

Gender, class and school teacher education from the mid-nineteenth century to 1970: scenes from a town in the North of England

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Abstract [149 words]

This paper considers gender and social class in relation to teacher education through an episodic study of the development of adult educational institutions in Huddersfield. It briefly discusses nineteenth century mechanics' institutes in the town before moving to a consideration of school teacher training college students in the twentieth century, highlighting aspects of the gendered and cultural ethos of teacher training. Local efforts to establish teacher training, and the war-time presence in the town of an evacuated women's teacher training college, provide a prism for the examination of transitions in social attitudes towards teaching as a profession, as do the educational aspirations of local working-class grammar school girls and boys during the 1940s/1950s. The paper then focusses on the establishment in 1963 of a 'new kind' of non-residential teacher training college and, in particular, on its introduction in the late 1960s of part-time provision designed specifically for 'married women'.

Key words: Teacher education; class; gender; colleges of education; mechanics' institutes.

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Introduction

In 1904 Michael Sadler (1861-1943), Professor in the History and Administration of Education at Manchester, and subsequently Vice Chancellor at the University of Leeds (1911-1923), undertook a commission by the County Borough of Huddersfield Education Committee to review secondary and technical education in the town, rapidly producing an impressively detailed document. Sadler was of the view that,

It is much to be hoped that the teachers in the Girl's High School at Huddersfield will attach due weight in their ideal of girls' education to the importance, in a woman's life, of the skilful and thorough discharge of domestic duties. A devoted teacher is sometimes too apt to think that the only fit destiny for a clever girl is to become a teacher herself.¹

For the working class, and especially for working class women, a career in teaching has historically presented a potential route towards a form of middle class respectability and pensioned security. Rose², referring to late Victorian times, pointed out that 'Girls could find models for emulation in their female teachers, many of whom came from working-class backgrounds.' This observation could be applied to all subsequent decades, and generally holds true throughout the Anglophone world today. How gender has articulated with processes of teacher proletarianization is also an issue that has surfaced internationally³. For women and men within the unskilled segment of the working class in England who have aspired to become qualified school teachers, pursuit of the opportunities to do so has frequently been contingent on their domestic responsibilities and on family support. A consequence of those factors is that the geographical proximity of appropriate teacher training has often been crucial. The 1963 opening of the Oastler College of Education⁴ in Huddersfield marked the realisation of a long-held ambition within the town that it should host a college dedicated to the training of school teachers. This institution, however, was very different to what had hitherto been regarded as a typical teacher training college.

A vignette in E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* relates how, following a visit to Huddersfield in 1757, Methodist preacher John Wesley recorded that 'A wilder people I never saw in England...the men, women and children filled the street as we rode along, and appeared just ready to devour us.'⁵ This unruliness appears to presage phases in the early part of the nineteenth century when

¹ Michael Sadler, *Report on Secondary and Technical Education in Huddersfield* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1904), 50.

² Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (London: Yale Nota Bene, 2002), 177.

³ Michael W. Apple, *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education* (London: Routledge, 1988). For a useful overview of the then emerging debates see Jenny Ozga and Martin Lawn, 'Schoolwork: Interpreting the Labour Process of Teaching', *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 9, no. 3 (1988): 323-336.

⁴ The College was named in honour of Richard Oastler (1789-1861) a noted factory reformer in West Yorkshire.

⁵ Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Classics, 2013, first published 1963), 31.

Huddersfield became a centre for Luddism and, between 1838 and 1848, of radical Chartist activity⁶. Friedrich Engels, visiting in 1845, regarded Huddersfield as ‘...the handsomest by far of all the factory towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire...’ though it had ‘...yet its bad quarter...’⁷. Although founded on woollen textiles, the chemical and engineering industries have had a strong presence in the town and its relatively diverse economy attracted various migrant communities, principally Irish in the nineteenth century, but subsequently Polish, Caribbean and, more significantly, Pakistani. Huddersfield of the late 1940s/early 1950s provided the backdrop to Jackson and Marsden’s classic *Education and the Working Class*⁸, and the field-work for Jackson’s *Working Class Community*⁹ was undertaken in Huddersfield during the late 1950s. In *Starting School*, in which he presented a study of a by then (1960s) ‘multi-racial community’, Jackson’s introduction carried the gentle boast, ‘The scene is Huddersfield, Yorkshire: most stylish of the great woollen towns of northern England.’¹⁰.

