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OTHER RELATIONSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES**

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## CHAPTER 8 OTHER RELATIONSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

### 1. Introduction

The growth of institutions for the tertiary education of the ordinary citizen has been a slow, continuing and complex process. By the end of the nineteenth century public libraries may well have seen themselves as being concerned with lifelong (rather than with either adult or higher) education—but this had not always been so. The idea of the public library as a force in post-school self-development was widespread amongst the protagonists of libraries from the 1850s. Before the series of Education Acts from 1870, many if not most public librarians seem to have thought that children of school age should be kept out of the library.<sup>1</sup> In the late 1880s and 1890s, we do find increasing evidence of the involvement of public libraries with child education—by which time some committees were liaising with School Boards for the use of their school premises as branch libraries, or as school libraries, or as lecture rooms, or as adult reading rooms. These contacts were usually to obtain premises for the library, and in general do not seem to have resulted from a conviction that librarians and school teachers were equally members of an educational provision for children. In any case the limitation of the library rate was a powerful factor in restricting a library's co-operation with an elementary school system which could be seen as having a higher income and more staff.

The earlier library legislation largely envisaged that public libraries would be institutions which (though serving local communities which were rated to finance them) were inward looking—the facilities were to be provided within the institutional buildings, and members of the community were to come to those buildings in order to benefit from their services.<sup>2</sup> This concept slowly changed during the later nineteenth century—the co-option of non-Council members onto library committees widened the range of

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<sup>1</sup> e.g., Thomas Plowman was removed as a boy from a library because he was under sixteen years old, but he asked his father to persuade the Librarian to allow him access if he was quiet. His father knew the Rev. H.O. Coxe (Bodle's Librarian) and arranged for him to be appointed "handy lad" at £20 p.a. Thomas was later appointed Oxford City Librarian at the age of 22 years. Plowman, T.F. *In the days of Victoria: some memories of men and things*. (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head. 1918.) pp.49-51 and 77.

<sup>2</sup> In the words of the General Secretary of the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching: "We may have to admit that in the past he [the librarian] has felt his life bound up more than he should within the walls of his own library". James, G.F. *University extension*. *Library Journal* [New York], vol.17 Supplement, 1893, p.40.

influences by outside interests and bodies, and conversely librarians (both as professional and as private individuals) had access to extramural institutions and groups.

Furthermore, the various concepts of public institutions which had been floated during the first part of the century, continued to surface during the second half as social changes brought about new opportunities. Dr Roberts, the Organizing Secretary of the Cambridge Local Examinations and Lectures Syndicate (for a time he was also Secretary to the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching, and of the Gilchrist Trust), wrote that: "Every town of moderate size ought to possess under the same roof as its Free Library, lecture-rooms and a laboratory, making a centre for the higher educational work of the neighbourhood and constituting what is really a new type of College, specially adapted to the needs of the time".<sup>3</sup> Michael Sadler had earlier made the point that:<sup>4</sup>

Elementary education has sharpened the public appetite for reading, and a mass of cheap literature lies ready to gratify the appetite. It is surely expedient that we should guide it to those studies which are pure and of good report. To surround a man with books is rarely sufficient. The run of a library does not necessarily educate. Most learners need the guidance of a stimulating teacher. Gibbon himself maintained that books cannot supersede oral instruction. 'There remains,' he says in his memoirs, 'a material difference between a book and a professor... Attention is fixed by the presence, the voice, and the occasional questions of the teacher; the most idle will carry something away, while the more diligent will compare the instructions which they have heard with the volumes which they peruse in their chambers.'

Sadler was suggesting that smaller towns could combine to finance local professorships, and that the railway network would facilitate the travel of peripatetic university extension lecturers. At the same time he showed his optimism by saying: "It is possible that, before another generation has passed away, we shall see in a hundred English towns a foundation devoted to the higher education of its inhabitants—the building, in which the instruction is given, commemorating one benefactor; its library or museum or art gallery, a second; one or other of its professorial chairs, a third. Such in outline is the scheme for establishing University Colleges by the co-operation of small towns"<sup>5</sup>

Although noting the Technical Instruction Acts and the availability of the associated revenue as potential resources for the scheme, Sadler ignored those local governments which were already providing *de facto* community colleges through public

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<sup>3</sup> Roberts, R.D. *Eighteen years of university extension*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1891.) p.110.

<sup>4</sup> Sadler, M.E. A golden opportunity for university extension. *The Paternoster Review*, December 1890, p.218.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p.221.

library legislation—including the incorporation of University Extension lectures and classes into their facilities.

## 2. Relationships with university extension

A plan for university extension was suggested by the Rev W. Sewell of Exeter College, Oxford, but it was not until 1871 that the idea was revived—James Stuart at Cambridge persuading his university to be the first to operate such a scheme.<sup>6</sup> He had in mind an idea for "establishing something in the nature of a peripatetic university" soon after taking his degree in 1866, and an opportunity to put the idea into practice came in the following year with an invitation to lecture in Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Leeds for the newly-formed North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women. The request was for a set of lectures on the theory and methods of education, but Stuart thought this an 'abstract subject' and offered 'Astronomy' instead as the topic for a demonstration series. By trial and error he developed the basic features of extension lectures—lecture outlines, suggested pre-reading, and lecture questions. There followed invitations to lecture at the Crewe Mechanics' Institute (on 'Meteors'), and the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Co-operative Society (on 'Married Women's Property legislation') where the idea of lecture classes was established. Following an orchestrated campaign in 1871 of memorials from organisations which had experienced Stuart's lectures, the University of Cambridge agreed to set up a syndicate which two years later recommended the University Extension Scheme. Three travelling lecturers were appointed, the first lectures being held in Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.<sup>7</sup>

Extension lectures could, of course, be held on any suitable premises under the auspices of any pertinent body. The Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle-upon-Tyne issued a programme of lectures for the winter session 1882-1883. Of the four courses on offer, three were described as being educational—and included two under the Cambridge and Durham Universities Extension Scheme. A subscription of one guinea (£1.05p) gave access to all of the lectures.<sup>8</sup> Some well known public schools

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p.224; Mackinder, H.J. and Sadler, M.E. *University extension, past, present and future.* (London: Cassell & Co. 3rd ed. 1891.) pp.6-8.

<sup>7</sup> Stuart, J. *Reminiscences.* (London: Chiswick Press. 1911.) pp.156-158 and 161-172.

<sup>8</sup> Library Association *Monthly Notes*, vol.3, no.11, November 1882, p.185. As early as 1855 Lord Arthur Hervey had written a pamphlet on *A Suggestion for Supplying the Literary, Scientific, and Mechanics' Institutes of Great Britain and Ireland with Lecturers from the Universities* - cited in Mackinder and Sadler. *op.cit.* pp.9-11, and in Marriott, S. *Extramural empires.* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham. 1984.) p.17.

also arranged for extension lectures to be given as part of their curricula—including Rugby, Clifton and Bath (for boys), and Cheltenham Ladies' College.<sup>9</sup> By 1895 the Oldham Industrial Co-operative Society had hosted eight Oxford University Extension courses and one from the Victoria University (Manchester). The Society had previously organised single lectures "generally intended to entertain and amuse... [and] miserably attended", alternating with concerts which were "inconveniently crowded", but revived its professed educational work by applying for a course of extension lectures. It became "the largest extension centre in the world". Co-operative Societies in Hebden Bridge, Todmorden, Accrington and elsewhere were encouraged to follow suit—though not always with equal success.<sup>10</sup>

## 2.1 Local University Extension Committees

Public libraries were often ready to become involved with 'extension activities' for adults, so that when the university extension movement in England was somewhat grudgingly launched by Cambridge University in 1873, the public libraries became involved quite quickly. The connection between public libraries and the university extension movement took three main forms. Firstly, the people who were concerned with adult education were frequently equally involved with the inauguration of public libraries where they did not already exist, and with establishing local university extension activities. This was the case at Rugby, where the statutory town meeting to adopt the Public Libraries Acts was chaired by Dr (later Bishop) J. Percival, headmaster of Rugby School. He was also chairman of Rugby's University Extension Lectures Committee and of the Local Board, as well as past-President of the Rugby Institute. The extension lectures began in the year before the public library was opened, and the 'travelling library' was found invaluable to the students on the courses held in 1890.<sup>11</sup> Of course, given the socio-administrative system of the time, it was perhaps inevitable that the same few persons would be concerned in so many enterprises (a phenomenon also in evidence today).

Local authorities and their Librarians, too, were ready to co-operate with local University Extension Committees in various ways. At Norwich a room was reserved in the public library for university extension students. At Derby the public librarian acted as

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<sup>9</sup> Sadler. *op.cit.* p.225.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, J.T. Co-operation in relation to the University Extension movement in Great Britain. *The Citizen* [Philadelphia, USA], vol.1, 1895, pp.138--139.

<sup>11</sup> Rugby University Extension Committee. [First Annual] *Report*. (1890). Greenwood, T. *Public libraries*. (London: Cassell. 4th ed 1894) p.194.

honorary librarian to extension students, taking care of the scheme's small portable library. Worcester and other places purchased reference works recommended by extension lecturers, and reserved them for students.<sup>12</sup> Cambridge University had been lending to the public library some of the more valuable books used as text books for their Extension lectures in Derby for several years,<sup>13</sup> whilst at Cheltenham it was the local Oxford University Extension Lecturers Committee which agreed that books provided for students should be housed at the public library.<sup>14</sup> In many places, links were being forged between libraries and the university extension movement.

## 2.2 University extension lectures

The second form of association between university extension and public libraries was the latter's utilisation of the former's lecture series to supplement their own. This may also be seen as the former's use of the latter's buildings and/or book stock, to their mutual benefit. In some instances it was the university which made the initial approach to offer its extension lecture service to public libraries.<sup>15</sup> Apart from such university extension activities there does not seem to have been any special desire on the part of the universities in the nineteenth century to co-operate with and assist their local public libraries. This was certainly the case in Cambridge, whilst in London the question did not really arise because of the peculiar function of the university itself and the lack of public libraries until late in the century. In Durham the public library did not even exist before 1930 when the city was provided with a branch of the county library service. In Oxford the public library received some books from the university but no other help; on the contrary, for many years it insisted on the college buildings being exempted from the library rate, though a few members of the university staff did give library lectures. The non-university colleges in other provincial cities were too busy struggling with their own problems to help public libraries, except again in the case of Manchester where Professor Scott (Principal of Owen's College from which the university developed) may be said to have pioneered library lectures by suggesting to the newly established library in 1852 that a series of "Bibliographical Lectures" could be a valuable service.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ogle, J.J. The relationship of the Public Library Committee to other educational bodies. *The Library*, vol.7, 1895, p.130.

<sup>13</sup> *The Library*, vol.4, 1892, p.130.

<sup>14</sup> Varley, A. *History of libraries in Cheltenham from 1780 to 1900*. (unpublished F.L.A. thesis, 1968.) p.165.

<sup>15</sup> e.g. Manchester Library Committee. *Proceedings*, 24 December 1891.

<sup>16</sup> Manchester Library Committee. *ibid.*, 10 September 1852.

Greenwood noted the work of the Oxford University Extension Lectures in connection with public libraries, museums and art galleries, stating that "the chief aim of University Extension Teaching is to form and encourage permanent habits of continuous and systematic reading and study". He claimed that there were five classes of subjects of lectures "adapted specially to Museums and Free Libraries"—Literature, History, Art, Science, and Political Economy and Industrial History. Each course was delivered by an experienced lecturer, and consisted of between six and twelve classes. Lectures were followed by classes, students were invited to write essays between meetings for correction by the lecturer, and optional examinations were held at the end with certificates and prizes being offered to successful students.<sup>17</sup>

As with the lectures provided by local authorities under the auspices of their Public Library Committees (see Chapter 6, Section 2.1 above), the legality of incurring expenses in connection with University Extension lectures was open to question unless provided under a local Act as at Liverpool. In 1898 an unidentified parish library in London said that its Commissioners were considering inaugurating a series of lectures in connection with the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching by constituting themselves a local centre. It estimated that a course of ten popular scientific lectures would cost about £60 (including examinations), but wondered whether the Local Government Board would surcharge the Commissioners on the ground that the courses did not constitute a 'School of Science' authorised under the Public Libraries Acts. By inviting others to join the venture, the Commissioners may have ceased "to be a body having legal power to expend the Library rate, or any portion of it" on the lectures. Legal opinion was that the Commissioners could provide a School for Science under the Acts, but that peripatetic lecturers would not constitute such a school; they could employ a salaried officer who could be a lecturer. The Commissioners had, however, no power to co-opt others (not being a rural parish or a Borough Library Committee). The advice ended by suggesting that the scheme should be submitted to the Local Government Board for its authoritative opinion.<sup>18</sup>

Three years later the Association's legal opinion was that money for Extension or other lectures could not be expended under the Public Libraries & Museums Acts unless Schools for Science or Art had been established—and then only if the lectures were pertinent to these Schools. It was considered that courses of lectures on books held in the library or on specimens in the museum would be allowed, but this was not tested in

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<sup>17</sup> Greenwood, T. *Museums and art galleries*. (London: Simpkin, Marshall. 1888.) pp.210-211.

<sup>18</sup> *The Library*, vol.10, 1898, p.142.



the courts.<sup>19</sup> Whether this uncertainty actually affected the provision of University Extension lectures by any local authority has not been ascertained, but in fact most of the identified lectures were on literature rather than on art or science.

Nevertheless, a breakthrough came at the turn of the century when Passmore Edwards funded several extension courses in London.<sup>20</sup> The Society for the Extension of University Teaching experimented with using public libraries "as centres of instruction", and the Library Association believed that "a sum of £1,000 a year would provide free popular lectures at thirty London free libraries". The Society arranged to hold lectures in the libraries at Battersea, Brixton, Camberwell, Fulham, Hoxton and Southwark, followed by classes allowing discussion with the lecturers and the setting of weekly questions for those wanting to study further. After the second lecture, just over one-third of those attending the lectures at four of the public libraries stayed on for the classes (Table 8.1)—an indication of interest though perhaps not of endurance. An examination at the end of the course led to the award (for successful students) of the Society's certificate. It was claimed that there was a wide age range of people attending, with an average of about twenty-seven of both sexes.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 8.1: Attendances at lectures and classes organised in public libraries by the London Society, 1900**<sup>22</sup>

	total at ending weekly lectures (N)	attendance at weekly classes (N) %	
Battersea	210	70	33.3
Brixton	310	106	34.2
Fulham	230	100	43.5
Southwark	155	60	38.7
TOTALS	905	336	37.1

<sup>19</sup> *Library Association Record*, vol.3 1901, p.224.

