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Ieuan M. Williams

**Continuity and change ~
the role of the university
in the education of adults**

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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Inaugural Lecture

Delivered at the College on 10 November, 1981

by

PROFESSOR I. M. WILLIAMS, M.A.

Department of Adult and Continuing Education

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SWANSEA

1981

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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE
THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

'Rwy'n cofio, âros ugain mlynedd yn ôl bellach, fy hen gyfaill a'm cydweithiwr ers hir f'lynyddoedd, yr Athro Glanmor Williams, yn âweud ar ddechrau ei ddarlith agoriadol yntau, pe na bai arfer yn bod eisoes ar achlysur fel honno i dalu teyrnged i'w ragflaenywr, y byddai'n rhaid iddo ddyfeisio un. Ar un o'w mae fy sefyllfa i heno yn gwbl wahanol, gan i mi gael y f'raint brin o lenwi Cadair newydd sbon yn y Coleg hwn; a'r profiad prinnach fyth synnw i ddim o fod eisoes wedi gweithredu fel pennaeth yr adran honno ers dros ugain mlynedd. Ar yr o'w arall, wrth gwrs, pan ddeuthum i Abertawe yn 1960 fel Cyfarwyddwr Efrydiau Allanol cyntaf y Coleg, mantais arbennig oedd etifeddu ffrwyth dycenweh a gweledigaeth dau ragflaenydd eithriadol iawn a fu'n braenaru'r tir, sef y diweddar P. S. Thomas a arloesodd gwaith tiwtorial allanol yng nghyffiniau Abertawe yn y dau-ddegau; a'i olynydd yn ei swydd y Dr. Illyd David, a dreuliodd yn y maes oes hwy na'r cyffredin, yn ymestyn dros drigain mlynedd ac nad yw eto wedi llwyr lacio'i afael yn yr aradr. Hyfryd yw cael y cyfle hwn i dalu teyrnged gyhoeddus i'w gwaith, ac i'r amryw gydweithwyr i lawr y blynyddoedd a fu'n cynnal eu breichiau hwy, ac yn arbennig fy mreichiau innau yn ystod y 21 mlynedd ddiwethaf.

I recall, some twenty years or more ago, my old friend and colleague of long-standing, Professor Glanmor Williams opening his inaugural lecture by remarking that, if there did not already exist a practice of paying tribute to one's predecessors, he should have had to invent one. In one sense, my position this evening is very different since I have had the rare privilege

of filling a brand new Chair in this College; and I suspect an experience even more rare of having been the head of that particular department for more than twenty years. In another sense of course, when I came to Swansea in 1960 as the College's first Director of Extra-mural Studies, I had the special advantage of inheriting the fruits of the dedication and vision of two very exceptional people who had prepared the ground, namely the late P. S. Thomas who pioneered extra-mural tutorial work in the Swansea area in the 'twenties; and his successor in office Dr. Illyd David, who has spent a very long life-time, extending over sixty years working in the field and who has not yet relaxed entirely his grasp on the plough. It is a delight to have this opportunity of paying tribute to their work, and to the work of many colleagues down the years who helped them; and in particular to those who for the past 21 years have given such firm support to me.

When this College opened its doors in 1920, it gave its immediate support to adult education in the area by establishing in Swansea, and in association particularly with the WEA, a Joint Tutorial Classes Committee. In fact, already in the previous year, the report of two distinguished visitors appointed by the Court of the University of Wales to examine the provision of Arts subjects in the proposed new University College, had included among its recommendations one to the effect that

'In a town like Swansea, where we are satisfied that there is zeal for education and a desire for knowledge, the members of the Arts staff should regard it as an essential part of their duties to provide courses, not merely single lectures, for the general public.'¹

¹ Quoted in 'The first fifty years - a brief survey', in the souvenir booklet University College of Swansea - Fiftieth Anniversary 1920-70

This was never of course formally implemented. Nevertheless a detailed and fascinating account of the work undertaken in those early years is given in the Annual Reports of the College, and of very particular interest is a special report on extra-mural work for the session 1920-21 by Mr. Ernest Hughes as he was then. Professor Glanmor Williams in his tribute to the man who in 1926 became the College's first Professor of History, refers to Ernest Hughes's delight in recalling that for a year, he was the Faculty of Arts. It is proper for me to record that until Mr. P. S. Thomas was appointed a full-time tutor in the session 1923-24, Ernest Hughes was also effectively the College's Extra-mural Studies.

