Tutors*. London: W.E.A.

WILLIAMS, R. (1961/2011), *The Long Revolution.* Swansea: Parthian Books.

WILLIAMS, R. (1961) *The Common Good*. In *Adult Education*, 344 (November 1961).

WILLIAMS, R. (1966) *Modern Tragedy*. London: Chatto and Windus.

WILLIAMS, R. (1977) *Marxism and Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WILLIAMS, R. (1979) *Politics and Letters: Interviews with 'New Left Review.'* London: Verso.

WILLIAMS, R. (1983) *Towards 2000*. London: Chatto and Windus.

WILLIAMS, R. (1989) *What I Came to Say*. London: Radius

WILLIAMS, W.E., and HEATH, A.E. (1936) *Learn and Live – the Consumer's View of Adult Education*. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd.

WILSON, M. (1985) *Epoch in Education: Administrator's Challenge*, Sheffield City Polytechnic.

WILTSHIRE, H. (1956) *The great tradition in university adult education.* In A. ROGERS (ed.) *The Spirit and the Form: Essays in Adult Education by and in Honour of Professor Harold Wiltshire*, pp. 31—38. Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

WOODIN, T. (2007) *Working-class education and social change in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain*. In *History of Education* 36 (4/5), pp. 483-496.

WOODIN, T. (2009) *Working-class writing, alternative publishing and audience participation*. In *Media, Culture and Society* 31 (1), pp. 79-96.

WOODIN, T. (2011) *Co-operative education in Britain during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: context, identity and learning*. In WEBSTER, A, et al. (Eds.). *The Hidden Alternative: Co-operative Values, Past, Present and Future*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 78-96.

WOODS, P., WOODS, G. and ASHLEY, M. (2005) *Steiner Schools in England*, Research Report No. 645, Centre for Research in Education and Democracy, Faculty of Education, University of the West of England, for The Department for Education and Skills.

WORSLEY, G. (2002) *England's Lost Houses: From the Archives of Country Life*, London: Aurum Press.

WRIGHT, P. (1987) *Why the blight is stark enough*. In *The Guardian*, 1 August 1987.

WRIGHT, P. (1985/2009) *On Living in an Old Country – the National Past in Contemporary Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

YALOM, I. (2008) *Staring at the Sun: Overcoming the Terror of Death*. London: Piatkus.