<sup>20</sup> e.g., Mr J.A. Hobson delivered a course on 'Great Novelists of the Nineteenth century' at St George the Martyr Parish Library, under the direction of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching, and endowed by Edwards (*Library World*, vol.3, no.25, July 1900, p.26.).

<sup>21</sup> *Library Association Record*, vol.3 January 1901, pp.22-23.

<sup>22</sup> compiled from data in *Library Association Record*, vol.3, January 1901, p.23.

It is difficult to evaluate the results of this experiment; lecturers naturally expressed pleasure with the quality of work presented for marking (sometimes expressed in diplomatic terms, e.g. "The Hoxton papers were better than I expected") and with the interest of the working and lower middle classes.

Although the Library Association's news item of January 1901 had referred to them as "popular lectures", the ones funded by Edwards were not the Society's "People's Lectures" which had been inaugurated in London town halls in 1888. These latter were short courses of three lectures for which tickets were free. Unlike their Extension lectures there were no examinations, and certificates were not awarded. The existence of the University Extension system was brought to the attention of people at the first free lecture, and they were asked to indicate their willingness to buy tickets for a course of Extension lectures if offered. In this way the 'serious' students could be identified. <sup>23</sup>

Even before the Passmore Edwards-funded lectures were offered in London in 1900, however, other public libraries throughout England had hosted non-Extension courses on their premises or had assisted in other ways. Perhaps the most interesting case is that of the Liverpool public library, which in 1869 allowed the 'Ladies Committee for Cambridge Examinations in Liverpool for Girls' to use the Lecture Hall and Reading Room for a week in December. Boys sat their examinations in St George's Hall, but this was the first occasion on which girls had been accommodated in Liverpool. <sup>24</sup> Afterwards the Honorary Secretary of the Ladies Committee (Margaret M. Calder) wrote a letter of thanks, enclosing four copies of James Stuart's lectures and expressing the hope that they would be appreciated by the working men of Liverpool as much as by those at Crewe. <sup>25</sup> The library became the annual centre for the "Cambridge Examinations for female Classes for honours", as also for the Government Examinations for the Civil Service. <sup>26</sup>

As noted below (Section 2.3.2), Moore Ede was the first Cambridge University Extension lecturer invited to give a course of eleven lectures (on Political Economy) in the Liverpool public library which took place during 1878. Seventy-two persons sat the examination, of whom twenty-two passed first class, thirty-six second class, and

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<sup>23</sup> Roberts. *op.cit.* pp.69-70.

<sup>24</sup> Liverpool: Library, Museum and Arts Committee. *Minutes*, vol.7, 16 September 1869.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, 3 February 1870.

<sup>26</sup> e.g., Liverpool: Library, Museum and Arts Committee. *Twentieth annual report of the Free Public Library, Museum and Gallery of Art.* (Liverpool. 1872.) p.7 (and subsequent reports).

fourteen people (nineteen per cent) failed.<sup>27</sup> In the following year some 480 tickets were issued for his course of fourteen lectures on the same subject,<sup>28</sup> for which the library was charged £60 plus expenses. The Syndicate passed on the sum of £3.10.0d (£3.50p) from the Cobden Club, being £2 for Thomas Baxton and £1.10s (£1.50p) for D. O'Sullivan, who obtained the highest marks in the 1878 examination—which the Lectures Sub-Committee resolved should be paid to them for the purchase of books selected by them.<sup>29</sup>

Some 650 tickets were issued in 1880 for the Rev Alfred Caldecott's course of twelve lectures on 'English Prose Literature',<sup>30</sup> for which the library paid £45 plus expenses for railway fares, printing and examining.<sup>31</sup> This was the last Cambridge University Extension course to be held under the library's auspices, and the Library Committee coyly reported that it had engaged Hall Caine to give a course of twelve lectures during 1881 because the University Extension authorities were unable to continue Caldecott's course.<sup>32</sup>

The truth was slightly more complex. The Syndicate had proposed a course of twelve lectures by Mr Griffith on 'The History of Great Britain as illustrated by Archaeology', which the Lectures Sub-Committee considered "too special in its character"—proposing instead a series of twelve more lectures ("as general as possible") on English Literature from 1720, to continue Caldecott's course of the previous year. R.D. Roberts replied that the Syndicate was unable to find a lecturer on English Literature, "but would endeavour to do so, if other Towns in the Neighbourhood of Liverpool would engage for similar courses of Lectures". Doubtless following some unrecorded negotiations, the Sub-Committee received a letter from T. Hall Caine offering to give a course of twelve lectures on 'English Prose Literature (Addison to George Eliot)' with syllabus etc., for forty guineas (£42) including expenses. Not only were

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<sup>27</sup> Liverpool: Library, Museum and Arts Committee. *Twenty-sixth annual report of the Free Public Library, Museum and Gallery of Art.* (Liverpool. 1879.) p.21.

<sup>28</sup> Liverpool: Library, Museum and Arts Committee. *Twenty-seventh annual report of the Free Public Library, Museum and Walker Art Gallery.* (Liverpool. 1880.) p.19.

<sup>29</sup> Liverpool Library Committee, Lectures Sub-Committee. *Minute Book*, 10 June 1879, and 20 November 1879.

<sup>30</sup> Liverpool: Library, Museum and Arts Committee. *Twenty-eighth annual report of the Free Public Library, Museum and Walker Art Gallery.* (Liverpool. 1881.) p.19.

<sup>31</sup> Liverpool Library Committee, Lectures Sub-Committee. *Minute Book*, 17 June 1880.

<sup>32</sup> Liverpool: Library, Museum and Arts Committee. *Twenty-ninth annual report of the Free Public Library, Museum and Walker Art Gallery.* (Liverpool. 1882.) p.19.

they cheaper than the Syndicate's but were regarded as an instant success, attendances totalling 3,177 persons and averaging 264 at each lecture. Many essays were presented for marking, and certificates (eight 1st class, seven 2nd class) signed by the Committee's chairman, Sir James Picton, were awarded for them. Sixteen people attended the final examination, and the papers were sent to the Rev Professor Graham in London for adjudication. He endorsed Caine's placings, stated that he was impressed by both students and lecturer, and wrote: "I would only say further that the Boy Palethorpe, 12 years old, wrote a Paper so judicious and at the same time so naive that he almost or indeed altogether deserves to be put into a class of which he is the only representative". Examination certificates were then prepared and presented—three 1st class distinguished, six 1st class, and seven 2nd class.<sup>33</sup> As a result of its satisfaction with this new venture, the Lectures Sub-Committee abandoned University Extension and in future organised its own courses with classes and examinations in addition to the normal library lectures.

University Extension lectures were provided in connection with several County Borough Councils, including Burnley, Huddersfield and Worcester.<sup>34</sup> In May 1899 the Huddersfield Public Library & Art Gallery Committee resolved to authorise the Art Gallery Sub-Committee to arrange for "a Course of Lectures on some artistic subject hereafter to be selected [to] be given under the auspices of the University Extension Scheme during the Autumn".<sup>35</sup> Subsequently, J.E. Phythian<sup>36</sup> gave a course of six lectures on English Painters for the Oxford University scheme, at the end of which a voluntary examination was sat by five students in January 1900. The lecturer (perhaps somewhat naturally) commented favourably on the "regularity in attendance, the care and interest with which the lectures have been followed, the large number of students taking part in the visit to the Manchester Art Galleries, and, above all, the exceptionally high quality of the paper work..."<sup>37</sup> At all events, following a letter from J.A.R. Marriott (Secretary of the Extension Delegacy at Oxford), the Librarian was authorised to meet him at Leeds to discuss arrangements for Mr Phythian to give a second series on art.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Liverpool Library Committee, Lectures Sub-Committee. *Minute Book*, 12 May 1881, 11 August 1881, 10 January 1882, and 23 February 1882.

<sup>34</sup> *The Record of Technical and Secondary Education*, vol.5, 1896, p.504.

<sup>35</sup> [Huddersfield] Public Library & Art Gallery Committee. *Minutes*, 5 May 1899.

<sup>36</sup> Phythian, from Manchester, had begun lecturing by giving talks in Oldham and other public libraries in the region, before being appointed a University Extension lecturer (see Appendix 3 below).

<sup>37</sup> [Huddersfield] Public Library & Art Gallery Committee. *Minutes*, 9 February 1900.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 22 March 1900.

These were given fortnightly in the Mayor's Reception Room at the Town Hall (though in connection with the Art Gallery up to 6 December 1900. Phythian's topic was 'Architecture in relation to English history'. It was noted that nearly forty people in the class participated in the associated visit to York, and that the "paper work was good in quality, but the number of papers written was regrettably small".<sup>39</sup>

Hereford, Carlisle and Hyde—places of differing size and social conditions—were three other public library authorities which co-operated with Oxford University. During 1897-98, a series of lectures on 'The Evolution of Gothic Architecture', arranged by the Hereford Centre of the Oxford Extension Lectures, was delivered in the Woolhope Clubroom.<sup>40</sup> A little earlier, Carlisle's Tully House (which housed the public library and other community education facilities) allowed the use of the Lecture Theatre to the Carlisle Scientific Society and Field Naturalists' Club, and the Local Committee of the Oxford University Extension Scheme. Under the auspices of the latter body, two courses of twelve lectures each were given, on 'Architecture' and 'Geology' respectively during the winter of 1894-95.<sup>41</sup> In the following year two lectures on 'Astronomy' were delivered in the Lecture Theatre under the auspices of the Local Committee of the Oxford University Extension Scheme.<sup>42</sup>

The township of Hyde in Cheshire, then with a population of some 30,000 people, adopted the Public Libraries Act in 1893. The library opened in December 1894, and immediately arranged for Oxford University Extension lectures to take place. These were held during the winter months, and it was reported that the first series "stirred up extra history reading". The second series was on 'Shakespeare', and although extra books on the subject were purchased beforehand, it was found that the shelves quickly emptied of relevant literature.<sup>43</sup>

The two small townships in the industrial county of Staffordshire may also exemplify the diversity of effort and the opportunities open to library authorities. Newcastle-under-Lyme (population 8,452 at the end of the century) adopted the Public

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<sup>39</sup> [Huddersfield] Library & Art Gallery Committee. *Annual report* 1900-1901. pp.3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Hereford City Library. *Annual report* 1897-3.

<sup>41</sup> Carlisle: Committee of the Public Library, Museum, and School of Science and Art. [*1st*] *Annual report, 1893-1895*. p.5.

<sup>42</sup> Carlisle: Committee of the Public Library, Museum, and School of Science and Art. [*2nd*] *Annual report, 1895-1896*. p.11.

<sup>43</sup> Hyde Public Free library Committee. *Annual report, 1896*. p.4.

Library Act in 1884, but the library was not opened until 1891.<sup>44</sup> Although it did not organise its own series of library lectures, it did arrange for other bodies to do so on its behalf. Cambridge University Extension Lectures were held in 1898 and 1899, as well as Gilchrist and County Council technical lectures in 1899. The Cambridge series on 'Astronomy' was held in the Lending Department on Tuesday evenings, so that the library had to be closed to borrowers.<sup>45</sup> The sum of £25 was paid by the town council to the Cambridge Syndicate,<sup>46</sup> and it was arranged that Mr H.J. Boyd-Carpenter should give a course of six lectures during 1899 on 'The Expansion of England'.<sup>47</sup>

In Leek (population 15,500) the Public Library Act was adopted in 1889, and the library was opened in the Nicholson Institute which had been privately established in 1884.<sup>48</sup> The Institute included a museum, an art gallery, and a school of art and science in addition to the library, and offered lectures, concerts, meetings and exhibitions among its live educational services. In addition to popular lectures given by local and national figures (Oscar Wilde gave a talk on 'Dress' in 1885), advantage was taken of the facilities offered by both the Cambridge and Oxford University Extension Lecture schemes. The latter were organised during the summer months, instead of the winter as was usual at the time, whilst Cambridge contributed a series of twelve lectures in 1897 on 'Physiographic Astronomy'. Admission cost 5/- (£0.25p) for a single ticket, which unfortunately would have put university extension beyond the reach of the working class.<sup>49</sup>

Most of the University Extension lectures were arranged by public library committees, though some of the lectures which they organised were of a scientific or technical character. In Southport (where the extension centre was flourishing), however, the Technical Instruction Committee organised several unsuccessful Extension lectures during 1897.<sup>50</sup> The Technical Instruction Committee at Altrincham had more success in the two winters of 1895-96 and 1896-97, when it arranged for an Oxford University

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44 Greenwood, T. (ed.). *British library year book 1900-1901: a record of library progress and work.* (London: Scott, Greenwood & Co. 1900.) p.171.

45 Newcastle-under-Lyme: Free Library Management Committee. *Minutes*, 21 January 1898.

46 *ibid.*, 18 February 1898.

47 *ibid.*, 14 December 1898.

48 Greenwood, T. (ed.). *British library year book 1900-1901. op.cit.* p.153.

49 Smith, P.V. *The Nicholson Institute, Leek.* (Stafford: Staffordshire County Library. c.1984.) pp40-41.

50 *The Record of Technical and Secondary Education*, vol.6, 1897, p.194.

lecturer to give courses of six lectures on 'The Making of England'—hardly a technical subject, unless it concerned industrial history! The fees charged were 2s 6d (£0.13p) each course or 1s (£0.05p) each lecture. In the former season seven people passed the associated examination (three with distinction), whilst in the latter season—when there were on average fifty "students" and three hundred "others" attending—eight people passed, of whom six did so with distinction.<sup>51</sup>

At Portsmouth, the Library and Museum Committee was also the Technical Instruction Committee for the borough—and was composed exclusively of Council members, contrary to usual practice. Until 1894 it was voting £300 a year to University Extension lectures in the town to supplement technical instruction, but in March 1895 only £150 was voted for this purpose—possibly because it had to find £4,700 to adapt and furnish some disused municipal offices as a municipal technical institute to relieve the serious shortage of accommodation.<sup>52</sup> At Chester, on the other hand, it was reported that annual grants of £30 or £35 were received from the Technical Instruction fund, to assist the Oxford University Extension lectures being offered.<sup>53</sup>

During the early 1880s the Middlesbrough Library Committee "assisted, to a slight extent, the very valuable Scientific Lecture courses initiated by the Universities of Cambridge and Durham", and they proposed to support the movement to ensure its permanent location in the town. By these means it was hoped that the Committee could "render most valuable assistance in the promotion of sound Scientific instruction, and in making it accessible to all classes of the community, as contemplated by the enlightened promoters of the Free Libraries' Acts".<sup>54</sup> A connection between the work of the library and extension lectures was also perceived in the following decade, when a slight decrease of issues in the Reference Department was attributed to the fact that during the winter of 1892-3 there were no University Extension Lectures there.<sup>55</sup> A similar connection was seen at Loughborough. Following the brief experiment with the half-hour talks (see Chapter 6, Section 2.5 above), the public library brought in the services of the Gilchrist

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p.337.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, vol.5, no.23, July 1896, pp.311, 373 and 381.