After describing in his report the tutorial, pioneer, and short courses arranged by the College in its first year he goes on to say:

'It being impossible for the College in its early days to organise lectures at a distance from Swansea, I further availed myself of such opportunities as occurred to lecture over the whole area which the extra-mural department of the College, when fully organised, may be fairly required to serve.'

He then lists no fewer than 32 towns and villages, radiating in different directions as far as Haverfordwest, Knighton, Aberdare and Porthcawl which he visited as an emissary of the young College and then adds the intriguing comment:

'Incidentally, I may record the gratification which it gave me to find that the people with whom I came into contact, even in the distant centres visited, took a deep and lively interest in the University College of Swansea; that they were surprisingly well-informed in regard to the progress already made; and that they had definite ideas of their own as to the possibilities of the development of the work of this College.'

Within a very few years, and certainly by the session 1924-25 extra-mural studies were well established in the Swansea area in terms of a work programme which included 3 year Tutorial and 1 year Preparatory classes, short courses, public lectures and 'special courses'; their organisation and teaching were carried out by means of a College Joint Tutorial Classes Committee, full-time and part-time staff; and finances were provided through the Board of Education, the College and the University Extension Board, and the local authorities. Almost sixty years on, very little has changed in all these respects.

The real significance, however is that the University College and its members were by now firmly committed to an extra-mural function. The commitment involved teaching by a large proportion of senior College staff from internal departments - the names of Professors W. D. Thomas, F. A. Cavenagh, Mary Williams, Henry Lewis, A. E. (later Sir Arthur) Trueman, D. Emrys Evans as well as others such as Ernest Hughes and Saunders Lewis, recur year by year in those early reports. At the same time the firm community links forged on the one hand by the initial emergence of the College as a result mainly of the technological and industrial needs of the area, and on the other by the missionary work of people like Ernest Hughes, were strengthened at one level by the powerful early connections with the WEA and with the WETUC. A significant pointer to the importance of this early link and also to some of the implications is that, in the session 1924-25 referred to earlier, five out of the fourteen tutorial classes were conducted on the 'shift' system. At another level, it is tempting to associate the Coalowners' University Trust Fund made available to the College in the 1920's and early 1930's, with the kind of patronage accorded to earlier forms of adult education such as the Mechanics' Institutes and Royal Institutions. The purpose of the Fund was to encourage the spread of university adult education in the area of the anthracite coalfield. Of the many excellent classes that grew out of this fund, Brynamman is today the sole survivor. Day-release courses for trade unionists

however, have never ceased to form an important part of our programme here in Swansea; and today such courses are provided for coalminers and steelworkers on a firm and regular basis.

Why is it that this University College of Swansea, and indeed most universities in the United Kingdom, should be concerned with the education of adults 'outside their walls' in this way? There have been many responses to that question from the middle of the last century onwards, and it is certainly no part of my purpose to rehearse them all here. Some however are worth noting. Thus Ernest Hughes, in his special report to the College Council referred to earlier, underlined the need as he saw it:

'My impressions formed over the area noted and in contact with people of many different classes, callings and conditions, point clearly to the existence of a wide-spread desire and a conscious need for the intellectual stimulus and interest which an active extra-mural department of the College could provide, and which all modern universities freely proclaim that it is one of their first duties to provide for the mass of the population.'

This expressed need to provide 'intellectual stimulus ... for the mass of the population', and Ernest Hughes's reference in the same report that the large enrolment at the first ever series of 12 public lectures on the theme 'Political and Social Movements in Nineteenth Century Europe', proved the existence locally 'of a keen desire for the popular presentment of great issues from the university standpoint', seem to carry an echo of the words of R. D. Roberts when opening the first course of public lectures at Aberystwyth in 1876 that

'one of the functions of the University College of Wales ...
(was) to stand forth as a witness ever before the people, that they must
not rest until the means of obtaining higher education (were) within
the reach of all' ¹