Teaching is widely recognised as an activity which is vital to the economy, to the well-being of society, and to the realisation of individual potential. It is implicitly altruistic and nurturing, despite being largely based on a presumption of privileged knowledge. Yet the teaching profession in Britain has an ambivalent status and conflicting identities arising from its role and place in what has been (and is) a society deeply divided by class, race and gender. The history of teacher education in England reflects these characteristics. At the start of this century almost 70 per cent of state employed teachers in England and Wales were women¹¹. Conley and Jenkins¹² have argued that teaching has,

...traditionally been considered to be a woman-friendly occupation. Historical examples of forward thinking in terms of gender equality in teaching are the removal of the marriage bar and the acceptance, in principle, of equal pay for women and men teachers. The marriage bar in teaching was lifted in the 1944 Education Act in the UK, approximately 15 years before it was formally removed in the civil service. Similarly, equal pay was granted to women teachers in 1953, 17 years before the 1970 Equal Pay Act bestowed this right on all women workers.

⁶ David Griffiths, ‘Huddersfield in Turbulent Times, 1815-1850: Who Ruled and How?’, *Northern History* 52, no. 1 (2015): 101-124.

⁷ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England: From Personal Observation and Authentic Sources* (London: Panther, 1969, first English edition 1847), 74.

⁸ Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Education and the Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1966, first published 1962).

⁹ Brian Jackson, *Working Class Community: Some General Notions Raised by a Series of Studies in Northern England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

¹⁰ Brian Jackson, *Starting School* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 10.

¹¹ Department for Education and Skills, *School Workforce in England: First Release (Revised)* (London: DfES, 2006).

¹² Hazel Conley and Sarah Louise Jenkins, ‘Still “a Good Job for a Woman”? Women Teachers’ Experiences of Modernization in England and Wales’, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18, no. 5 (2011), 488-507: 489.

The image of the self-sacrificing spinster, married to her job as a teacher, and working with younger children¹³ has been potent in both literature and popular culture in the UK, North America, Australia and New Zealand¹⁴. In the UK the residential teacher training college was the traditional gateway to becoming a qualified teacher, but the routes to qualified status have varied over time (and have proliferated in the twenty-first century¹⁵).

Nineteenth century elementary school teachers were generally from the upper echelons of the working class. In 1857, at the Whitelands teacher training college in London, 76 per cent of entrants ‘...were the daughters of manual workers.’¹⁶. This demographic began to change, and from the early years of the twentieth century up to the Second World War the majority of students at teacher training colleges were drawn from the lower middle class but were still considered, in the eyes of college principals, to be in need of some ‘social improvement’. In her study of women’s teacher training colleges between 1900-1960 Edwards¹⁷ found that they ‘...played the crucial role in transmitting to students the cultural, aesthetic, intellectual and spiritual values of the liberal humanist traditions of the middle class.’

In her recent study Reay¹⁸, in returning to Jackson and Marsden’s *Education and the Working Class*, has pointed to the ‘...many different ways of being working class...’ and notes that the young people who participated in their study were from either the ‘respectable’ working class or the ‘sunken middle class’. Even when family and occupational data is available it is exceedingly difficult to pinpoint social class in a given population, and generalisation is often necessary. As Skeggs¹⁹ has pointed out, class formation is dynamic and contested at ‘...the level of the symbolic’. In the case of the present paper there is a convenient but rational assumption that the *majority* of students discussed in the context of specific institutions will carry the social class

¹³ Wendy Robinson, ‘Frocks, Frills, Femininity and Representations of the Woman Teacher in The Woman Teacher’s World: Reconstructing the Early Twentieth Century “Schoolmarm”’, *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 35, no. 2, (2003): 87-99 presented an interesting discussion of ‘tensions between femininity and professionalism’ arguing that features in *The Woman Teacher’s World* (later *The Teacher’s World*) journal between 1911 and 1913 suggested that a woman teacher might seek to resolve these ‘...by celebrating her femininity and embracing life outside of school in order properly to conduct herself in school. She was not to be a slave to her classroom or to her children. Rather she should acknowledge a responsibility to herself as a woman and a teacher both to indulge in her femininity and to use it to broaden her professional base.’ (ibid. 97).

¹⁴ Pamela Bolotin Joseph and Gail E. Burnaford, eds. *Images of Schoolteachers in America* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001); Roy Fisher, Ann Harris and Christine Jarvis, *Education in Popular Culture: Telling Tales on Teachers and Learners* (London: Routledge, 2008); Mary M. Dalton, *The Hollywood Curriculum: Teachers in the Movies* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010).