<sup>53</sup> Greenwood, T. (ed.). *British library year book 1900-1901. op.cit.* pp.104-5.

<sup>54</sup> [Middlesbrough] Free Library Committee. *The annual report of the Free Library Committee for the 11th year ending 30th September 1882.* p.5; Library Association *Monthly Notes*, vol.3, no.12, December 1882, p.204.

<sup>55</sup> Middlesbrough Town Council. Librarian's report 11 October 1893. In, *Proceedings of the Middlesbrough Town Council, 1892-1893.* p.568.

Trust and the Cambridge University Extension Committee for the 1901-1902 season. It was claimed that they had "been the means of improving the reading inclinations of our borrowers, for in addition to the text-books recommended by the authorities, many works dealing more or less with the particular subject in hand have been repeatedly in demand".<sup>56</sup>

At Worcester, where there was a Technical Instruction Sub-Committee of the Library and Museum Committee, the grant-aided science and art classes were located in the multi-purpose Victoria Institute which also housed the public library (see pp.294-295 above). In connection with this active centre—which offered various public lectures of its own on general topics—the library also sponsored University Extension lectures in geology, nature and science by staff of Mason College (later the University of Birmingham), which were offered during the winter of 1894-95. There were 132 entries in the associated examinations (fifty-five in geology and seventy-seven in nature and science), of whom only fifteen passed though four of these were with distinction. In addition there were three lectures for juveniles in December 1895 on 'The air we breathe', which were illustrated by experiments.<sup>57</sup> A series of Cambridge University Extension lectures was also held, covering the history of English Literature during the previous two centuries. In one year it was reported that of 143 students enrolled for those on the 'Victorian Age', attendances averaged 112 that session.<sup>58</sup>

Many other public libraries also hosted or supported University Extension lectures in various ways (see Appendix 1, col."f" below) during the final quarter century, but usually in order to supplement their own lecture programmes. Far too often the co-operation was not sustained, so that their educational value was soon dissipated.<sup>59</sup> A few attempts were made to create a form of university extension study centre in some public libraries, but it appears that neither the University Extension departments nor the public libraries had sufficient funds to develop the concept effectively. In spite of occasional suggestions that such study centres could enhance the educational work of

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<sup>56</sup> Borough of Loughborough: Public Library Committee. *Sixteenth annual report of the Public Library Committee 1901-1902*. p.2.

<sup>57</sup> *The Record of Technical and Secondary Education*, vol.5, 1896, pp. 504-505.

<sup>58</sup> City of Worcester. Victoria Institute. *Report of the Committee on the twelfth session, 1901-1902*. p.10.

<sup>59</sup> e.g., Grimshaw, R.E. *The Northern Union of Literary, Scientific, and Mechanical Institutions*. (unpublished F.L.A. essay no.184. 1951.) p.22, citing the Northern Union of Mechanics Institutes' *Report* for 1884., wrote that the "North Shields Public Library organised successful university extension courses... though only for a short time".



both the universities and the libraries, there was no real dialogue between the two institutions which might have examined ways of providing such centres.

### 2.3 University extension colleges

The third form of association consisted of public library involvement with the establishing of university colleges themselves as a part of the university extension movement in England, though other factors were also involved. Direct association can be seen between three of these colleges and their local public libraries, though in each case the circumstances are quite different. These were in Exeter, Liverpool, and Nottingham respectively, where all three of the university colleges were partly the result of university extension activities. The last two were amongst the ten colleges established between the 1867 Paris Exhibition and the 1884 Samuelson Commission Report, and which offered advanced scientific instruction. These ten institutions were the Durham College of Science (later Armstrong College) in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1871; University College Aberystwyth, 1872; Yorkshire College of Science in Leeds, 1874; University College Bristol, 1876; Firth College, Sheffield, 1879; Mason Science College, Birmingham, 1880; University College Nottingham, 1881; University College Liverpool, 1882; University College of South Wales, Cardiff, 1883; and Bangor, 1884.

Of the colleges listed above, Firth College and University College Nottingham owe their origins largely to university extension,<sup>61</sup> whilst the handing over of the work of the Cambridge University Extension Committee in Leeds to the Yorkshire College was to the advantage of both institutions.<sup>62</sup> Two later colleges were Reading in 1892 and Exeter in 1894.

#### 2.3.1 Nottingham University College

University College Nottingham was the result of four major educational forces in which the city library had initially played only a marginal role. These were:<sup>63</sup>

- (a) the university extension movement

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<sup>60</sup> Blanchet, J. *Science, craft and the state*. (unpublished Oxford University D.Phil. thesis. 1968.) p.51.

<sup>61</sup> Curtis, S.J. *History of education in Great Britain*. (London: University Tutorial Press. 7th ed 1967.) p.482.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, pp.436-437.

<sup>63</sup> Wardle, D. *History of education in Nottingham*. (unpublished Nottingham University PhD thesis. 1965.) p.910.

- (b) higher education for women
- (c) technical instruction of artisans
- (d) an educational ladder to Oxbridge.

All of these were developments in the field of adult education rather than of tertiary education proper, and indeed this very fact had some bearing on the low level of educational provision which prevented the institution from developing into a true university for many years. A second fact, that of initial Nottingham Corporation control (through its University College and Free Library Committee), has also been blamed for the low standard of work, though it may well be argued that the Corporation's assessment of the town's need for a technical institution rather than of a university was indeed the correct one at the time.

Certainly, throughout most of the nineteenth century it had been proved in all parts of the country that even secondary education as attempted in mechanics' institutes, science and art classes, etc., was often beyond the capabilities of many of the persons for whom it had been intended. This was because of inadequate preparation at the primary level, which had left them semi-literate and semi-numerate. Despite the fact that from 1870 the country entered a new phase of primary educational provision, this did not in itself cause sufficient general advancement in either acquired basic knowledge or techniques of learning to allow of widespread provision of secondary and tertiary education until a generation later.

Nottingham has had a long history of attempts to provide education for adults. These included the Adult School founded in 1798 by Fox and Singleton as an inter-denominational service for women to which a class for men was soon added;<sup>64</sup> the Mechanics' Institute from 1837;<sup>65</sup> the People's College from 1846;<sup>66</sup> the government School of Design from 1844;<sup>67</sup> various church-sponsored Working Men's Associations from about 1856;<sup>68</sup> and the University Extension movement in the city from 1873.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Rowntree, J.W. and Binns, H.B. *History of the Adult School movement*. (London: Headley Bros. 1902.) *passim*.

<sup>65</sup> Green, J.A.H. *History of the Nottingham Mechanics' Institution*. (Nottingham: Nottingham Mechanics' Institution. 1887.) *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> Hudson, J.W. *History of adult education*. (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans. 1851.) p.148.

<sup>67</sup> Becket, E.M. *University College of Nottingham*. (Nottingham: Henry B. Saxton. 1928.) p.14.

<sup>68</sup> Department of Practical Art. *1st Report*. (London: HMSO. 1852-3). pp.108-112.

<sup>69</sup> Paton, J.L. *John Brown Paton*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton. 1914.) p.159.

In addition there were the usual learned and discussion societies, and a more comprehensive than usual system of 'operatives' and other libraries. In spite of all this, relatively few of the inhabitants of the town at the end of the nineteenth century were capable of benefiting from higher education, and it would seem that the provision of a local university was the dream of a very small number rather than the hope of many.

It is true that Nottingham Corporation had shown some slight interest in university education for some of its citizens over the centuries, dating at least from 1635 when £2 was contributed by the Council towards the expenses of John Cooke in taking his degree at Cambridge, to be paid by the schoolwardens.<sup>70</sup> In 1675 John Hutchinson was awarded a scholarship of ten shillings (50p) each year for four years of attendance at any U.K. university.<sup>71</sup> In 1829 the Corporation bought two shares in the new London University, making occasional use of the privilege of nominating two scholars.<sup>72</sup> However, when it became financially involved with the institution which developed into University College Nottingham, it insisted on control for fiscal rather than educational reasons.

Of the four main strands in the complex history of the founding of the college, perhaps the most vital was that of the university extension movement. It is also the strand which links Nottingham with Liverpool Public Library Committee. The seeds of Nottingham city control of the future university were sown in 1867 when the new committee of the Artizans' Library appointed a three-man pressure group (Drs Ranson and Robertson, and Mr Richard Enfield) to influence opinion in favour of the town adopting the Public Libraries Acts.<sup>73</sup> Because of its financial difficulties it was proposed that the Artizans' Library should be handed over to the Corporation to be the nucleus of a public library, on condition of settlement of outstanding debts of about £120 then owing. The Council responded by appointing a committee to look into the operation of the Acts in other towns,<sup>74</sup> and as a result of the favourable report a public meeting was called on 19 May 1867 with the mayor's authority. The Acts were adopted and the town's free public library was opened in the former Artizans' Library premises on 13 April 1868, the Council having rescinded its resolution of September 1867 granting land

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<sup>70</sup> Nottingham City Council. *Minutes* 30 November 1635.

<sup>71</sup> Gray, D. *Nottingham through 500 years*. Nottingham: Nottingham Corporation. 2nd ed 1960.) p.112.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p.159.

<sup>73</sup> Becket. *op.cit.* p.12.

<sup>74</sup> Nottingham City Council. *Minutes* 18 March 1867.

in Horse Fair Close as a site.<sup>75</sup> This latter is the site on which the public library and university college buildings were erected later in the century. The Corporation appointed the Free Libraries Committee in 1867.

The new committee was added to the ten original council committees which had resulted from the reorganisation of 1858, when the Local Government Act of that year stimulated Nottingham Corporation to reduce the number of its committees but to give them greater responsibilities. It is not possible to state whether the Council felt that the new duty of public library provision was important enough to warrant a separate committee, or whether the process of increasing them had begun again. Certainly, the Nottingham Improvement Act of 1874 which declared that delegated powers to Council committees meant that their proceedings were deemed to be acts of the Council itself, resulted in fragmentation of the policies of the Corporation. To bring some order into the deteriorating situation, another period of committee reform was instituted in 1879 when one of the measures was that of amalgamation. One of these new committees was formed in November of that year from the two former Free Libraries Committee and the University College Management Committee respectively.<sup>76</sup> The new University College and Free Libraries Committee under the chairmanship of Edward Goldschmidt then became the first and only committee appointed under authority of the Public Libraries Acts to be directly responsible for a university college in addition to a library and museum.<sup>77</sup>

The college itself had its origins in lectures requested at a public meeting in April 1871, held in the Exchange under the auspices of the Mechanics' Institution. This was called as a result of Richard Enfield and Dr Paton (the Principal of the Congregational Institute) proposing that classes relevant to the needs of working men as citizens should be instituted. The 1867 Reform Act had brought another 938,000 voters throughout the country instead of the 400,000 planned by Disraeli; the 1868 election resulted in Gladstone becoming Prime Minister, and one of his government's social reforms was the 1870 Elementary Education Act. Enfield saw a resulting need for classes for Nottingham's workers as "workmen, fathers of families and sharers in the political power of the country".<sup>78</sup> The courses asked for were on health, English constitutional

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<sup>75</sup> Becket. *op.cit.* p.13; Wood, A.C. *History of the University College, Nottingham 1881-1948.* (Oxford: Blackwell. 1953.). pp.7-8.

<sup>76</sup> Gray. *op.cit.* pp.200 and 208-209.

<sup>77</sup> Nottingham: University College and Free Libraries Committee. *1st Annual Report.* (March 1880).

<sup>78</sup> Becket. *op.cit.* p.24; Wood. *op.cit.* p.13.

history, English literature, and political economy. It was possible to provide only the first (given by a local doctor in 1873), and at the January 1873 annual meeting of the Mechanics' Institution Enfield and Paton pointed out that suitable courses of lectures and discussions could only be given satisfactorily with the help of the universities.<sup>79</sup>

In March, a local committee was formed to call for university extension lectures in Nottingham (Derby and Leicester were invited to help form a circuit), and a small deputation was sent to discuss the matter with the Syndicate at Cambridge.<sup>80</sup> Three courses were provided from September; these were on economics designed (though not exclusively) for workingmen, for young middleclass men on force and motion, and for young ladies on English literature. To these were added others on constitutional history, astronomy, and physical geography respectively.<sup>81</sup>

Of importance to the links between the public libraries and the universities in Nottingham and Liverpool was the Rev. W. Moore Ede (later Dean of Worcester), who gave the course on economics in the winter of 1874.<sup>82</sup> Ede himself recounts how he was walking in Nottingham with Enfield one Sunday, to see a factory which the latter thought might be purchased as a building in which to hold university extension lectures, £10,000 having been offered for that purpose by a friend. Ede thought that the factory could be used, but favoured offering the money to Nottingham Corporation to provide adequate rooms in connection with the extension lectures which it was proposing should be held in the new free library building. He thought that such an offer would induce the Corporation to spend more on the building.<sup>83</sup> It is probable that had the factory been purchased as originally envisaged, the association between the public library and the university extension movement would have dwindled and the future University College Nottingham would never have been linked administratively with the public library.

79 *The [London] Times*, 29 January 1873.