Over 20 years previously, in 1852, The Report of the Royal Commission on Oxford had maintained that 'What is needed is to place the best education within the reach of all qualified to receive it', an axiom startlingly similar to that propounded almost a century later in the Robbins Report 'that courses of higher education should be available for all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so' ² Incidentally, such current phrases as 'lifelong', 'continuing' and 'permanent' education are in many respects of course modern restatements of well-established concepts. For the moment and to this audience I need only recall that the motto of the Welsh language journal Y Gwerinwr from 1855 onwards was Tymor i ddysgu yw holl oes dyn; ('Man's entire life is a term for learning') or that the famous Final Report of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, known popularly as the 1919 Report, was summarised in the Times of the 15th November 1919 under the heading 'Lifelong Education'. The Report itself, which over the years has provided so many basic texts and resounding quotations for talks, articles and books on adult education, states, as one of its seminal propositions,

1 Quoted in B. B. Thomas, 'R. D. Roberts and Adult Education', in Harlech Studies ed. B. B. Thomas, Cardiff, 1938.

Dr. R. D. Roberts was according to the historian J. A. R. Marriott 'the foremost figure in the university extension world in Britain'. A native of Aberystwyth, he became the organising secretary, first of a Local Lecturer Syndicate connected with the University of Cambridge, then of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching; and Registrar of the London Extension Board.

2 Higher Education. Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-63, HMSO 1963, p.8

'That the necessary conclusion is that adult education must not be regarded as a luxury for a few exceptional persons here and there, nor as a thing which concerns only a short span of early manhood, but that adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong'. ¹

Accordingly an essential aim must be 'to make higher education as universal as citizenship'. Benefits are mutual, and include for instance 'the opportunity of getting or of giving the inspiration which springs from the mingling of different types of culture and experience'. Universities for their part would be helped to extend their influence into fields as yet untravelled by them, especially in the direction of industry. There is a thoroughly contemporary ring to the assertion that 'The Universities of Great Britain are still only on the threshold of the work which new conditions demand of them', as there is indeed to the view expressed that the freer admission of students of mature age to courses of full-time study 'would bring a valuable contribution to the intellectual and social life of the university'.

The so-called 'Ashby Report' some thirty-five years later expressed similar views on the reciprocal benefits of extra-mural work:

'... it is evident that many universities set a high value on extra-mural work for its own sake, not merely as a duty which scholars owe to their fellow citizens, but also as a means of keeping universities close to social and economic problems and to the people whose taxes finance them'. ²

1 p. 5

2 The Organisation and Finance of Adult Education in England and Wales, HMSO, 1954, p. 25

The reference thus early to what is now referred to as the public accountability of universities was a pointer to the shape of things to come in the 1960's and early 1970's, when growth in their number and physical resources not only sharpened the pressure on universities to account responsibly for their larger budgets but underlined also the propriety of making those physical resources available to a wider public in the local community.

More recently still a report produced as the result of a detailed review by the University of Oxford of its extra-mural work also noted its essentially local nature, and like the Robbins Report a few years later, stressed the important influence of the university on the intellectual and cultural climate of its region; remarking also, however, on the benefits enjoyed too by the university from such activity, notably the intellectual stimulus it provided for teachers, the valuable information it often provided for full-time students, and the way in which it helped to create a sympathetic environment for the university.¹ The most recent major report on adult education, published in 1973 and known familiarly 'in the trade' as it were as the Russell Report,² lays great store by the unique contribution that universities have to make to a fully comprehensive service of education for adults, the distinguishing feature of that contribution being

'the intellectual demands it makes on students, enabling them to think and work independently in the best traditions of university scholarship, to meet with the latest results of research, or to appreciate the frameworks of theory within which professional activity is carried on'

¹ Report of the Committee on Extra-mural Studies, University of Oxford, 1970, pp. 15-16.

² Adult Education: A Plan for Development. Report by a Committee Of Inquiry under the Chairmanship of Sir Lionel Russell, CBE, HMSO, 1973

I have I hope said enough even thus sketchily to indicate the degree of unanimity maintained in a periodic expression of views spanning more than sixty years about the important and unique nature of a university's contribution to a comprehensive process of adult education; and from the days of Ernest Hughes's missionary expeditions onwards those views have stressed also the reciprocal benefits to be gained by the university itself from such involvement. Such a steadfast attitude is all the more remarkable when one remembers that it was sustained throughout the depression of the twenties and thirties, the devastation of the Second World War and the explosive growth in university provision over the following twenty-five years or so.