¹⁵ Options now include a number of school-based routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

¹⁶ Elizabeth Edwards, *Women in Teacher Training Colleges, 1900-1960: A Culture of Femininity* (London: Routledge, 2001), 17.

¹⁷ Ibid. 168. See also Elizabeth Edwards, ‘The Culture of Femininity in Women’s Teacher Training Colleges 1900-50’, *History of Education* 22, no. 3 (1993): 277-288.

¹⁸ Diane Reay, *Miseducation: Inequality, Education and the Working Classes* (Bristol: Polity Press, 2017), 5.

¹⁹ Beverley Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004).

backgrounds overwhelming associated with such institutions at the historical period under consideration.

From the 1840s to the late 1920s: pupil teachers, the female institute, and the quest for school teacher education in Huddersfield

As with many other industrial towns of substance, nineteenth century Huddersfield saw the establishment of a number of post-school largely technical educational institutions²⁰, and these were highly gendered in nature. In 1841 the Huddersfield Young Men's Mental Improvement Society²¹ was formed under the guidance of local German merchant Frederic Schwann, originally from Frankfurt. In 1844 it was renamed the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution and would thrive, having various subsequent re-designations including Huddersfield Technical College, Huddersfield College of Technology, Huddersfield Polytechnic, and, from 1992, the University of Huddersfield²². The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, established in 1846, declared at its foundation that it aspired to be '...organised and managed on a separate and independent basis, for the education of the young women of the working classes.'²³ Despite Henrietta Schwann (nee Kell) playing a leading organisational role, the Committee running the Huddersfield Female Educational Institute had a middle-class membership and its management was, in practice, dominated by men²⁴. The female institute's students were mainly milliners, dress-makers, domestic servants, or factory workers, with most studying Reading, Writing and Arithmetic in a curriculum offer which also included Singing and Sewing²⁵. In 1859, a former student of the female institute, then a trainee teacher of Sewing at Homerton in Cambridge, wrote to express her appreciation for all that had been done for her at Huddersfield²⁶, but such successes must have been exceptional. In England and Wales in 1851

²⁰ Martyn Walker, "Earnest students anxious to acquire a practical knowledge suited to the trade of the district": The Growth and Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement with Particular Relevance to Huddersfield 1824-1890', *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 46, no. 1 (2014): 38-56; Martyn Walker, *The Development of the Mechanics' Institute Movement in Britain and Beyond: Supporting Further Education for the Adult Working Classes* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

²¹ In 1825 a 'Huddersfield Scientific and Mechanic Institute' had been founded, but this experienced financial difficulties before evolving into the Huddersfield Philosophical Society in 1836/7. It had no connection with the 1841 initiative – an account is provided by David Griffiths, 'The Huddersfield Scientific and Mechanic Institute (HMSI): a response to John Halstead' *Huddersfield Local History Society Journal* 26, (2016): 62-63.

²² John O'Connell, *The Making of a University: The Path to Higher Education in Huddersfield* (Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield Press, 2016).

²³ Quoted in Martyn Walker, "Solid and Practical Education within Reach of the Humblest Means": *The Growth and Development of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes 1838–1891*, PhD diss (2010), University of Huddersfield. <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/9087/1/mawalkerfinalthesis.pdf>: 79.

²⁴ June Purvis, *Hard Lessons: The Lives and Education of Working-class Women in Nineteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

²⁵ Teresa Gerrard and Alexis Weedon, 'Working-class Women's Education in Huddersfield: A Case Study of the Female Educational Institute Library, 1856-1857', *Information & Culture: A Journal of History* 49, no. 2 (2014): 234-264.

²⁶ Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Annual Report* (Huddersfield: Wheatley, 1859) quoted in Walker *Solid and Practical Education*, 80.

approximately 9 per cent of mechanics' institute members were female²⁷. By 1880, the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution had 93 (fewer than 6 per cent) females amongst its 1651 members²⁸. In 1882 there were just 42 pupil teachers²⁹ receiving tuition at the Mechanics' Institution³⁰. It was for the best when, in 1883, the Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, with its limited curriculum offer, agreed to merge with the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution after some 37 years of what had been only limited autonomy.