80 Paton. *op.cit.* p.159.

81 Becket. *op.cit.* p.31; Wardle. *op.cit.* pp.914-916.

82 Professor Stuart Marriott believes that Ede (who had graduated only three years before) was a 'front man' for James Stuart, who "supervised the strategy if not the details... and who did the wheeling and dealing over endowment and accommodation" (letter from Stuart Marriott to Edward R. Reid-Smith, dated 5 October 1994.).

83 Becket. *op.cit.* p.32 (citing Ede, W.M. *Memorandum on the origin of University College, Nottingham.*)

The anonymous donor agreed with this suggestion and Enfield wrote formally on his behalf to the Town Clerk in January 1875 to the effect that if the Corporation would provide the accommodation, the £10,000 could be used to endow extension lectureships. It was envisaged that the Syndicates of either Cambridge or Oxford would be responsible for providing the lecturers. Enfield thought that "the buildings should at first comprise a Lecture Theatre, seating about 500 or 600, two class rooms, seating about 150 or 200, a small room for Library, a Chemical Laboratory, and a residence for one resident lecturer, but that they be planned with a view to subsequent extension".<sup>84</sup>

It is difficult to be sure exactly what was in the minds of the various people concerned with this offer, as regards with the relationship between the public library and museum and the university extension courses. Enfield, Ransom and Robertson had in 1863 outlined a plan for laboratories and classrooms to be provided for use in connection with the natural history museum.<sup>85</sup> This had originally been formed in 1837 by the Natural History Society, and contained botanical, entomological, geological and ornithological specimens. It had been presented to the public library in 1867, and was one of the reasons why larger premises were already being demanded by the library committee in 1869.<sup>86</sup> It was obvious that the lecture and laboratory rooms suggested when the museum was housed by the Mechanics' Institution were out of the question as long as the library remained in the former Artizans' Library premises in Thurland Street. However, the proposal to build a new public library provided the opportunity to revive and revise old ideas. The mention of "a small room for Library" [*sic*] in Enfield's letter may suggest that he envisaged the lectures being held in a separate building.

At least some members of the Corporation considered that the Science and Art Department classes which had been held in the Mechanics' Institution since 1862 should be transferred to the Corporation, and G.B. Rothera pointed out the need for chemistry and physics laboratories as well as a practical demonstration theatre for lectures in natural history. The general opinion seemed to be in terms of a local college for technical and other courses, linked with the view held by Canon Morse and others that the university extension courses movement should develop the idea of local colleges to ensure

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<sup>84</sup> Becket. *op.cit.* pp.33-34; Wood. *op.cit.* pp.15-16; Nottingham City Council. *Minutes*, 1 February 1875.

<sup>85</sup> Becket. *op.cit.* p.34.

<sup>86</sup> Nottingham: Free Libraries and Museum Committee. [*1st*] *Annual Report 1867/8*; Nottingham: Free Libraries and Museum Committee. *Annual Report 1868/70*.

systematic and continuous provision.<sup>87</sup> Moore Ede suggested that attendance at a set number of sessions of extension courses should lead to the award of a degree, or at least of associate status.

By February 1875 the Borough Engineer had prepared a scheme whereby the library, museum and extension lectures would all be in one building, to be erected at a cost of £250,000 on land surrounding the ruined castle. This plan was abandoned as too expensive, and because the site was not central enough to meet the donor's wishes. A recommendation to include the library, museum and lectures in a proposed new Town Hall was also abandoned,<sup>88</sup> and after considerable deliberations as well as memorials from the Literary and Philosophical Society and from extension students and Science and Art Department supporters, the Council finally approved a 'Culture Building' on the Horse Fair Close site at an estimated cost of £40,000. The gift of £10,000 towards the building was formally accepted in July 1877, though in December of the same year the Town Clerk could only state that there were no planned annual incomes but that the Corporation hoped that further contributions would provide an endowment.

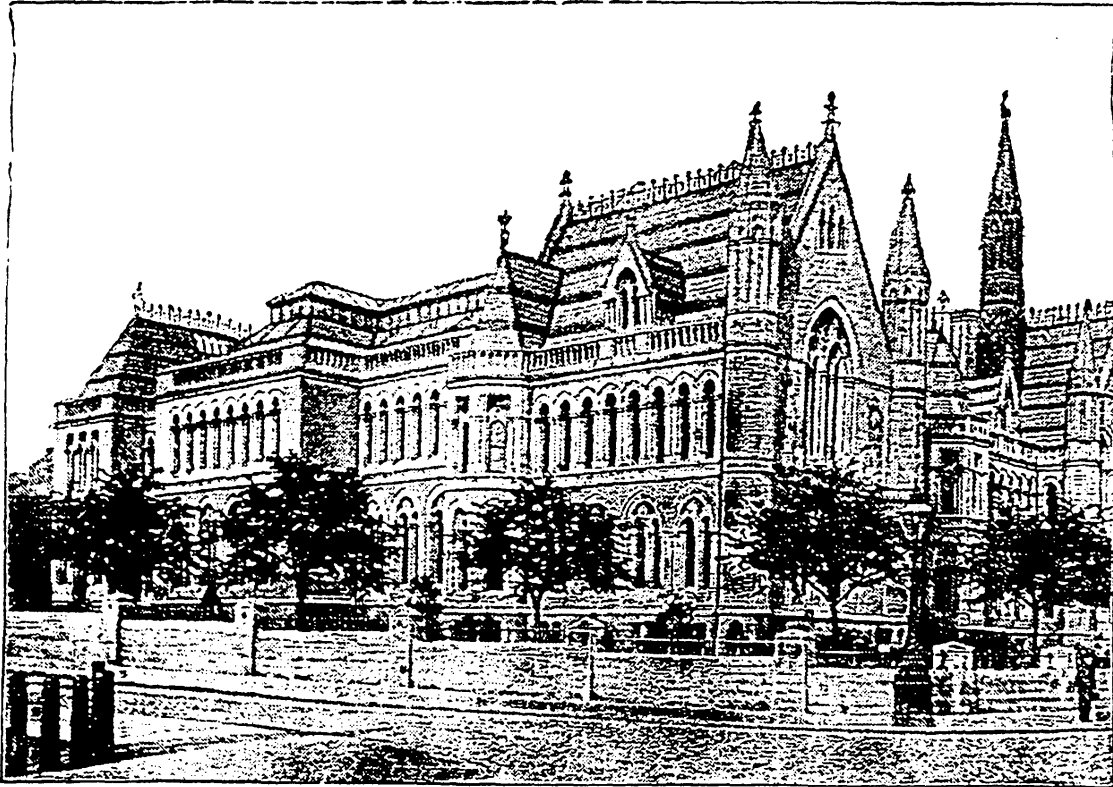
In fact the new institution (Figure 8.1) was extremely short of funds for many years. In February 1881 the Council was given an estimate of £6,515 p.a. running costs, against which could only be set an income of £2,575 which was the product of the maximum penny rate allowed under the Public Libraries Act. Apart from interest on money subscribed, the balance would have to be found by the Finance Committee from the general rate, so that when the building was opened in June 1881 the future was far from secure.<sup>89</sup> The College and Library Committee therefore set about finding money from several sources. The initial approach was to the newly established City & Guilds of London Institute (CGLI), for whose examination a course in lace and hosiery manufacture was begun at the College in 1882. This led to the Drapers' Company increasing its subscription to the CGLI to enable the latter to make a grant of £500 p.a. plus £200 for apparatus. In the 1888-1889 session the Drapers' grant was extended, and £3,000 was offered to erect a new wing for a Technical School.

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<sup>87</sup> Enfield, R. [Scrapbook on] *The origin of the first municipal college in England*, 22 September 1875.

<sup>88</sup> Nottingham: Public Buildings Committee. *Minutes*, August 1875.

<sup>89</sup> Nottingham: University College and Free Library Committee. *Report*; Nottingham: City Council. *Minutes*, 7 February 1881. (The situation was initially made worse because within two years the building had to be closed for repairs when it was found that beams were rotten, walls fractured, and that the specifications had been ignored by the builders. Greenwood, T. *Public libraries. op.cit.* pp.188-189.)



NOTTINGHAM CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

Figure 8.1: Nottingham. Public Library and University College,  
c.1885<sup>90</sup>

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90 Greenwood, T. *Public libraries. op.cit.* p.188.



In the 1883-1884 session, £800 was given by Mr Jacoby and £160 from the Cooper Trust for technical education. In 1889 the latter gave a further £3,000 towards the new Technical School which opened in 1893, and the Drapers' and Plumbers' Companies provided furnishing and equipment. In the same year the Committee received some £90 rent from some freehold land, and the future of the College as a technical university became assured. This was greatly assisted by the appointment of a new Professor of Engineering in 1890 (the first one having left shortly after his appointment in 1883), and by 'whiskey money' out of the technical education fund.<sup>91</sup> The establishment of the Technical School and of technological departments in the University College itself was in accordance with the view of the Committee that they should provide knowledge which was of practical application to local industries, and at levels appropriate to the needs and capabilities of school leavers in the city.

The Committee itself had seen three main divisions in the College: as a centre for university extension; to absorb the Mechanics' Institution classes for Science and Art Department examinations; and to provide a technological institution for the city. To do this they appointed four full-time professors with wide teaching areas: one to be responsible for languages, literature, history, philosophy and economics (with three part-time language teachers); one for mathematics, mechanics and physics; another for chemistry; and a fourth for biological and geological sciences. Three demonstrators assisted the professors.<sup>92</sup> In addition to the technical education money being spent on the technical schools, £750 was allocated to the School of Art for general and lace designing.<sup>93</sup>

In 1889 Parliament first voted sums in aid of the university colleges, Nottingham's share being £1,200 out of the £15,000 distributed. This rose to £1,500 after a government inspection in the 1896-1897 session when the Treasury reported favourably that "being thus supported mainly by the rates [it] may be said to be the most democratic institution of the kind which we have seen". A second favourable inspection led to a further increase of £200 in 1902,<sup>94</sup> but the Education Act of the same year required local authorities to submit their plans to the Board of Education. In March 1903 Nottingham Corporation (having taken over from the School Board as the local education

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91 Wardle. *op.cit.* pp.823-825; Becket. *op.cit.* pp.48-50.

92 Nottingham: University College and Free Library Committee. *Report.* (February 1881).

93 *Record of Technical and Secondary Education*, 1891. p.77.

94 Wood. *op.cit.* p.42; Nottingham: University College and Free Library Committee. *Report.* (1897).

authority by virtue of the Act) submitted its scheme for educational development in the city, and this received government approval in June. Under this scheme the University College was placed under its own College Management Committee of the City Council, receiving its Charter of Incorporation in August. The administrative link with the public library thus ended, although the students have continued to make use of its services.<sup>95</sup>

There seems to be little evidence that the common committee resulted in any special bibliothecal influence on the instruction offered by the University College. Some attempt was made to buy books appropriate to courses, but the relative poverty of the public library did not allow the building up of superb collections. Nor, apparently, did the academic staff make an effort to anticipate the 'Library College' movement of the mid-twentieth century, by using the public library facilities as the basic learning method for their students. In retrospect the association may be seen as disappointing in its effect, though perhaps fully in accordance with the academic and library climates of the period. The Committee members were men of limited vision and action; by developing technical education they were doing no more than following the fashion of the time, but by allowing the diminution of the university extension courses they were harming the intellectual opportunities of the city.

### 2.3.2 *Liverpool University College*

The Public Library Committee in Nottingham may have had the administration of the University College forced upon it by the Council's reorganisations, but in Liverpool it was the Library Committee itself which was responsible for the Council **not** taking on the organisation of the University College there. Liverpool Public Library had wished to supplement its own lectures by acting as host for Cambridge University Extension courses in the library lecture hall, and the first of these was a series of eleven lectures on political economy given by the Rev. W. Moore Ede between October and December 1878, which began Liverpool's tradition of courses before Christmas and single lectures after it.<sup>96</sup> Attendance ranged between 385 at the first and 98 at the last lecture, with an average of 221 at each, but Ede and the Library Committee were apparently content. Seventy-two persons sat the examination, of whom 22 passed first class, 36 second class, and 14 failed. Ede was asked to give another course in the following season.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Gray. *op.cit.* pp.233-234.

<sup>96</sup> Liverpool Public Library. *Statistics: free lectures [1874-1879]*.

<sup>97</sup> Liverpool: Free Public Library, Museum and Walker Art Gallery Committee. *26th Report*. (10 February 1879) p.21; Liverpool Library Committee, Lectures Sub-Committee. *Minute Book*, 23 May 1879.

It is probable that Ede had some discussions with interested persons in Liverpool desirous of developing higher education in the city, and that the letter which he wrote to Sir James Picton (Chairman of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee) was in fact the final and formal draft of communications which had already taken place. This letter, dated from Sheffield in March 1879, begins by referring to Ede's university extension lectures at Liverpool when he "was much struck with the ability of the students who attended my course, their eager desire for instruction, and the diligence with which they devoted their spare hours to the perusal of the various books to which I referred them, and I could not help feeling that there already existed in the William Brown Museum, &c., the nucleus of what might, with comparatively little trouble and expense, be developed into one of those local Colleges, such as Owen's at Manchester or the Yorkshire College at Leeds". Ede saw that because of the trade depression (Liverpool being primarily a commercial city) it would be some time before the existing Liverpool College scheme could be adequately financed, and he suggested that the public library could commence the work and transfer it to the college when built and endowed. He asked why Liverpool should wait for financial improvement when the public library already contained lecture and class rooms, museums (historical, natural history and geological), and a reference and lending library of great extent. He pointed out to the library committee that "thus there is all ready to hand all that is required in the way of buildings, specimens and books; all that remains to complete a College is teachers and students, and of the former you have already the Curators of the Museum, and the present very efficient teachers of the Science and Art Classes, and you have recently added courses of lectures and classes in connection with the University of Cambridge Syndicate".

Although he saw in the library and museum complex the nucleus of a university college for Liverpool, Ede was also aware of various shortcomings which would have to be rectified if his idea were to be put into effect. "The work done in the Science and Art Classes, though admirable as far as it goes, does not carry the students on to the highest branches of the various subjects; the free lectures are desultory; the University lectures, though giving systematic instruction throughout one course, are not at present so arranged as to offer a regular curriculum of instruction." He envisaged initially a three-years' continuous course in (i) natural science, and (ii) literature and history, for either the Vice-Chancellor's Certificate or the Library Committee's own examinations and certificates. This would seem to be the origin of the Committee's examination system from 1882, although it may merely have been continuing normal University Extension practice.