Throughout this entire period, what Spenser called

'... the ever whirling

Wheel of Change, the which all mortal things doth sway'

has accelerated to a rate unprecedented in man's history. The implications, profound and far-reaching as they must be for any meaningful process of education, and for my present purpose for adult education in particular, have yet to be fully apprehended. I would nevertheless crave your indulgence while I rehearse some of the changes very briefly, and tread ground that will be all too familiar to most of you.

Since in one form or another they are daily on our television screens or radio sets or prominently displayed in our newspapers, the effects of political changes world-wide are well-known to us all. Among them are the variable consequences of new-found independence associated with the shifting spheres of influence of the two great world powers, consequences which include the rearrangement of internal political and social structures and the emergence of new international balances, and a growing desire among the people for greater participation in political and industrial management. These demands cannot but flourish and multiply in a climate of overriding preoccupation with continuous economic growth associated with the accelerating pace of technological advance. Such conditions

bring with them their besetting problems, among which are unemployment and underemployment on the one hand and the need to provide adequately for the training and retraining of manpower on the other. Demographic trends, especially the world-wide increase in population and in life expectancy, bring their own related pressures such as adverse dependency ratios as between the young worker and the elderly retired; adverse work ratios as the numbers of young people increase and the numbers of jobs decrease. Social factors generally both stem from and contribute to the many areas of tension in a rapidly changing society, where the world ceases to correspond to the image that people have built up for themselves since childhood, where gradually it becomes incomprehensible to them and before long hostile.

I need not amplify this theme, nor indeed is this the time and place to do so. Neither would it be proper for me to speak of the implications for the educational system generally. I shall content myself therefore with a brief comment on the relevancies as I see them to the adult education sector of that system and particularly to the function of the university in this respect. Helping to comprehend the processes, and to adapt to the manifestations, of change is surely one function which is common to all sectors of educational provision; except that in this day and age, when rapid adjustment needs to be made periodically throughout life, it must be regarded as a responsibility peculiarly relevant to adult education, and uniquely so to the special potential of the university role. It is not only that the reflective, conceptual nature of traditional university adult education - that of providing 'the framework of theory' in Russell's words - is especially well suited to help towards an understanding of the political, economic and social turbulences of our times. It is also that an essential feature of universities' teaching and research, namely that they operate as centres of excellence at the frontiers of knowledge, enables - and many of us would say obliges - them to inform if not always to reassure, the public at large about advances in the state of knowledge. Universities have also a significant role to

play at their own appropriate levels in helping with problems of professional, vocational adjustment to requirements for retraining and re-education recurring probably for the whole period of working life. Moreover, within the educational system itself new educational technologies need to be developed and applied in order to take advantage of far-reaching improvements in communication techniques of all kinds - technologies which, to become effectively integral within the educational system, will probably require totally new educational structures. Again universities, with their expertise and facilities, must be prepared to play their unique role in these specialised developments. The reciprocal quality of their adult education involvement will help them to keep closely in touch with the experiences as well as with the needs of the community 'outside the walls' as they respond to the challenge of these changes.

As we have seen, this reciprocal quality of university adult education work has called forth comment from the days of the 1919 Report onward, and is rooted in the essentially - if not exclusively - local and regional character of such activity. In those early days, however when Ernest Hughes lectured 'over the whole area which the extra-mural department of the College may be fairly required to serve', he was not of course interested solely nor indeed primarily in establishing the new College's extra-mural identity, but rather in persuading the young people of the region to register in Swansea as full-time students, preferably in his own department of history. And in the first two decades of the College's existence, until that is the Second World War, it was very much a regional institution in the sense that the majority of its undergraduate students came from homes in the valleys of South Wales. One aspect of change over the years since then is that whereas, in common with other modern universities the proportion of such locally-based full-time students has declined greatly, the number enrolled of part-time adult students, virtually all of them drawn from within a radius of some twenty-five

miles from Swansea, has increased to its present level of almost five thousand, which is nearly half as many again as the total of full-time students. It is in this sense therefore that the College nowadays can justify most clearly the statement in the Robbins Report that 'Universities and Colleges have an important role to play in the general cultural life of the communities in which they are situated' and can fulfil most directly one of the major aims of universities described in the Report, that of transmitting 'a common culture and common standards of citizenship'.