Nationally, doubts regarding the efficacy, and indeed, the moral soundness of the pupil teacher scheme began to grow. When the Congress of *The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (NAPSS) (1857-1886) met in Huddersfield, 3-10 October 1883, Dr Thomas Clifford Allbutt (1836-1925) proclaimed that 'The pupil teacher is a mischief to his scholars, a mischief to his superiors, and a mischief to himself'³¹. From 1904, following an initiative from Robert Morant, Permanent Secretary to the Board of Education, pupil teachers were required to be aged 16 or over (except in rural districts), and from the following year their hours and the schools in which they could teach were limited, and at least 300 hours a year training in approved centres would be required³². By this time the Mechanics' Institution, now renamed Huddersfield Technical College, offered a substantial programme of subject updating classes for teachers³³ as well as an examined three-year in-service teaching certificate course.

Michael Sadler's 1904 Report on secondary and technical education in Huddersfield began with ominous praise for the '...individual energy, the toughness of purpose, the sagacity, and the outspokenness...'³⁴ of the local populace. Sadler prescribed '...an education which opens the mind and trains the practical aptitudes; which inspires courage and faith and fortitude; while also imparting knowledge and the scientific way of doing things...'³⁵. Sadler, however, was no technocrat and he cautioned that, 'Technical skill must rest upon a basis of liberal training'³⁶. The Huddersfield Technical College, advised Sadler, '...should concentrate on...the furtherance of the staple trade of the town and the training of teachers...'. Thwarting local ambitions, Sadler was of the view that, 'There is no room in Huddersfield for a University College...'³⁷. Towards

²⁷ Purvis, *Hard Lessons*.

²⁸ Walker, *Solid and Practical Education*, 74.

²⁹ The National Teacher Pupil Scheme, devised by James Phillips Kay Shuttleworth and introduced in 1846, enabled 'carefully selected Elementary school pupils' (normally drawn from the working class) aged 13 or more to teach during the day and receive tuition from their school head either before or after classes. They were paid and were annually examined by HMIs. Pupil teachers were able to win scholarships to teacher training colleges – Harold Collett Dent, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales* (Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1977), 19. Many pupil teachers, both boys and girls, also attended local institutes for subject and pedagogic training, as was the case in Huddersfield.

³⁰ O'Connell, *The Making of a University*.

³¹ Quoted in Mary Sturt, *The Education of the People: A History of Primary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 364.

³² Dent, *The Training of Teachers*.

³³ Huddersfield Technical College, *Huddersfield Technical College Prospectus Session 1908-09* (Huddersfield: County Borough of Huddersfield, 1908), 86.

³⁴ Sadler, *Report on Secondary and Technical Education*, 6

³⁵ *Ibid.* 7

³⁶ *Ibid.* 8

³⁷ *Ibid.* 10.

the end of his Report Sadler would also dampen the optimism that might surround the future of teacher training in the town, stating that ‘...the University Day Training College at Leeds is near at hand, and offers opportunities for academic training which Huddersfield could never hope to provide.’³⁸. Sadler questioned whether the costs of introducing a day training college at Huddersfield would be ‘...really compatible with the immediate duty of making the Technical College directly useful at all points to the trades of the Borough?’³⁹. Sadler’s Report proved a deep disappointment for those with high ambition for both teacher education and, in due course, the establishment of a university college in the town.

In 1919 the Board of Education turned down an application received from Huddersfield Technical College governors for designation of the College as a teacher training centre for ex-service men⁴⁰. Dent states that pupil teachers ‘...lingered on here and there up to the outbreak of the Second World...’⁴¹. In Huddersfield the training of pupil teachers was curtailed in the early 1920s, though subject updating classes for teachers continued to be offered up to the late 1920s⁴². The Second World War, however, would bring a female teacher training college of the then traditional kind to Huddersfield in a completely unanticipated way.

1941-1947: an unanticipated interlude, followed by an emergency college for technical teachers

Between 1941 and 1946 the Huddersfield Technical College provided temporary home to some 300 trainee teachers and 30 staff evacuated from the residential all female Avery Hill Teacher Training College in London⁴³. This was part of a wider evacuation in response to fear of war-time aerial bombing⁴⁴. Avery Hill College, founded in 1906, was located in a parkland campus at Eltham, South East London. Pre-Second World War, Avery Hill students were young women drawn mainly from the lower middle class. The College Principal⁴⁵ stated that in recruitment ‘We look for soundness, vigour, vitality, sensitiveness. We attach quite as much importance to fitness in character and temperament as to academic attainment...’. Also, ‘...appearance, dress and speech’ were important considerations.

Avery Hill’s teaching was undertaken in Huddersfield Technical College’s newly opened ‘Chemistry Building’, however, there were no College residential facilities

³⁸ Ibid. 97-98.

³⁹ Ibid. 98.