He then pointed out that Nottingham Corporation was erecting a new building "for the purpose of bringing together, under one roof, their Free Library, Museum, Science and Art Classes and University Lectures and Classes", to be developed into a local college having elementary and advanced tuition. There, the petitions to be affiliated with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were in order that successful students could be granted some university title, and be able to continue to take a degree at either university at the end of a year and nine months instead of the usual three years. If the William Brown library and museum in Liverpool became similarly affiliated, he continued, "they would have done much towards establishing in Liverpool that much-talked-of ladder which shall reach from the gutter to the Universities".<sup>98</sup>

Comparing the two institutions—the public libraries in Liverpool and Nottingham—it would seem that the services and resources of the former were far in excess of the latter's. The various book collections were more extensive and comprehensive, the museums covered more subjects and contained vastly more specimens, the Liverpool library lectures (inaugurated in 1865 to help the School of Science) had by this time come to cover all main classes of subjects in sciences, arts and the humanities. At least to some members of the Library Committee, Ede's idea must have been in conformity with their own thinking—and with the way in which the library and museum service had been developed during the previous years. Of all of the Council's committees, the Library Committee had the most justification for seeing itself as being connected with the educational processes and facilities.

Despite this, when Ede's letter was brought to the attention of the Council which then referred it back to the Library Committee for official consideration, the Council pointed out that education as such was not one of the committee's functions.<sup>99</sup> In view of the Library Committee's former official connection with primary schools and its later official administration of technical education for the city, the Council's comment may be taken to indicate partisan feeling by a majority of councillors on the question of a university college rather than on the educational and educative functions of the library and museum services themselves.

The Library Committee set about holding authorised consultations with representatives from the Queen's College. This had been incorporated in 1857 by royal

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<sup>98</sup> Ede, W.M. *Letter to the chairman of the [Liverpool] Library, Museum and Arts Committee*. March 1879. (Liverpool: Library, Museum, and Arts Committee. 1879.)

<sup>99</sup> White, B.D. *A history of the corporation of Liverpool, 1835-1914*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 1951.) p.153; Liverpool Council. *Minutes*, 2 April 1879.

warrant as an institution set up by the directors of the Mechanics Institute to enable tertiary level study, though in the twenty-three years of its existence only nine students graduated.<sup>100</sup> It also consulted with the committees of the Science and Art Classes, and of the proposed university college. Mr Ede was also present at the conferences, at which three major lines of possible activity were suggested:-

- (a) the establishment of a College to be affiliated with Oxford or Cambridge;
- (b) the formation of a technical school for physical science, and a university college for mental science and *belles lettres*;
- (c) the purchase of chemical and experimental apparatus with provision for lectures by "professors of high standing", together with the appointment of a consultative committee of management which should include members of the Library Committee, who should associate with the Science and Art Department in order to obtain government grants and awards.

It would seem that the nucleus of a college as proposed in the first suggestion was in essence the scheme of Ede, whereby the public library would become the university college. As the second suggestion was a modification of the first, whereby existing science classes would be amalgamated to form a separate technical institution at tertiary level, it is clear that all three suggestions depended on some management by the Library Committee itself.

The brevity of the Library Committee's report to the Council in itself suggests that so much dissension had arisen that it may have been considered advisable to give the minimum details. It was pointed out that the Liverpool Library and Museum Act of 1852 authorised the delivery of lectures on science and art, and that the Committee had availed itself of this special privilege for some years by means of a popular series on miscellaneous subjects. In addition, occasional science courses had been provided (particularly in the early years) and advantage recently taken of the university extension scheme. The Committee felt that it had acted strictly within its legal powers, and wished to continue in this direction, but doubted the legality of any extension. It was pointed out that there were already three organised agencies for science classes in Liverpool, and that a fourth would inevitably weaken the others. (The Committee does not seem to have

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<sup>100</sup> Kemp, N. *Scientific and technical education in Liverpool, 1851-1902*. (unpublished Manchester University M.Ed. thesis. 1971. pp.44-45. [Originally established with Faculties of Arts and of Law, and with both day and evening classes, Queen's College eventually became mainly an evening institution.]

been convinced that a central body to undertake the entire work was necessary, though it did express its feeling that the Town Council was not the appropriate body to do so as it was of fluctuating membership and so not permanent enough for a "teaching body".)

With a somewhat surprisingly narrow outlook in view of the activities which it had already initiated, the Committee said that the Council had been elected for different purposes and had not the necessary qualifications. Furthermore, merely to provide the finances and leave the administration to another body outside municipal control would not be desirable. It was proposed to accept the offers of "professors of high standing" to give courses of lectures on science, as "the provision of the means of education is strictly within their limits, leaving the systematic application and continuous teaching to the existing organisations". Beyond this the Committee could not advise the Council to go, and so the Corporation itself took no further action towards the establishment of the University College. <sup>101</sup>

It is apparent that the Library Committee felt that it did have educational responsibilities but that its powers would not be allowed to include a university college institution. Possibly it was felt that if the Committee could not organise the college then the Council should not do so, but it certainly did not prevent the Liverpool Public Library Committee from continuing its educative work. The miscellaneous lectures were continued and the courses developed, the School of Science continued to be housed in the library lecture rooms, the art gallery and later the museum lectures were commenced, school parties were organised to visit the facilities, and the museum circulating cabinets system was begun as a schools service. The Committee not only resolved that "regard be had to Courses of Lectures of an Educational character" <sup>102</sup> but actually insisted on organising its own courses when it considered that the one proposed by the Cambridge Extension Syndicate was too specialised in its character. <sup>103</sup> Furthermore, after the passing of the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 and the Local Taxation (Customs & Excise) Act of 1890, the Library Committee was charged with the duty of organising technical education, which it did through its Technical Instruction Committee. <sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Liverpool Library Committee. *Higher education: report.* (1879).

<sup>102</sup> Liverpool Library Committee, Lectures Sub-Committee. *Minute Book*, 23 November 1880 and 17 November 1881.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, 12 May 1881 and 11 August 1881.

<sup>104</sup> Liverpool Library Committee. *Minutes*, 12 February 1891.

Whatever the real reasons for the tenor and the wording of the Library Committee's report to the Council in which it had recommended no involvement in the scheme to establish a university college in Liverpool, the proposal did come to fruition in 1881. Ede's suggestion had been that if the college had been inaugurated under the auspices of the Library Committee, it should seek affiliation with one of the two older universities. At the same time he saw the proposed Liverpool college as being a local one like those in Leeds and Manchester. For some time there had been a university extension committee in Leeds which was in association with the Cambridge Syndicate. In order to put its work on a better basis it offered to transfer its functions to the College of Science, which gladly accepted the responsibility in 1877 as it was considered advantageous to include arts studies in the subjects offered. At the same time its name was changed to the Yorkshire College. In Manchester, Owens College had been growing increasingly dissatisfied with teaching for the external degree syllabus of London University (which it had done since opening in 1851), and wished to develop into a degree-awarding local university.

Yorkshire College petitioned against granting this status to Manchester, preferring instead to see a federated college system whose constituent parts would exist in various towns. This plan was approved by the government in 1880 when the Victoria University was chartered, with Owens College as the first incorporated institution. When University College Liverpool was founded in the following year it was envisaged that it would become part of the Victoria University, which it did in 1884 after amalgamation with the Liverpool School of Medicine. In the same year, the Leeds School of Medicine amalgamated with Yorkshire College, and the joint institution was admitted to the Victoria University in 1887.<sup>105</sup>

The subsequent association between the Library Committee and University College Liverpool tended to be the result of personal rather than official contact, though this did result in the inclusion of the University College in the Committee's official scheme for technical education in the city. Just as the early lecturers in the library's free lectures series had often come from existing educational institutions, so the University College staff were utilised in the 1830s and 1890s. Professor W.A. Herdman gave twenty-three lectures for the public library between 1882 and 1899, and Professor H.S. Hele Shaw lectured on fifteen occasions for the library between 1886 and 1899.<sup>106</sup> It was doubtless this kind of contact which resulted in the Library Committee recognising

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<sup>105</sup> Curtis. *op.cit.*, pp.434-438.

<sup>106</sup> Liverpool Public Library. *Statistics: free lectures. passim.* [see Appendix 3]

the University College as the apex of local technical education, with such tangible expression as grants of £750 to the Physics Department, £250 to the Engineering Department, and £250 to the Chemistry Department. These were followed by the endowment of a lectureship in Education, and by annual grants of £200 towards the 'Penny Lectures' organised by the University College. <sup>107</sup>

### 2.3.3 Exeter University College

The third case of association between a public library and a university college occurred in Exeter, and is quite different from the other two in principle though with some similar features. Writing from the library point of view at the end of the nineteenth century, one author reported that "Exeter has a beautiful building, but the library has to take a very second place to the museum and schools of science and art.... The library is evidently being starved in order to feed the museum section". <sup>108</sup> A different point of view was expressed in 1905 at the annual meeting of the Library Association held in Cambridge, by the Master of Downing College (Dr Hill). He said that he knew of only two libraries where the conditions were satisfactory—in Exeter and in Nottingham. In both towns there was a museum, library and university college under the same roof, and the librarians there were coadjutors of the museum curators and colleagues of the teachers in the university colleges. Dr Hill said that this arrangement greatly assisted the larger needs of education, and considered the convenience of both book users and 'book storers'. <sup>109</sup> It is most unlikely that his librarian audience would have appreciated being referred to as book storers even at that date, and certainly not the secondary status accorded as 'coadjutor' of the museum curator.

In fact, the use of both terms was inaccurate, for even though much of librarianship was then concerned with acquisition, housing and classification, availability to the public was of considerable importance as may be exemplified by the 'open-access' controversy. True, many libraries had begun by having only reference collections, but lending departments were opened as soon as possible. As for being assistants to the curators, in very many towns the librarian was also curator, for it was envisaged from the first legislation that a public library should have a museum and possibly also an art gallery. The smallness of these institutions ensured that few places could afford the luxury of both a librarian and a curator. One city which did employ specialists was

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<sup>107</sup> Liverpool Library Committee, Technical Instruction Sub-Committee. *Minutes*, 7 June 1891, 9 May 1892 and 13 January 1893.

<sup>108</sup> Greenwood, T. *Public libraries. op.cit.* p.228.

<sup>109</sup> Report of Dr Hill's paper in the *Library Association Record*, vol 7 (1905). p.548.



Liverpool, where the senior staff consisted of the Librarian, a Sub-librarian, the Curator of the museum, the Curator of the Mayer Museum, and the Curator of the Walker Art Gallery. <sup>110</sup>

In Nottingham the Librarian was also responsible for the natural history museum, which was a relatively unimportant appendage to the public library itself; he was not responsible for the university college. In Exeter, the institution was originally conceived as a museum in association with the School of Art; the public library was included late in the planning, and initially the whole was institutionalised on a private subscription basis. Opened as the Albert Memorial Museum in 1870, the staff consisted of a Curator (salary £200 p.a.) and a Librarian (salary £100 p.a.) who had been a chemist. In April 1873 the Curator voluntarily relinquished £50 of his salary, and the Librarian had sole responsibility for the library. The two offices were later combined, but separated again in 1901. <sup>111</sup>

The association between the public library and University College Exeter did not come into effect until the latter was founded in 1893/4, though the origins of both institutions may be traced in part to the earlier Science and Art Classes. The other major services were not common to both institutions; these were the museum for the library, and the university extension lectures for the university.

There had been the usual circulating and society libraries in the city, as well as the Cathedral Library tracing its origins back to Bishop Leofric in the 11th century, who is reputed to have given his books to the cathedral. <sup>112</sup> The immediate origins of the Albert Memorial lay in the School of Art which was founded in 1854, <sup>113</sup> but which was so successful that by 1860 it was looking for larger rooms. At a meeting of its committee in 1861 there was a renewed call for a museum and library to be appended for the use of the students. This was not the first time that a museum had been provided in Exeter, for one was included in the services offered by the Devon and Exeter Institution (founded in 1813) though it did not long survive. At the end of 1861 Prince Albert died, and in Exeter a Prince Consort Memorial Fund was launched. It was decided that the memorial

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<sup>110</sup> Liverpool Library Committee. *31st Report* [for 1883]. p.2.

<sup>111</sup> Whitton, J.B. *A history of libraries in Exeter, in particular the Exeter City Library*. (unpublished Sheffield University M.A.Librarianship special study paper. 1968/69.) pp.16 and 18; Tapley-Soper, H. Exeter public library. *Library Association Record*, vol.13, 1911, p.68.

<sup>112</sup> Lloyd, L.J. *Library of Exeter Cathedral*. (Exeter: University of Exeter. 1967.) p.1.

<sup>113</sup> Science and Art Department. *Calendar, history, and general summary of regulations*. (London: HMSO. 1893). p.140.

should take a form consistent with the Prince's interests as shown by the Industrial Exhibition of 1851, and so the £2,000 collected for a new building for the School of Art was handed over to the Fund. This had been launched in February 1862 at a public meeting of prominent people in the district, which agreed that the memorial should be a permanent "museum with adjuncts for the study of art, science, and literature".<sup>114</sup>

In September 1862 a Fund Sub-Committee was set up to receive and look after any gifts offered for the museum, to be stored in a private art gallery in Colleton Crescent. In point of fact, the first donation received was the gift of "503 volumes of bound books, and 103 journals, pamphlets, etc."—probably because people are usually more ready to throw out old books than antiques. Museum objects did follow, and after removal to temporary premises in Paul Street, they were first put on exhibition to the public at 1d (1/2p) admission on 5 May 1866, when there were 96 visitors.