In fulfilling this role and in helping to accomplish at the same time the purpose of understanding the process of change, a most useful laboratory or workshop which lies immediately to hand is the very region itself. It is with good reason therefore that local studies of all kinds enter very prominently into the curriculum of university adult education, and this is particularly the case here in Swansea. Thus the chronological sequence of change which can, and is, encompassed by such studies, begins in a geological time-scale which can help towards providing a perspective of physical events and relationships observable in the immediate local environment. Observations of man's condition have their beginning in archaeological studies, in an area rich in remains relating to periods extending from prehistoric ages to medieval times. They proceed into the modern age with specially developed studies, related to the area's own and unique historical past, of for instance industrial archaeology and the history of labour, thus giving the people of the locality their own opportunity to study local industry and its workers as they really were and thereby perhaps help to rescue them from what E. P. Thompson called 'the enormous condescension of posterity'.¹ The local society itself of course, provides its own subjects of study, and from the earliest days activities in conjunction with local professional

¹ E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, London, 1963, p.12

groups in the medical sciences, in social services of various kinds, in the legal and other profession, have been a common feature of extra-mural work, and will doubtless continue to be so.

Similarly, industrial studies, traditionally because of the class-conscious nature of the origin of formal adult education, have tended to develop in conjunction with trade unions and their educational organisations. As we have already observed, in the Swansea area, with its heavy concentration in the early part of this century of steel and tinsplate industries along the coastal belt from Kidwelly to Port Talbot, close links were forged between adult education agencies and the trade unions in the various works; and again Dr. Iltyd David, who began his career in those early years with the WETUC and WEA, is a living witness to that link. It was inevitable therefore that this University College, with its own metallurgical and other applied science bias, should establish itself and grow very much in the industrial context of its region; and that these connections were carried over, in their own way and at the appropriate levels, into the extra-mural activities of the newly founded College. Classes for trade unionists, especially in the Port Talbot, Briton Ferry and Neath areas have therefore right up until the present day featured prominently in this department's programme; and these moreover have provided down the years a powerful connecting link with the WEA. Indeed, when statistics of student occupations were first recorded in 1926-27, almost one half of the students were manual workers - forty two per cent being recruited from the mining and metal industries, but mainly from the latter.¹ On the whole the attitude of the South Wales Miners' Federation in those early days was markedly different from that of trade unions in the steel and tinsplate industries in the sense that its official support went to classes

¹ Survey of Adult Education in Wales, University of Wales Extension Board, Cardiff, 1940, p.63

conducted under the auspices of the National Council of Labour Colleges (the NCLC). The mergence of such classes with the WEA in the 1960's, together with the establishment in the 1970's of the Miners' Library under the wing of the Extra-mural department were among the factors which contributed to a change in that attitude. Today day-release and residential courses arranged in conjunction with the NUM S. Wales area are a regular feature of the department's industrial programme. There have been other far-reaching changes since the Second World War, among them the progressive reduction and concentration of heavy industry, the accelerating pace of technological change, the growing complexity of industrial law, of personal relations in industry and of managerial practice and techniques. These are some of the factors contributing towards a greater need to extend the adult education role of the university into the supervisory and managerial sectors of industry.

Nowadays, in any discussion of adult education in its social and industrial context, regard must be taken yet again, as in the 1920's and '30's, to the distressing circumstances of unemployment and underemployment. This is not the time nor the place to enter in any detail into the broad function of adult education services in this context nor indeed into the proper response of a university and of this one in particular, to the many problems that such conditions give rise to. For the moment and on this occasion I will content myself with saying two things: first, that it is now a matter of the utmost urgency to produce an over-all strategy of policy and of finance, as was done in the 1930's through the co-ordinating agency of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Service to allay at least some of these problems; and secondly that a university such as ours has a clear responsibility to contribute to such a strategy through the application of its own unique resources, as well as by lending its guidance and support to other bodies.