⁴⁰ John O’Connell, ‘From Mechanics’ Institution to Polytechnic: Further and Higher Education. 1841-1970’ in *Huddersfield - a Most Handsome Town: Aspects of the History and Culture of a West Yorkshire Town* ed. E. A. Hilary Haigh (Huddersfield: Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992), 561-595.

⁴¹ Dent, *The Training of Teachers*, 56.

⁴² Huddersfield Technical College, *General Prospectus of the Day and Evening Classes, 1926-27* (Huddersfield: Alfred Jubb and Son, 1926).

⁴³ See David Shorney, *Teachers in Training 1906-1985: A History of Avery Hill College* (London: Thames Polytechnic, 1989) and Roy Fisher, ‘Teacher Education, Evacuation and Community in War-time Britain: The Women of Avery Hill at Huddersfield 1941-46’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2017.1408770> for a full account.

⁴⁴ Niko Gärtner, *Operation Pied Piper: The War-time Evacuation of Schoolchildren from London and Berlin 1938-1946* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2012).

⁴⁵ Frances Consitt, quoted in Edwards, *Women in Teacher Training Colleges*, 75.

available. Avery Hill negotiated the use of two large houses on the fringes of Huddersfield, but the great majority of its students were billeted on the local community on the basis of a weekly payment set at £1 and five shillings for bed, breakfast and an evening meal (£61 at 2018 values). The absence of a college based residential facility was considered by the Principal to be ‘...a great loss.’⁴⁶ and strenuous efforts were made, through the formation of lecturer led social groups and a programme of activities, to maintain a sense of community. In addition, the trainee teachers were highly regulated with the College authorities maintaining a careful check on their whereabouts – a common feature of female teacher training college regimes at that time⁴⁷.

Between 1941 and 1946 approximately nine hundred Avery College women trainee teachers studied in Huddersfield, and through community-based initiatives in both child care and youth work, they made a considerable contribution to the town and its educational and social well-being⁴⁸. Huddersfield, so long seeking to develop a school teacher training education of its own, thus played host to an established residential college. The world of teacher education, however, was under close scrutiny. In 1944 the McNair Report on the supply, recruitment and training of teachers and youth leaders indicated that there were at that time 83 training colleges, 60 (72 per cent) of which were for women and 7 were co-educational⁴⁹. On McNair’s recommendation Area Training Organisations (ATOs), led by universities, were formed between the universities and the teacher training colleges. The immediate post-war realities, economic austerity combined with demanding social needs, saw the setting up of ‘Emergency Training Colleges’ which initially operated one-year training courses⁵⁰. One such institution was the Huddersfield Emergency College for Technical Teachers⁵¹ which opened in 1947. This was one of three (the others were in Bolton and London) dedicated to the training of technical and vocational teachers primarily for the college sector, though some would find employment in schools⁵². Although co-educational the Huddersfield Technical Teacher Training College was, in its early years, decidedly a male dominated institution. The 1948 intake of more than 80 students included only nine women⁵³, and Huddersfield was still waiting to welcome its own college dedicated to the training of school teachers.

⁴⁶ Frances Consitt, *Report on the Evacuation Period at Huddersfield, January 1941 – January 1944. Appendix A (2)*. (Unpublished, 1944), 1, University of Greenwich Archives.

⁴⁷ Joan D. Browne, *Teachers of Teachers. A History of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979).

⁴⁸ Fisher, ‘Teacher Education, Evacuation and Community’.

⁴⁹ Board of Education, *Teachers and Youth Leaders: Report of the Committee Appointed by the Board of Education to Consider the Recruitment and Training of Teachers and Youth Leaders* (London: HMSO, 1944).

⁵⁰ Peter H. J. H. Gosden, *Education in the Second World War: A Study in Policy and Administration* (London: Methuen and Co., 1976).

⁵¹ After its first year this institution was renamed the Huddersfield Technical Teacher Training College, and then Huddersfield College of Education (Technical) from 1965. For a detailed account see Mike Cook, Roy Fisher and Martyn Walker, *Teacher Education at Huddersfield, 1947-2007: from Technical Teacher Training College to University School of Education* (Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield Press, 2008).

⁵² Bill Bailey, ‘The Establishment of Centres for the Training of Teachers in Technical and Further Education in England, 1933-50’, *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 59, no. 3 (2007): 279-294.

⁵³ Cook et al., *Teacher Education at Huddersfield*.

1963-1970: Oastler - an experimental college

Women have far less chance of getting into university than men; about 25 per cent only of university students are women. The college has to be their institution of higher education; in fact about 70 per cent of college students are women. We must congratulate ourselves that this fits in with our conception of jobs suitable for women. What better job than teaching for a married woman?