Meanwhile, progress in opening the permanent building had been hampered by strikes and by shortage of money; the Fund relied on gifts and subscriptions, and there was no regular source of income. One citizen donated land in Queen Street valued at £2,000 and by August 1863 about £5,677 had been raised. However, it was a further year before the Committee of Management accepted the architect's design for "providing accommodation for the earlier requirements of a museum... the School of Art, and a large room which could be used temporarily as a free library". At this date it is doubtful that by 'free library' they had in mind a public library under the Acts and maintained from the rates, as this would not have fitted in with the voluntary character of the rest of the institution. In July 1865 the builder's contract was signed and in October the foundation stone was laid.<sup>115</sup>

When the building of the Albert Memorial Museum was officially opened on 20 April 1868, it was still incomplete; in fact, the contract to commence the south wing (finished in 1869) was not even signed until three months later. There was then an opening ceremony for the entire building on 21 April 1870 on its transfer to the City Council. Between these two dates, the committee of the Albert Memorial Museum (which included the School of Art) had found itself short of sufficient funds to develop both the museum and a library. The School itself did, of course, receive fees from

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<sup>114</sup> Donisthorpe, G.T. *An account of the origin and progress of the Devon and Exeter Albert Memorial*. (Exeter. 1868?) p.8; Tapley-Soper. *op.cit.*, pp.56-58.

<sup>115</sup> Tapley-Soper. *op.cit.*, pp.58-60; Donisthorpe. *op.cit.*, p.25.

students, and qualified for grants and awards from the Science and Art Department. <sup>116</sup> In June 1868 a member of the Building Committee stated that "if the committee proposed to open the free library immediately, it would be advisable to supply a cheap table, a few chairs, and to take some London newspapers and other local papers". This suggestion was referred to an *ad hoc* sub-committee which (rather confusingly) became known as the Free Library Committee. The following month this committee recommended that no further action be taken to furnish a library (although books had been given) until the south wing had been completed. However, the general committee of the Albert Memorial Museum resolved that: "No money be expended for the present on the free library and that any books, scientific papers, and periodicals presented to the library and reading room be open to the citizens of Exeter". <sup>117</sup>

It is apparent therefore that without at least a table there could hardly have been an effective reading room, but it is not clear whether it was intended that the books should be available for home use. In any case, some sort of shelving would be essential to provide the minimum of convenient accessibility to the books, so that it is not certain what the contradictory resolution of the general committee intended should be done in the matter. It was not until April 1869 that it was resolved to erect temporary shelving, and this was probably because of the possibility of a complete set of patents being deposited there. The Commissioners of Patents had offered a set of their publications valued at about £2,000 to the City Council, which had no space available to house them nor anyone to look after them. <sup>118</sup> The committee of the Albert Memorial Museum resolved to accept them if the town council did not, and if the Commissioners agreed to reserve them until facilities for reception were arranged. This spurred the Council to appoint a Free Library Committee (as a sub-committee of the Council and not yet under the Free Libraries Act as it was commonly known) "to consider the desirability of establishing a Free Library in Exeter, and to report".

After consultation with the committee of the Museum, the Corporation's library committee recommended the city to call a public meeting to adopt the Public Libraries Act of 1855. The Museum confirmed that it would have room for the patents and for a public

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<sup>116</sup> For example, in the 1894/5 session the School of Science and Art in the Albert Memorial Museum received £384.05p (£384 1s.) in grants and £298.76p (£298 15s. 1d.) in fees, according to the *43rd Report* of the Science and Art Department. p.98.

<sup>117</sup> Tapley-Soper. *op.cit.*, pp.59-61.

<sup>118</sup> A similar situation arose in 1855 when a set of patents was offered to Wolverhampton Corporation on condition that they would be freely available each day; they were stored in the School of Art building, and remained unused. See Rowberry, A *History of Wolverhampton public libraries from 1868 to 1900*. (unpublished Library Association final examination essay, 1967.) p.1.

library. At that time the Museum estimated a deficiency of £1,217 but a subscription list soon brought in £1,744 which enabled the completion of the south wing. As a result, the City Council approved the sub-committee's recommendations, and following the public meeting it formally adopted the Act in May 1869.<sup>119</sup>

The Corporation had no power to transfer the proceeds of the rate under the Act to another body's library and museum, but it could spend the money on providing and maintaining "Public Libraries or Museums, or both, or for Schools for Science or Art".<sup>120</sup> The solution was therefore to transfer the existing Albert Memorial building and contents to the Corporation, and a resolution was therefore passed at a meeting of donors and subscribers to do this "for the purpose of being perpetually maintained as a Museum, School of Science and Art, and Free Library under the Public Libraries Act of 1855".<sup>121</sup> In fact, most of the money was quite legally spent on the museum and a lesser amount on the library, whilst the School of Art was expected to pay its own way as much as possible. The main increase in the additions to the library came in the form of gifts and bequests—a possible way of acquiring scarce materials but a certain way of acquiring a quantity of rubbish.

Nevertheless, some invaluable donations were received, from which a reference and lending stock could be provided. For example, in April 1871 the Public Select Library (a subscription library founded in 1807 "from which all books of an immoral nature, novels, dramatic productions, works on controversial divinity and party politics are excluded",<sup>122</sup> though it had subsequently liberalised its acquisition policy) consisting of some 7,500 volumes was given to the new public library on condition that the proprietors and subscribers had free use of it. A more typical picture is seen in the statistics for the year 1878, when there were 2,570 books in the Reference Library and 8,923 in the Lending Library. This shows that very few books apart from gifts could have been acquired. This is reinforced by the figure of 500 books given during the year against only twelve purchased. A few books were specially bought with the School of Science and Art in mind, and the students were permitted to enter the closed-access shelves to select books for reference. On the whole, however, the library was in no

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<sup>119</sup> Exeter and Devon Albert Memorial Museum Committee. *Minutes*, 3 December 1868 and 7 January 1869; Exeter City Council. *Minutes*, 10 December 1868 and 6 May 1869.

<sup>120</sup> *Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1855*, section XVIII.

<sup>121</sup> Exeter and Devon Albert Memorial Museum Committee. *Minutes*, 9 December 1869 and 7 April 1870.

<sup>122</sup> Besley, H. *Exeter Directory*. (Exeter: Besley. 1835). p.22. [It was at first mainly for young persons, but later catered for the general reader.]

position to supplement the educational facilities of Exeter on equal terms with the museum and the School of Science and Art.<sup>123</sup> Statistics by themselves can be deceptive; for example, it was reported that there had been a considerable increase in the number of issues in the Reference Library, "but this was principally owing to the number of young persons frequenting the reading rooms who find amusement in the bound volumes of *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*".<sup>124</sup>

The administrative structure of the institution was rather complicated. The Memorial itself was under the management of a Board of Governors annually elected by the Corporation, and which was invested with executive powers. In 1892 this consisted of the Mayor who was both chairman and treasurer, eight aldermen and seven councillors, with fifteen co-opted laymen. By 1910 the Board of Governors consisted of nineteen members of the Corporation with the Mayor *ex officio* as chairman, with eighteen others co-opted as lay members. At this latter date the Board had several standing committees, such as those for the college, the library, the hostel, the museum, etc., which reported each month to a full meeting of the Board in the same way that Council committees did.<sup>125</sup>

Soon after the transfer of the institution to the City Council, evening classes were organised for the Science and Art Department's examinations on a wider scale, but Cambridge University extension classes do not seem to have been provided in Exeter until Miss Jessie Montgomery organised these in the 1880s. In 1893 she was the prime mover in drafting a scheme to combine the Science and Art Classes with the university extension courses, which directly resulted in the foundation in the following year of the Exeter Technical and University Extension College with a full-time Principal. This existed for a few years in the School of Science and Art's premises in the Albert Memorial alongside the museum and public library, each of which was in theory a component of the same institution. At the time of the transfer to the Corporation, the building was valued at £10,762.39p (£10,762 7s 8d) plus £2,000 for the site. By 1897 this had increased to £30,000 for the site and buildings of the Technical and University

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123 Exeter and Devon Albert Memorial Museum Committee. *Minutes*, 2 March 1871 and 10 April 1879.

124 *ibid.*, 29 April 1890; and Exeter and Devon Albert Memorial Museum Committee. *Annual Report* [for 1879].

125 Exeter and Devon Albert Memorial Museum Committee. *Annual Report* [for 1892]; Tapley-Soper. *op.cit.*, pp.67-68.

Extension College, the Museum, and the Public Library.<sup>126</sup> A new wing to the Albert Memorial was opened in 1899 and the College housed in it. This released a little more space for the public library, which served as the library of the College until 1933. Not until 1905 did the College make a book grant to the public library, however, but it was soon also making a small contribution to the librarian's salary in recognition of his additional role as College Librarian. In the 1901/1902 session, the College began to look towards the external degrees of the University of London rather than towards the Cambridge Syndicate, and for many years the College was maintained chiefly from the technical instruction funds. The public library did benefit in the early twentieth century from the large number of books which the College purchased each year; these were placed in the main library and so were freely available to the public as well as to students of the College.<sup>127</sup>

In the nineteenth century, however, the service was only in the one direction with the public library acting as the College Library on tragically inadequate funds. This was because until 1909 the only income for both the library and the museum was the 1d (1/2p) rate levied under the Public Libraries Acts. After that date the whole sum was used for library purposes and the 1/2d (1/4p) levied under the Museums & Gymnasiums Act of 1891 was spent on the museum. After 1922 when the government Treasury recognised the college as a University College, the public library continued to act as the University College Library for another eleven years. All other formal associations between the University College and the Corporation ceased in 1922. Even before this, however, there had been a physical separation from the institution in 1911, when the College moved to new premises provided in Gandy Street at a cost of some £25,000.

#### *2.3.4 relations with other higher education institutions*

Although all public libraries would have been used by students of local educational institutions, there were few others which acted formally as college libraries. One exception was in Chelsea, where Greenwood reported that "the Central [Public] Library forms the Library of the South-west London Polytechnic Institute, which is an adjoining building", and printed classified lists of technical and scientific books for the use of students.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *Record of Technical and Secondary Education*, vol.VII, 1898. p.325; Lloyd-Parry, H. *History of the University College of the South West of England to 1946*. (Exeter: Exeter University College. 1946.) *passim*.

<sup>127</sup> Tapley-Soper. *op.cit.*, p.68; Tapley-Soper, H. *Financial and other relations existing between the University College, Exeter, and the Exeter City Library*. [unpublished typescript memorandum bound with the College Library *Minutes*. c.1931.] *passim*.

<sup>128</sup> Greenwood, T. *Greenwood's Library Year Book, 1897*. (London: Cassell. 1897.) p.137.

Public libraries sought co-operation with other institutions also. At Leeds this resulted in the library committee employing professors from the Yorkshire College (forerunner of the University of Leeds) to give "attractive and popular lectures" in various locations throughout the borough from 1887, though they were discontinued due to the lack of library funding.<sup>129</sup> These began in 1887 with twelve winter lectures by four members of the College staff, on 'Muscular Power', 'The Nature of Explosions', 'Electricity as a Motive Power', and 'Heat and Work'. An average of only 175 people attended each lecture, at a total cost to the Library Committee of £75 3s 11d. (£75.19½p.).<sup>130</sup> The College had already a tradition of giving popular lectures, but these had been discontinued when a change of *locale* resulted in diminishing attendances. "The Senate", it was reported, "therefore determined to bring these Lectures again into closer contact with the working classes, and the opportunity for doing so was afforded by an invitation from the Free Libraries Committee". Audiences of from 300 to 400 attended in the Philosophical Hall, and between 100 and 150 attended the repeats in other places. Admission was free, and the costs fully met by the Public Library Committee.<sup>131</sup>

In 1893 eight lectures were given by two other professors of the Yorkshire College in the Sculpture Gallery, funded from part of the technical instruction grant which the Library Committee had received. The lecture hall was filled to its capacity of 350 people on each occasion.<sup>132</sup> In the following year four series of three lectures each, were funded by the Library Committee and held in the Art Gallery. The subjects dealt with 'Early Italian Art', 'Bridge Construction', 'Celestial Geology', and 'Music' respectively, and there was an estimated total attendance of some 6,000 people. That year, however, only two of the lectures were from the College.<sup>133</sup> It appears that other occasional short series of lectures were organised by the library committee until the end of the century,<sup>134</sup> but then ceased.

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129 Hand, T.W. *The Leeds public free libraries*. (Leeds: Public Library. 1903.) pp.22-23.

130 Leeds: Public Libraries Committee. *Annual report 1887-8*. p.4.

131 Yorkshire College. *Annual report 1887-8*. p.27.

132 Leeds: Public Libraries Committee. *Annual report 1893-4*. pp.4-5.

133 Leeds: Public Libraries Committee. *Annual report 1894-5*. p.4.

134 Greenwood, T. *British library year book 1900-1901*. *op.cit.* p.152.

### 3. Community activities and public libraries

Most local authorities seem to have allowed considerable licence to their library committees, to whom they had delegated their powers under the Public Libraries Acts. This led to much variation in facilities and services throughout the country, as committees and librarians responded to local needs and conditions as they perceived them. In some cases this led to the provision of a very basic book-based service, though in most there was an expansion to include museums and art galleries. The development of the concept of a public institution which would become the cultural centre of the local community was facilitated in some places by library lectures. Schools of science and art helped their development as the post-school educational centre of the local community.

In addition to these in-house activities (of which the public libraries had no monopoly), various other activities contributed to the realisation of the idea of public institutions as envisaged by Buckingham and other earlier social reformers.

#### 3.1 Library initiated activities

Activities took different forms in different places, though on the whole they were not very widespread throughout the public library systems. A few examples indicate the kind of initiatives which were inaugurated. Liverpool city library organised a Library Literary Society in December 1881 under the presidency of Peter Cowell (Chief Librarian), from whom the post was taken over in 1883 by Thomas Formby (Sub-librarian). The Society held debates and discussions, and papers were also read in each winter session. These papers were divided between literary topics (such as that on 'the Essayists' Period of English Literature and its Influence on the Literary Criticism of the last Quarter of a Century' by W. May), and library topics (such as 'Municipal Corporations and the Free Libraries Acts' by Mr Formby).<sup>135</sup>

In the Oxford public library a Working Men's Association was established soon after it was first opened; lectures in the various departments of science, literature, and art, were given "by graduates of the University and by many intelligent citizens to large classes in the various rooms attached to the City Buildings."<sup>136</sup> Oxford also started a weekly Public Library Debating Society, established in 1854 as a result of a memorial

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<sup>135</sup> Library Association *Monthly Notes* vol.4, no.12, December 1883, p.164.