For the past few minutes I have sought to point to some of the ways in which university adult education can continue to fulfil its traditional 'liberal' role, based on the premise that the enlightenment of the public is socially as well as educationally desirable, by encouraging studies of various kinds which are rooted in the local community and the local environment, but which nevertheless relate recognisably to the more general circumstances and problems of contemporary society. Clearly however, studies of this kind form only a part - albeit an important one - of the range of activities encompassed within the department's traditional teaching role. There are for instance certain local or regional circumstances which are particular, even unique, and which cannot therefore be reflected on to a wider canvas. Of these, the Welsh language is perhaps the outstanding example. Whereas classes taught through the medium of the Welsh language, in literature, in philosophy and religion, in politics, history and other subjects have from the earliest days been part of the 'extra-mural' curriculum, it is only in the last decade that the University of Wales has really begun to take serious account of its responsibilities in so far as the teaching of the language itself is concerned. That there were stirrings of conscience long before that is suggested by the inclusion in the programme here in Swansea for the sessions 1924-25 and 1925-26 of a short course of five lectures on the teaching of Welsh by the 'direct method', delivered on Saturday mornings during the Michaelmas Term by Miss Magdalen Morgan M.A. - a name that will be remembered with admiration and affection by many in this audience. It was however some ten years ago that this University's Extension Board, after much deliberation, recommended the adoption of a policy aimed at teaching the language at an advanced level, of improving techniques of teaching intensive courses and of encouraging research related to these teaching methods. In order to pursue this policy the Board recommended further the appointment of a Research and Development Officer who would be aided by colleagues appointed to serve within

each of the four extra-mural areas. These appointments have now been made, and the department here in Swansea, in common with the other extra-mural departments, is developing for the first time in its history substantial programmes of advanced and intensive courses teaching Welsh as a second language.

In Wales the function of a university to transmit a common culture - a fundamental one according to Robbins - is by definition unique in its relation to the Welsh language. Other subjects studied as part of a 'liberal' programme are traditional and traditionally common to the adult education function of most British universities. In Swansea, the teaching of such subjects as English literature, philosophy, history, psychology and politics goes back to the early years of the 1920's, and reflects the involvement as we have seen of senior College staff such as Professors W. D. Thomas, F. A. Cavenagh, Ernest Hughes, A. E. Heath, R. I. Aaron and D. Emrys Evans (later Sir Emrys, Principal of the University College of North Wales, Bangor). An equally early beginning to the teaching for instance of International Politics and of Biblical Studies underlines on the other hand the way in which the 'extra-mural' function can extend itself to fill gaps in the disciplines available among internal departments. It was partly this kind of extension of function together with a change of attitude about practising, as distinct from simply 'appreciating', the arts that made possible the very considerable growth since the end of the Second World War of courses in the visual arts and in music in Swansea.

In the sciences, the teaching of geology and biology has been continuous from the earliest days, and is again associated with names familiar to many of you, among them Sir Arthur Trueman, Professor Neville George, Professor Mockeridge, Dr. P. A. Little and in the more recent past Professor Ivor Isaac. To teach as part of a traditional liberal programme, subjects such as mathematics and the physical sciences is no easy task, and attempts so far whether in Swansea or

elsewhere have met with indifferent success. The introduction of 'modern mathematics' to schools in the '50's and '60's provided some incentive to parents (and even occasionally to grandparents) to resume long-forgotten studies in this field, but in the main it is the study of astronomy that has provided the most useful vehicle for conveying some of the concepts of mathematics and physics. As a matter of course, opportunities are constantly being created for those scientists able and willing to do so, to describe, to explain and occasionally to illustrate some of the more significant recent advances in their particular disciplines. Such praiseworthy efforts notwithstanding, however, the main 'extra-mural' achievement hitherto in the sciences is to make available to the community many of the physical resources that the university commands. The use of laboratories and of laboratory equipment and materials is of course one important aspect; another is the way in which special portable scientific equipment is taken to outlying centres thereby helping to reinforce the sense of a university presence in those centres; and yet another is the growing application of scientific techniques and equipment in cross-disciplinary ways. Some recent instances are the application of carbon dating and soil analysis in archaeology; and of word processors, tape and video-records in various teaching and project situations. A final instance in this connection is that the College, by means of a collaborative exercise involving the departments of Physics and Adult and Continuing Education together with the Swansea Astronomical Society, has provided on the Fairwood Playing Fields the space to erect an observatory and also a radio telescope to facilitate both teaching and research projects. Thus, alongside a gradual extension for example of the use of library facilities to students in adult classes, this university is not only enlarging its traditional function of teaching outside the walls, it is also little by little finding more ways of sharing with the local community its oncampus facilities.