(From an inaugural lecture, 1969⁵⁴)

I think I said - "I wish I had your wage coming in – well, it's two proper wages, you and y'husband." And Shirley said, "well why don't y'go on this teacher training course for married women at Oastler College, down town. It's only part-time, and you're back home in time to cook tea." I said, "oh y'need brains to go to College." But Shirley said "oh no, y'don't."

Well, I remembered that. And next Monday, when I came out of Supersave, I went to Oastler – y'know Oastler, it's what they've done with the old Co-op on New Street? Turned it into a bit of a college.⁵⁵

On 18 January, 1963, following national concerns about meeting the educational demands of rising birthrates and large numbers of women leaving teaching, the Ministry of Education (MoE) wrote to Huddersfield County Borough Council notifying its approval of a temporary (subsequently made permanent) day teacher training college for the town. The letter suggested that '...a particular problem will be to ensure that the college obtains a reasonable number of students with a good level of ability and that it is not filled largely with border-line candidates unable to find places in residential colleges.'⁵⁶ The College would offer training for infant, junior and combined junior/secondary teaching. On 9 April, 1963 George Wilson was appointed principal, assuming duty on 1 May. Oastler College of Education was accepted as an affiliate of the University of Leeds Institute of Education⁵⁷, of which Tom Hollins, whose inaugural is quoted above, was subsequently Director. The College opened on Monday 23 September, 1963 with a student body comprising 55 women and 25 men. The official

⁵⁴ Tom H. B. Hollins, *Another Look at Teacher Training: An Inaugural Lecture* (Leeds: Leeds University Press, 1969), 12.

⁵⁵ From Jackson, *Starting School*, 20.

⁵⁶ Ministry of Education, *Letter to H. Gray, Chief Education Officer, Huddersfield Borough Council from R. Klein, Ministry of Education*, (Unpublished, dated 18 January 1963: np). University of Huddersfield Archives.

⁵⁷ Others affiliated colleges of the University of Leeds Institute of Education were Bingley College; City of Leeds and Carnegie College; Bretton Hall College, Wakefield; Huddersfield College of Education (Technical); Ilkley College; James Graham College, Leeds; Leeds College of Art; Margaret McMillan College, Bradford; North Riding College, Scarborough; Ripon College; St John's College, York; Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds; and the Yorkshire Training College of Housecraft, Leeds. For a full account see Sheila Gosden and Peter Gosden, 'The Institute of Education and the Affiliated Colleges' in *The University of Leeds School of Education 1891-1991* ed. Peter Gosden (Leeds: Leeds University Press, 1991).

opening was performed by Sir Roger Stevens, Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds, on Tuesday 1 October, 1963⁵⁸.

By September 1965 Oastler had grown to 308 students of whom 215 (70 per cent) were women⁵⁹. By contrast, in 1966 the full-time provision at the town's technical teacher training college had 289 trainees of which just 21 (7 per cent) were women⁶⁰. (2008). Oastler College offered no residential accommodation. In 1965, 86 (27 per cent) of its students lived at home, with the rest finding rented accommodation throughout the town. In relation to the 1940s, Taylor⁶¹ referred to the stereotype of the teacher training college as one in which,

...a diluted form of gracious living was engaged in by a largely spinster staff in an impressive if educationally unsustainable and draughty building at the end of a mile-long drive, ten miles from the nearest town...

This was decidedly not the case at Oastler. The first annual report proclaimed that 'The College is experimental in a number of ways...', these included the use of staff of the College of Technology for the teaching of some academic subjects, pioneering collaborative work undertaken on the use of closed circuit television in the training of teachers, and the nature of the teaching accommodation⁶². Colin Robson⁶³ recalled that the College was,

...housed in the upper storeys of the central building of the Cooperative Stores at the southern end of the town centre. It provided a Tardis-like experience as one went upstairs from carpets and ladies' fashions to the lecture rooms, refectory, library, assembly hall, and laboratories of a general teacher training establishment...an article in the *Times Educational Supplement* referred to it as being the best situated teacher training facility in the country.

Norman Howlings⁶⁴ (2007), Oastler's Head of English, described how,

...the Coop dairy building in Alfred Street was used to provide additional teaching space...and at certain times of the day classes were conducted to the accompaniment of rattling milk bottles...All this helped to create over the next few years a special Oastler ethos, felt by staff and students alike: a sense of down-to-earth realism. It was a kind of 'frontier feeling': as a college we were in touch with 'real life' going on all around, no idealised grove of academe.