<sup>136</sup> House of Commons. Public Libraries. Return... 1856. paper 221. p.9.



presented by Alderman Sadler.<sup>137</sup> Nottingham had a Men's Sunday Morning Institute which met in the University College under library committee auspices. The city librarian, Potter Briscoe was a teacher in the Institute. In 1888 it was reported that its library was about to be considerably augmented, and that Briscoe would compile a new catalogue. When the library had been reorganised and the new catalogue published, a large increase in the circulation of books was recorded.<sup>138</sup>

Watford offered several extra facilities. A Youths' Institute (Figure 8.2) was formed in September 1874 under the auspices of the Watford Public Library Committee, with local clergymen and school representatives as co-opted members of its management council. Special classes were organised for these young people, a Penny Bank was started, and indoor games facilities were also provided. By the following year there were already some 119 members, who were required to attend at least one of the classes offered. It was stated that the Institute was "intended for youths who have passed the higher standards of an elementary school, and do not interfere with the work of the night school which is designed for persons of neglected education".<sup>139</sup>

The Town Council at Brighton adopted at its 3 August 1888 meeting the report from the Pavilion Committee which recommended that a lending library be established in the Chess Room. It had earlier been decided to sever the superintendence of the public library from that of the Fine Art Gallery and Museum.<sup>140</sup> At Middlewich (Cheshire), a Workman's Institute was formed in connection with the public library, in which there was a public recreation room, supported out of the local rate. The Librarian there (Thomas Drinkwater) was untrained, and devoted only a small portion of his time to the library itself.<sup>141</sup> Shoreditch provided a novel feature in view of the English climate and London air pollution—an open air reading room had been built in a large garden behind the library at Haggerston, where a covered shelter was provided.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Oxford Journal*, 14 October, 1854, p.5, reading in part "burgesses...believing that the free discussion of all opinions is a useful intellectual exercise, and that it develops truth, and promotes the free exercise of justice to all...". At four meetings the merits of Sir W. Cubitt's scheme for drainage of Oxford was discussed (with most speakers against it); on another evening the topic was 'The Characteristics of Three Great English Landscape Painters: Wilson, Gainsborough, Turner' (*Oxford Journal*, 31 March 1855, p.5.) It was later stipulated that the subjects must be approved by the mayor six days before the meetings (*Oxford Journal* 22 September 1855, p.5.)

<sup>138</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, pp.81 and 135.

<sup>139</sup> Hatley, V.A. *The Watford Local Board of Health 1850-1875*. (unpublished Durham University dissertation. 1953.) pp.183 and 224.

<sup>140</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, pp.113 and 73.

<sup>141</sup> Greenwood, T. *Greenwood's Library Year Book, 1897*. *op.cit.* p.173.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.* p.194.

**YOUTHS' INSTITUTE,**  
 IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
**WATFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY.**

COUNCIL:

PRESIDENT . . . . . LORD EBURY.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

DR. A. T. BRETT. R. R. CAREW, Esq. Rev. R. L. JAMES.		ROBERT PRYOR, Esq. Rev. W. WALSH.
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E. ASHBY. M. BEVAN. E. BAMFORD. E. M. CHATER. A. COTTAM. C. W. EDWARDS. J. B. FAIRMAN.		Rev. A. A. FARNALL. R. W. HINTON. C. HUMBERT, Jcn. Rev. N. PRICE. HENRY ROGERS. W. L. SMITH. JAMES TAPPLEY.
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F. J. SEDGWICK, *Treasurer.*

T. GARDNER, *Secretary, QUEEN'S ROAD, WATFORD.*

This Institute is established to promote the moral and intellectual improvement of working Lads between 13 and 19 years of age, employed in shops, offices, works, &c. Lads who wish to improve their education, or to have a place for quiet amusement and social intercourse with others of their own age, will here find what they need. One of the best rooms in the Public Library has been set apart for the use of the Members of the Youths' Institute. It will be comfortably furnished, well lighted and warmed, supplied with chess, draughts, and various other games; also with magazines and books. Classes will be established in Arithmetic, Grammar and Composition, Singing and other subjects free to the Members; and there will be interesting lectures and entertainments. Each Member must attend at least one Class. Members of the Youths' Institute will also be admitted to the Classes in the School of Science and Art at a reduced charge. It is intended also to establish a Penny Bank, and in the Summer to maintain Cricket and other Sports. A Register of Situations will be kept. Members in want of a situation may apply to the Secretary.

The charge for all the privileges above mentioned will be 2d. per week, or 6d. per month, during the winter months. We can admit 120 Members. The 60 who join first will not be charged any entrance fee. Those who join subsequently will have to pay an entrance fee of 6d.

A MEETING FOR LADS

Will be held in the Public Library, on Wednesday, 21st October, at 8 o'clock, when further particulars will be given. E. J. TABRUM, Esq., Member of the London School Board, and Secretary of a large and successful Youths' Institute at Islington, will attend. There will be dancing, views, singing, and other entertainments during the evening.

Three-fourths of the Room will be reserved for Youths. Admission Free. Admission to the other part of the Room, 1s.

The Council hope to see every youth in Watford and neighbourhood present at the Meeting on the 21st. Come and bring another boy with you. The doors will be open at half-past 7.

The Youths' Institute will be commenced on Friday evening, 23rd October, at half-past 6. Hours daily, except Sunday, half-past 6 to 10.

**Figure 8.2: Watford Public Library. Youths' Institute, 1874. 140**

Hinckley held an American Fair on at least one occasion as a fund-raiser (Figure 8.3), whilst Brighton held regular flower exhibitions. High Wycombe organised a Rustic Fair and Summer Fête in the grounds of Wycombe Abbey for three days on behalf of the Endowment Fund, which netted £1,431 and left less than £300 to complete the £3,000 needed.<sup>144</sup> Public libraries in a few other places also had recreational provision. Both Hucknall and Huddersfield had game rooms, and Chorley boasted a smoke room. The games, however, were not always of the approved type—at Hucknall a Report of the Free Library Committee complained of damage by youths and young men breaking glass, and playing football in the games room. The local newspaper recorded that: "They spit on the draught boards, and write filthy language about the place. They also carry off draughts and dominoes".<sup>145</sup> Fleetwood had a donated "recreation room, ostensibly for billiards, but in which other games have been introduced. A complaint has been made that gambling goes on in this room".<sup>146</sup> Clearly, there was some lack of agreement on what constituted the library as a fun place to visit!

From the eighteenth century groups of people would band together to purchase books for circulation amongst themselves, and many booksellers also organised subscription libraries in connection with their businesses. Some mechanics' institutions operated similar schemes. Because of the insufficiency of money from the rates to buy an adequate supply of books (especially when interest on loans for buildings had priority), a few public libraries also began book clubs or subscription departments. A Book Club was established in the Hereford Public Library, which had "proved a decided success", and a Telegram Fund was also been started there—presumably for the Queen's Jubilee.<sup>147</sup> King's Lynn was another town where a Book Club was established in connection with the library.<sup>148</sup>

The Public Libraries Acts stipulated that normal library facilities provided from the public library rate had to be free, so that no part of the rate could be spent on establishing these Clubs, even though the books may have been donated to the library in due course. There was another legal problem, which was the subject of a House of

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<sup>144</sup> Library Association *Monthly Notes*, vol.3, no.7, July 1882, p.112; and no.8, August 1882, p.135.

<sup>145</sup> *Hucknall Star and Advertiser*, 25 February 1895.

<sup>146</sup> Greenwood. *Public libraries*. *op.cit.* p.96.

<sup>147</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, p.58 (citing: Hereford. *The sixteenth annual report of the Committee of the Free Public Library and Museum, to the Town Council, 1887-8.*)

<sup>148</sup> Greenwood, T. *Greenwood's Library Year Book, 1897*. *op.cit.* pp.148-149.

**HINCKLEY FREE LIBRARY.**  
 PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT.  
 A GREAT  
**AMERICAN ∴ FAIR**  
 Will be held in  
**ST. GEORGE'S HALL,**  
 On THURSDAY & FRIDAY, MAY 12 & 13, 1892,  
 The Proceeds of which will be devoted to clearing  
 off the debt of £130 now existing on the Library  
 and Cottage.  
 The Committee ask all who are interested in  
 the success of the Library to save up their odds  
 and ends for the occasion, such as clothing, boots,  
 books, games, toys, cutlery, or surplus articles of  
 furniture; and the young people who use the lend-  
 ing library are requested to make as many new  
 articles, plain or fancy, as they can for the Fair.  
 Further particulars will shortly be announced.

**HINCKLEY FREE LIBRARY.**  
 A GREAT  
**AMERICAN ∴ FAIR**  
 Under the Distinguished Patronage of  
 HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND,  
 Will be held in  
**ST. GEORGE'S HALL,**  
**HINCKLEY,**  
 ON THURSDAY & FRIDAY,  
 MAY 12<sup>TH</sup> & 13<sup>TH</sup>, 1892,  
 to clear off the existing Debt on the Library.  
 Admission :  
 THURSDAY, 2 to 5 p.m., 1s.; AFTER 5 p.m. 6d.  
 FRIDAY, 2 to 5 p.m., 6d; AFTER 5 p.m., 3d.  
**STALLS:**  
 MARKET, FLOWER, AND REFRESHMENT;  
 NEW, USEFUL, AND FANCY ARTICLES;  
 NEW AND LEFT-OFF CLOTHING, BOOTS,  
 FURNITURE;  
 BOOKS, MUSIC, CHINA, HATS, JACKETS,  
 HOSIERY, &c.  
 During the Fair there will be held in the side-  
 room, an ART EXHIBITION, and ELECTRICAL  
 EXHIBITION, including Edison's Wonderful  
 Talking Machine, the PHONOGRAPH.  
 The Fair will be enlivened at intervals by Songs  
 and Musical Selections.  
**COME EARLY! GREAT BARGAINS!**

Figure 8.3: Hinckley Public Library. Fund-raising activity, 1892. <sup>147</sup>

Lords decision—the Income Tax Act of 1842 provided that "allowances are to be made in respect of any building the property of any literary or scientific institution used solely for the purpose of such institution and in which no payment" was received.<sup>150</sup> The existence of book clubs or subscription departments on public library premises jeopardised their privileged status, so that these features were not generally adopted.

### 3.2 Relations with community groups

An important part of what from the end of the century came to be known as 'library extension activities'<sup>151</sup> consisted of outreach activities for groups and societies in the community, designed to promote the use of the various library services. This involved the staff in both intramural and extramural activities of various kinds, of which the talks about library and museum facilities were perhaps the easiest to arrange. These were quite common throughout the country; in 1888, for example, it was noted that "Librarians have been busy of late talking about the treasures under their charge. On February 11, Mr Ogle lectured at Boodle on 'What to Read'. On February 14 Mr Frank Pacy lectured at Turnham Green on 'Libraries, Books and Readers'; and on March 12, Mr Jewers lectured at Southsea on 'Reading and Books that have most influenced me'.<sup>152</sup>

At the end of the century Lawrence Dillon of the Manchester Reference Library gave an address at the YMCA on the subject of books, based on those circulated by the city library, whilst Alderman J.W. Southern (Chairman of the Manchester Library Committee) gave a talk on village libraries in the Burnage Church School, during which he advocated that Withington U.D.C. should adopt the Acts.<sup>153</sup> At Fulham, the library lectures were seen to have an 'uplifting' purpose—whilst in the annual report "the usual apologetic explanation of the excessive fiction [was] supplied, but in a very neat and concise way", it was also noted that "a capital series of popular lectures were given, chiefly in illustration or explanation of the works of authors whose books are in the library".<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> *The Library*, vol.9, 1897, pp.315-316.

<sup>151</sup> Dent, R.K. Library extension work: lectures. *Library World*, March 1899, pp.162-164.; Jolliffe, H. *Public library extension activities*. (London: Library Association. 1962.)

<sup>152</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, p.57.

<sup>153</sup> *Library World*, vol.1, no.9, March 1899, pp.180 and 182.

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*, vol.1, no.10, April 1899, p.205 (citing the 11th annual report of the Fulham Public Library).

There is a difference (not always distinct in practice, however) between talks designed primarily to stimulate library usage, and lectures designed to stimulate the intellect—as noted particularly in Chapter 6 above. Librarians were not above the use of facetious titles to gain attention—Joseph Gilbert's paper (read before a meeting of librarians, in this case) was called 'Librarians' Individual Cranks, and the bearings on the general Weal (Wheel)'. Discussing lecturing as exemplified in the Half-Hour Talks, he said that "one of the chief duties is matrimonial.... By means of these lectures he [the librarian] cultivates brides and bridegrooms for this marriage market of the books and readers".<sup>155</sup> On another light note, Samuel Smith (Librarian of Sheffield) gave a public talk on 'Chuckles behind a Library Counter, and Counter Chuckles' at Cutler's Hall,<sup>156</sup> obviously designed to be an entertaining device to tempt people into the public library itself. One of his later talks in the same place, on 'Books and Reading', was in connection with the Parish Church Literary Society.<sup>157</sup>

### 3.2.1 talks to local societies

Some talks given by librarians may have been held on library premises, and others as part of the regular library lectures programmes. Other talks were given outside the library, usually to local societies—in which case the speaker would normally tailor the bibliothecal subject matter to correspond with the specialist interests of the group. In 1882 Daniel Howorth talked to the Ashton-under-Lyne Biological Society about the natural sciences resources in the Heginbottom Free Library,<sup>158</sup> whilst in November of the following year the librarian of St Helens addressed the local Association for the Pursuit of Science, Literature and Art on 'The St Helens Free Public Library and its Contents'.<sup>159</sup>

In the inner city area of Manchester, the Ancoats Recreational Committee organised a course of free Sunday lectures in 1882, in which Mr C.W. Sutton who was then city librarian co-operated by talking about the 'Treasures of the Free Libraries'. A book display was also organised in connection with the series. Another librarian, William Axon, spoke on 'Shadows of Old Manchester', and it was claimed that between

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155 *The Library*, vol.10, 1898, p.325.

156 *ibid.*, vol.7, 1895, p.372.

157 *Library World*, vol.1, no.10, April 1899, p.207.