I have spoken in the main so far about the more traditional aspects of the adult education role of a university, and touched upon some of the changes - relatively few in a long-established pattern - which have happened as a result of different attitudes, public and institutional, and society's changing needs. Much has been said and written of late years on many of the manifestations of change - in subject popularity, in course format, in patterns of enrolment and recruitment to classes; it is no part of my present purpose to dwell on these, but in the time available to confine myself to a brief examination of some contemporary educational needs of adults and the proper response, as I see it, of the university to those needs.

I would like therefore to return and pick up some of the threads dropped already on the way, and in particular to the reference I made a short while ago to the unique position properly claimed for universities at the frontiers of knowledge. This position, regarded in the context of their public accountability also referred to earlier must surely imply a vital role for universities not only in explaining and interpreting, but also in applying advances in knowledge, to meet the needs and to help solve some of the problems of our society today. Some of you may have heard Professor E. J. Richards deliver the Ivor Isaac memorial lecture last summer¹, in which he referred to the speed in the growth of knowledge, particularly in science, technology and medicine. He quoted an example from his own specialised field of interest, that of controlling vibration in structures, in which it was calculated that knowledge in this topic, essential to the development for instance of the space shuttle, at least doubled every 9.2 years. It may not be advancing quite so dramatically elsewhere, but the broad condition is now generally acknowledged that in many fields crucial to man's

¹ E. J. Richards, 'Education Throughout Life - Who is to Provide it?' The Third Ivor Isaac Memorial Lecture, University College of Swansea, June 1981

well-being the rate of the growth of knowledge is such that henceforth periodic renewal and updating will be essential. There are many other factors which also contribute to circumstances where jobs constantly change and disappear and indeed where whole industries disappear, and these circumstances serve to intensify the need to retrain and to re-educate perhaps several times in a working lifetime. Clearly many agencies must be involved in this total process, and among them universities - at their own appropriate levels and in their proper fields - have a vital role to play. Already this College is materially involved. To a growing programme of postgraduate diploma courses and the long-standing provision of inservice courses for school-teachers have been added in recent years short courses and conferences of varying length and at different levels on computers and microprocessors, on laser beams, tribology and aspects of civil engineering, to instance but a few in the fields of science and technology. Some reference has already been made to similar requirements in business and industrial management studies, and demands are made year by year for provision of this kind in many areas of social work. The establishment this session of an Institute of Health Studies is an indication on the one hand of the need and on the other of the College's preparedness responsibly to respond.

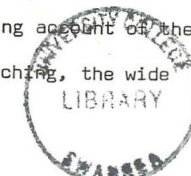
An associated manifestation of need in the community is of course the growing demand by adult students for access to graduation or other advanced qualification. To this again we can see the beginnings however tardy of a manifold response on the part of the university. Although it is now possible to attain a wider range than ever before of higher degrees by part-time study, part-time initial degrees are still very hard to come by in the University of Wales. Even so, to part-time B.Ed. courses have been added in recent years the possibility of gaining a degree through the medium of the Welsh language. These limited developments can satisfy only a very small proportion of public demand, but they do at least mark the beginnings of change in providing part-time degree courses.

Adult access to full-time degree study has of course always been available through the special mature-age matriculation regulations of the University of Wales. Reactions to the DES Consultative Paper Higher Education into the 1990's by universities themselves and by bodies such as the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the UGC, in a context of likely decreases in the number of 18 year olds and the growth of unemployment, stimulated fresh thinking in the area of full-time entry by students of mature age. Since then the University, through its Academic Board, has set up a working party to examine the whole question. Here in Swansea we have established experimental courses in a limited number of subject areas to prepare mature-age people for full-time university study. At another level of qualification a University of Wales certificate is available for adults studying Welsh as a second language, and a certificate course in geology is now part of our continuing education programme.