⁵⁸ George Wilson, *First Annual Report of the Oastler Day Training College for Teachers, Huddersfield* (Unpublished, 1964). University of Huddersfield Archives.

⁵⁹ George Wilson, *DES Form 2 RTC (Student Numbers)* (Unpublished, 1965). University of Huddersfield Archives.

⁶⁰ Cook, Fisher and Walker, *Teacher Education at Huddersfield*.

⁶¹ William Taylor, *Society and the Education of Teachers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 205.

⁶² George Wilson, *First Annual Report*, 1.

⁶³ Colin Robson, *Some Recollections of the Early Years of the Department of Education at Huddersfield Polytechnic*. Correspondence with author (27 February 2007).

⁶⁴ Norman Howlings, Correspondence with author – untitled (27 February 2007).

Jackson and Marsden, in their study of working class pupils who passed through Huddersfield's grammar schools during the late 1940s/early 1950s⁶⁵ considered that the girls, in response to their ignorance of university, had reacted '...by simply lowering their sights and aiming at training college' and that many explained this choice on the basis that, '...since they only intended to become teachers, there was little point in training for years at a university rather than two years at a college.'⁶⁶ Within Jackson and Marsden's study of 88 individuals (49 boys and 39 girls), 20 (51 per cent) of the girls and only one (2 per cent) of the boys opted for a place at a teacher training college; whilst 16 (41 per cent) of the girls and 38 (76 per cent) of the boys moved on to university. According to Jackson and Marsden the training colleges were '...full of girls from upper working class or lower middle class homes...'⁶⁷ and these girls '...emerged from training colleges with better accents, some new manners, fresh expectations – but with little social poise, for they had little social life, and with few friends much above their own social range.'⁶⁸ Indeed, at Avery Hill, where pre-war students had traditionally come from the petit bourgeoisie, the 1945 intake (who began their studies in Huddersfield) had comprised daughters of engineers, clerks, train-drivers, miners, farmers, motor-fitters and other crafts whilst, Shorney's account relates, '...only a small number came from professional families and for many years Avery Hill did not recruit one single solicitor's daughter.'⁶⁹

Provision introduced at Oastler in January 1967 targeted a different kind of student to the lower middle class/upper working class teenage girls leaving grammar school for residential teacher training colleges – this was the 'Part-Time Course for Married Women'⁷⁰ – which essentially extended the then standard three-year Teacher's Certificate course to four years. Twenty-four married women, the course report records, 'including one widow', constituted the first co-hort. Their average age was 36. Just two of the 24 were accepted on 'special entry' basis, the rest met the standard entry requirements for the full-time Teacher's Certificate⁷¹. There is no record of ethnicity, but a college photograph dated 1969 as well as extracts from the film referred to below, suggest that all were white. This new provision captured the attention of ITV television documentary makers who, in 1967, reported as follows:

[Film of exterior of Coop building with passing traffic. A male Pathé news style voice-over narrates...]

⁶⁵ The 49 boys had passed GCE A Levels between 1949 and 1952. Jackson and Marsden widened the survey dates to between 1946 and 1954 for girls in order to increase the associated sample size to 39 (Jackson and Marsden, *Education and the Working Class* 1966: 58).

⁶⁶ Ibid. 259

⁶⁷ Ibid. 162-163

⁶⁸ Ibid. 163

⁶⁹ Shorney, *Teachers in Training 1906-1985*, 164.

⁷⁰ Colin Robson (correspondence with author 2007, np) recalled that, even at the time, the course title was the cause of 'some hilarity'. By the early 1970s, within the Huddersfield Polytechnic, the course title had been dropped and the entry criteria changed to 'women over 25 with caring responsibilities'.

⁷¹ George Wilson, *Report on the Four Year Part-time Married Women's Course First Entry – January to December, 1967* (Unpublished, 1967). University of Huddersfield Archives.

This is Oastler College, Huddersfield. Here 24 Yorkshire housewives aged between 27 and 50 are doing what millions of other women only talk about. They resolved to be individuals as well as mothers and wives. Peggy South is 33, she has two girls aged 4 and 7. For her, starting late on a new career has meant changing the whole pattern of life.

[Film of Peggy South at home, seated at her breakfast table with two children. Peggy South, with a 'soft' Yorkshire accent, speaks as voice-over...]

Well, I wanted to teach. I suppose it's as simple as that. But, err, we had a little family conference and we all decided that it would be a good idea and, err, we decided to go into it.