158 Howorth, D.F. *Natural sciences illustrated in the Ashton-under-Lyne Free Library: a lecture delivered to the Society*. (Ashton: Ashton-under-Lyne Biological Society. 1882)

159 Library Association *Monthly Notes*, vol.4, no.11, November 1883, pp.143-144.

five and eight hundred people attended the series in the Ancoats Branch Library.<sup>160</sup> A few years later he read a paper to the Manchester Branch of the Teachers' Guild on 'Teachers and Libraries'<sup>161</sup>—Axon was in fact a regular speaker in the district, whose influence on educational and bibliographical development has not yet been fully documented.<sup>162</sup>

Talks were not always on library-related topics, and interesting ones could catch the attention of the local press. Frank Pacy, Librarian of Richmond (Surrey) Public Library, read a paper at the Richmond Athenaeum on 6 February 1888 on 'Humours of Criticism' which was printed in the *Thames Valley Times* two days later.<sup>163</sup> Such occasions helped to establish librarians as interesting and informative members of the community, and their libraries as local resource centres.

An interesting case is that of the South London Free Library and Fine Art Gallery, which was not maintained out of the public library rate but had been established to encourage the adoption of the Acts. One of its activities was a course of free lectures for men and women, held on Sunday afternoons and evenings. The chief burden of lecturing was borne by Mr Rossiter (its Treasurer, Secretary and Librarian), but two other members of the Library Association—Mr Conybeare and Mr Pfoundes—also shared the work.<sup>164</sup> By 1882 it had some 3,000 volumes, and was "the only public collection of books in all South London, which has a population of over a million". In spite of donations it was running at a slight loss,<sup>165</sup> which was exacerbated by the insistence of the Lambeth local authority levying a rate on the library's premises (whilst declining itself to adopt the Public Library legislation)—even though it was certified exempt by the Registrar of Friendly Societies—on the ground that it charged 1d (1/2p) per volume on

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<sup>160</sup> Library Association *Monthly Notes*, vol.3, no.10, October 1882, p.168; no.11, November 1882, p.185; and no.12, December 1882, p.201.

<sup>161</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, pp.187-198.

<sup>162</sup> He was responsible in 1875 for the memorial of the Manchester Literary Club to the Trustees of the British Museum, pointing out that the latter was in the best position to issue full lists of British publications because of the legal deposit regulations (see Axon, W.E.A. Some defects in the statistics of the English publishing trade. *Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society*, 1876-7. pp.256-258). The Trustees declined to undertake this service, which did not begin until 1950.

<sup>163</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, p.21

<sup>164</sup> Library Association *Monthly Notes*, vol.3, no.12, December 1882, p.201.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, 1882, *passim*; but see especially no.12, December 1882, p.204 which cites the *Report of the South London Free Library* (1878-1882).

loans of books. The book stock had grown to over 22,000 by 1888, and its free lectures and concerts were most successful. <sup>166</sup>

### 3.2.2 societies meeting in libraries

Peter Cowell of Liverpool stressed that public libraries were: <sup>167</sup>

not managed in the exclusive interests of any particular class [and] that they should be made, as much as possible, the centres of local literary and scientific work. They would do well to provide rooms (say at a small rent) for the meeting of the various local learned societies—if not, the older and those well-to-do—of the younger and somewhat struggling societies. They might provide at least a notice board for announcing the meetings of such societies, and for advertising lectures and such educational work as comports with the dignity and character of a library. In this way the importance and value of the public library to the citizens generally would be advanced, and gradually become more thoroughly recognised.

Although these facilities contributed an important element of publicity for the bibliographical work of the library, they were also in keeping with the concept of public institutions envisaged in the first half of the century—and they helped many public libraries to be seen as cultural centres by at least some sectors of their local communities.

In December 1860 the library committee had received a letter from Colonel William Brown saying "as I know your wishes are to make every Apartment available for useful purposes so far as connected with Science & Art", and asking that the Lecture Room and the adjoining room be made available for meetings when wanted. The bodies noted were the Historic Society, Polytechnic Society, Architectural & Archaeological Society, Literary & Philosophical Society, and the Chemists' Association. Brown offered to pay for gas and fire heating in the Winter time. His letter continued: "And when the Lecture Room is used you will no doubt see the propriety of excluding all subjects that would lead to angry discussion particularly on Politics and Religion which unfortunately are not always discussed with temper". The Committee gave the necessary permission subject to future rules being drawn up, and similarly agreed to house the monthly meetings of the local Social Science Association. <sup>168</sup> Liverpool city library continued to be a venue for various societies throughout the century.

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<sup>166</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, *passim*.

<sup>167</sup> Cowell, P. *Experientia docet; or, Thoughts and experiences of a public librarian*. *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, p.165.

<sup>168</sup> Liverpool: Gardens, Library and Museum Committee. *Library and Museum Minute Book*, vol.3, pp.388-389, 13 December 1860. The Committee had resolved a month previously to recommend to Council the renaming of the street in which the library had been built from 'Shows Brow' to 'William Brown Street' (*ibid.*, p.373, 15 November 1860.)



The range of local societies which either hired occasional accommodation—or even enjoyed it free of charge—in other public libraries was considerable. For example, in Carlisle the use of the Theatre was granted to the Carlisle Scientific Society, and a Classroom to the Carlisle Entomological Society, which held meetings and lectures during the winter months.<sup>169</sup> Leeds provided accommodation "for several local Astronomical, Naturalist, Antiquarian and other Societies".<sup>170</sup> A Students' Society was established at the Norwich public library,<sup>171</sup> whilst Watford public library provided a home for the meetings of the Hertfordshire Natural History Society, and the Ancient Order of Foresters—which had an important social function in acting as a mutual health benefit society.<sup>172</sup>

The Wolverhampton public library—which prided itself as being a multi-faceted educational centre—informed a parliamentary enquiry that there were "science and other evening classes, free weekly lectures on popular literary and scientific topics, and a field club for students".<sup>173</sup> The Field Club was "organised in connection with the institution in the summer months, and various places of interest in the neighbourhood are visited".<sup>174</sup>

The association of libraries with community organisations often led to library staff becoming office holders in them. This was frequently professional, as at Stoke-on-Trent where the Librarian (Alfred James Claddie) became honorary librarian of the North Staffordshire Naturalists' Field Club & Archaeological Society in 1894.<sup>175</sup> Of course, in other places librarians would become ordinary or executive members of learned societies or subject specialist clubs in which they were interested, bearing no direct relationship with their work but to which their work might nevertheless contribute. William Axon was one such person whose value as a member of the Manchester Statistical Society was influenced by his profession as an institutional librarian.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Carlisle: Committee of the Public Library, Museum, and School of Science and Art. [2nd] *Annual report, 1895-1896*. p.11.

<sup>170</sup> Ogle. *op.cit.* p.132.

<sup>171</sup> *loc.cit.*

<sup>172</sup> *Watford Public Library, and College of Science, Art, Music and Literature*. (Watford: Public Library Committee. 1887.) p.2.

<sup>173</sup> Parliament: House of Commons. *Parliamentary papers* (1885), Paper 106.

<sup>174</sup> *Library Chronicle*, vol.5, 1888, p.5.

<sup>175</sup> Greenwood, T. *Greenwood's Library Year Book, 1897*. *op.cit.* pp.197-198.

<sup>176</sup> for example, three of the papers which he read before the Society were (a) On some defects in the statistics of books and libraries, read 13 January 1875, Manchester Statistical Society. *Transactions*

### 3.3 Home Reading Circles

Several public libraries recognised the relevant value of the National Home Reading Union "which has made a big impression on the educational world", with Leeds and Norwich being amongst those which provided "comfortable housing" for their local Reading Circles.<sup>177</sup> There is evidence of an attempt to develop an interest in the Union in Ashton-under-Lyne, though it does not appear to have resulted in the formation of an actual branch there.<sup>178</sup> At Bootle, the public library "joined hands with the promoters of the Cambridge Systematic Home Reading Scheme, [and kept] a supply of their syllabuses". The Library Committee undertook to obtain for the library all of the books necessary for the various reading courses.<sup>179</sup>

At Rotherham there was an interesting liaison with the local newspaper, which arose from a conversation in December 1895, between Mr J. Ridal of the public library and the editor of the *Rotherham Advertiser*, during which concern was expressed at the excessive amount of fiction reading in the town (Figure 8.4). In the twelve months just ended, fiction had accounted for some 85.8% of books borrowed from the Rotherham Public Library (Table 8.2). Nevertheless, the reading of fiction was seen as being better than nothing, and as potentially leading to 'better quality' reading. To this end it was decided to encourage people to think and write about what they had read, and the Rotherham Reading Circle was conducted entirely through the columns of the *Rotherham Advertiser* during the early Winter and Spring months of 1896. It is not certain, however, whether this was an official initiative of the Borough Council through its public library. Rather, it was possibly an initiative of the Librarian himself which received the tacit blessing of the Library Committee.<sup>180</sup>

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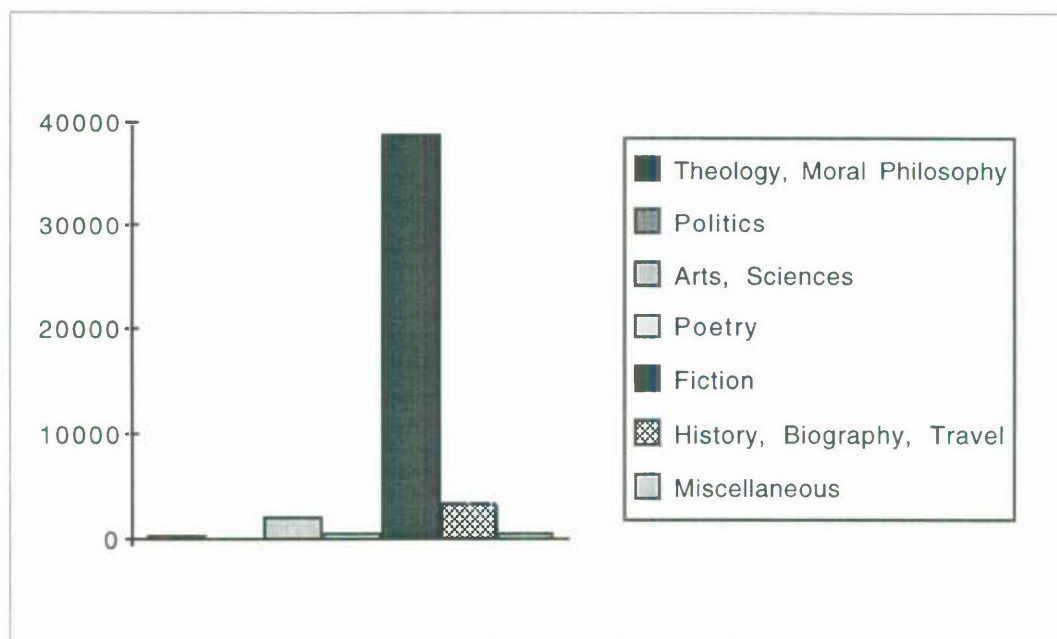
1874-5; (b) Some defects in the statistics of the English publishing trade, read 27 June 1877, Manchester Statistical Society. *Transactions 1876-7*; (c) Statistical notes on the Sunday opening of libraries and museums, read 11 June 1879, Manchester Statistical Society. *Transactions 1878-9*.

<sup>177</sup> Ogle. *op.cit.* p.132; Greenwood, T. *Greenwood's Library Year Book, 1897. op.cit.* pp.176-177.

<sup>178</sup> unidentified and undated newspaper cutting showing the last part of a lecture devoted to the aims and work of the Home Reading Union, in the local history collection of the Ashton-under-Lyne Public Library.

<sup>179</sup> *The Library*, vol.2, 1890, p.111.

<sup>180</sup> Ridal, J. *The Rotherham Free Library Reading Circle: a series of letters (showing its origin) and papers on books read by the members during its first session - 1895-6 - and printed in the 'Rotherham Advertiser' on various dates.* (Rotherham: Henry Garnett & Co. 1896.) *passim*.



**Figure 8.4: Rotherham Public Library. Lending Library book issues December 1894 to November 1895.** <sup>181</sup>

**Table 8.2: Rotherham Public Library. Lending Library book issues for the year ending November 1895.** <sup>182</sup>

	<u>Issues</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Fiction	38,672	85.8%
History, Biography, Travel	3,236	7.2%
Arts, Sciences	1,916	4.3%
Poetry	469	1.0%
Miscellaneous	444	1.0%
Theology, Moral Philosophy	287	0.6%
Politics	32	0.1%
TOTAL	45,056	

<sup>181</sup> created from data in: Rotherham Free Library Committee. *[Monthly] Reports of the Librarian*, January 22nd, 1895 to December 17th, 1895.)

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*

#### 4. Conclusion

Although the public library movement identified itself closely with an educative function, and at times found for itself an educational purpose also, only in a few instances during the nineteenth century were public libraries actually administratively concerned with educational institutions of a formal character. In none of these cases can it be asserted that the public library's own *professional* influence resulted in a particularly strong bibliothecal bias being introduced into the educational methodology of those institutions.

Liaison between the Nottingham public library and the University College Nottingham was close, and if Ede is to be believed this association was not originally planned. However, when Ede attempted to create a similar library-university college in Liverpool, the Library Committee and the City Council there were opposed to the idea. This is perhaps regrettable because Liverpool seems to have had the most likely Library Committee to have established a policy favourable to the growth of the University College and to the development of links with the library facilities. As it happened, however, Liverpool University College was not as unduly hampered in its early years as were some other colleges. In the case of Exeter it is difficult to decide how much assistance was provided by the public library. The Library Committee was not responsible for the College's teaching functions, though it did organise itself as a college library committee with the public librarian acting officially as the college librarian. The financial state of the public library meant that its help to the College was minimal, but the financial state of the College itself suggests that any academic library service of its own would have been even more inadequate.

The public library committees do not seem to have been qualified for an educational executive task, as the Liverpool committee itself acknowledged. On the other hand there is little evidence that the university college management committees themselves were farsighted or specially competent. Initiatives came generally from persons not on elected town councils (though often prominent persons in their communities), and it may be hypothesised that in fact the people who were educationally active behind the scenes were often not perceived as being politically active in public.

There was, however, considerable co-operation between public libraries and the University Extension Lectures schemes, both by the hosting of lectures on library premises and by the provision of reading matter. On the local level, many libraries were becoming centres where societies could meet to discuss their interests and to use the resources provided. Individual librarians gave talks to community groups both within

and without the library premises, and many supported their activities by acting as honorary secretaries or holding other office. Both the public library and the librarian were becoming important to the cultural lives of their local communities.