The entire programme I have just described, including as it does short post-experience courses often at postgraduate level, some part-time degree and certificate courses, certain training courses and others preparatory to full-time study, is as yet a very modest one. I have already tried to suggest some at least of the reasons why the pressures to enlarge this programme in various ways are certain to mount. Meeting such pressures has to be a matter for the university as a whole since responses must not only be made in particular areas of demand across a wide range of subjects, they must also be structured in a diversity of ways. It is more than likely that the profound changes which are already imposing themselves on British universities will make it both more possible and more desirable for this over-all response to be forthcoming. Quite certainly this University College, in view of its traditional links with industry and the community at large, its reputation world-wide in the applications of science, of technology, and of social studies, together with its unique standing as an institution of higher education within its region, can and should develop powerfully in this direction in the years immediately ahead to serve the local, the

national and the international community. As far as my own department is concerned, it will have its special role to play in a developing programme of continuing education. On teaching aspects whereas it can contribute little in a direct way because of the nature of the requirements and of its own composition, it can do much to identify and to apply the expertise of other departments. It can also if encouraged to do so help materially to create and sustain the momentum by acquiring over the years a cumulative dimension not only of organisational and administrative skills but of developmental experience.

This brings me to some final reflections on my main theme. I need not elaborate to this audience on the oft-quoted raison d'être for universities - that they exist to disseminate knowledge, mainly by their teaching; and to advance knowledge through research. Within each university, the various faculties, departments, schools, institutes develop their specialisms and have their own preoccupations and emphases. In this broad sense, a department of Extra-mural Studies or of Adult and Continuing Education is no different. It does however differ in one particular, a crucial one, namely that it is concerned exclusively with the adult - in the special sense of people of mature age who have completed their full-time education. It may seem a truism to say that the essential function of a department such as mine is to enable academics in many disciplines to teach, and to teach their special subjects, to adults, but I make no apology for the statement, in the hope that my reasons will become clear later. Each of my departmental colleagues has of course his particular research interest related to his discipline, whether that be zoology or international politics, literature or industrial relations, philosophy, physics or any other of the various subject-specialisms available among the full-time members of the department. Now, whereas the relationship normally claimed is that research illuminates teaching, it is very often the case with full-time university staff concerned exclusively with adult students that the requirements of teaching condition materially the nature of the research that is done. Those 'requirements' include taking account of the essentially non-compulsory, student orientated basis of such teaching, the wide



differences within the student body in respect of age, occupation and learning experience; and other characteristics such as the strength and diversity of motivation and the store of life-experience which distinguish the adult class from one composed of school pupils and undergraduates. To these teaching circumstances need to be added also the subject mix already referred to within the department. The resulting departmental interaction, with its greater 'lead-in' potential to the vastly wider teaching resources of the College, make an interdisciplinary approach much more feasible when constructing courses for a student body which is no great respecter of subject barriers.

All these circumstances have led over the years to the development of special teaching approaches and techniques. These skills have grown out of, and have been applied to, for instance the teaching of literature (as witness the influence of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and others one could name who are nearer home), of social history - especially working class history, of rural and industrial studies, of public affairs and of scientific topics to non-scientists. I referred earlier to the important place of local studies in our curriculum. Some of these techniques are in fact most dramatically illustrated by the way in which, in recent years, such studies have flourished through research-based projects. Here in Swansea these have already provided exciting results - in geology, in the tape and video-recording of local history and in archaeology. Such researches are of value in themselves and their findings over the years will add substantially to the state of our knowledge. I mention them here however mainly to emphasise the fact that they form part of a larger, and at least here in Swansea, hitherto largely unselfconscious, process of research and discovery into ways and means of teaching adult students many of the subjects which normally form part of a university curriculum. This process too, it seems to me, must be more seriously pursued henceforth if well-informed and well-tested guidance is to be forthcoming for the additional and more diverse teaching tasks that lie ahead.

It seems obvious also that the professional expertise of the full-time university teacher of adults is essential in order to assess, to collate and then to communicate meaningfully such a corpus of experience.

This then is yet another task for the university to undertake in this field, to be placed alongside the others I have tried to describe. As we have seen, many of the functions require a commitment by departments specialising in appropriate disciplines, most require involvement in varying degrees by a department concerned particularly with the teaching of adults. Together they seem to me to form for the years ahead a useful and proper role for a university, and for this University College in particular. It is moreover a role that can be fulfilled only if it is supported, as in earlier days, by a healthy perception of its 'reciprocal' quality - a perception that is of the benefits that flow into the College as well as those it bestows on the community by an increasing concern for the education of mature people.