[Film of Peggy South leaving home in the morning with her children, this cuts to her and the children at the school entrance gates. Peggy South speaks as voice-over...]

Well really, I felt that apart from bringing the children up I just wasn't living and I would, I would, sort of change the furniture around just for a change. You can read books, which I had done quite a lot, part of the time, but there was no end product to it.

[Film of Coop retail entrance area, then of College social space with the 'married women' students arriving together in the morning – a prominent sign reads 'Reserved for Married Women's Course'. Male narrator's voice-over...]

The course at Oastler has been carefully planned by Principal George Wilson to dovetail with the home time-table. Lectures start at just before 11 in the morning, and end just after 3. Monday is a free day. The free washday and late morning start will make it possible for housewives to help plug Britain's teacher gap.

[A female narrator's voice-over with strong regional accent, added for rebroadcast in 2015]

But not everyone shares the enthusiasm for these back-to-work mums, including some of the full-time trainee teachers filmed by the documentary team.

[A male student in a student social area speaks to camera...]

I don't think you can say that, err, because they're mothers, because they've had children of their own, I don't think you can say they're qualified to teach.

[Film of the married women in class, seated at desks in rows and taking notes from their male tutor. Male narrator's voice-over...]

Four years, a thousand evenings of writing up the day's lecture at home on the kitchen table. Will they stick it?

[voice-over from Peggy South...]

I don't think my conscience would allow me to backdown now. You know, having taken a precious place and so many other women wanted to do it. And having been allocated one of these places, I would feel I was letting everyone down.⁷²

Principal Wilson reported that the 'married women' were '...very conscientious, hard-working and most concerned individually and collectively to do well.'⁷³ He was unhappy, however, about the available financial support – they each received a total grant of £480 (£8461 at 2018 value) as compared to the £870 (£15337 at 2018 value) for a student on the equivalent full-time three-year course.

Wilson noted with satisfaction that,

Although the married women are part-timers, they are now beginning to share in the activities of the student body as a whole. During the first term they tended to isolate themselves and cling together in the Students' Common and Dining rooms...they are being encouraged by both students and staff...to take a greater share in student life.⁷⁴

Two years later Wilson reported that no student had withdrawn from the first two intakes and that during Spring Term 1968 the students had held an 'indoor garden party' at which they had,

...provided and/or baked food, and their husbands and children came along...Husbands and children were happy to know where their wives/mothers come each day and to become acquainted with staff. The intention is to make the event an annual one...however, integration and involvement with the full-time students is not yet as full as I would like.⁷⁵

In 1970 the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and Science, in a pre-echo of the James Report⁷⁶, received evidence from the Association of Chief Education Officers that 'There is increasing criticism of the work of colleges of education from students, teachers, Heads of schools, some local education authorities and the

⁷² ITV, *Britain as Seen on ITV - the Female of the Species* (film extract first broadcast 1967). (London: ITV, 2015). Extract transcribed by author and quoted by kind permission of ITV and ITV Studios.

⁷³ Wilson, *Report on the Four Year Part-time Married Women's Course*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 2.

⁷⁵ George Wilson, *Report on the Progress and Development of the First Two Years of the Four-year Part-time Course for Married Women at Oastler College of Education* (Unpublished, 1969). University of Huddersfield Archives.

⁷⁶ Department of Education and Science, *Teacher Education and Training: A Report by the Committee of Inquiry Appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Under the Chairmanship of Lord James of Rusholme*. [The 'James Report'] (London: HMSO, 1972).

professional teacher associations.⁷⁷). A memorandum submitted to the Committee by two lecturers at Kesteven College of Education argued that,

A large amount of time is devoted in education to academic pursuits in the fields of Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, History of Education – most of which will never be of any practical value to the teacher...A three-year course is unnecessarily lengthy...Academic standards at Colleges of Education fall far short of University standards...University atmosphere, ethos and general procedure are probably not suitable, certainly not necessary, for many of the students.⁷⁸

The married women at Oastler, as was the case with other Oastler students, undertook studies which included the theory, history and principles of education. A main academic subject was chosen from Art, Drama, English, French, Environmental Studies, and History. All studied English in a course which 'focused on developing the students' own skills in the use of language and their understanding of literature, and included discussion of work appropriate for children in school.'⁷⁹ There was a choice of a subsidiary course as well as a full term of school-based teaching practice each year. Their course could not be fairly criticised on the basis outlined above, however, the tide of educational opinion was turning against the colleges of education and by the close of the century they would be gone.

The Oastler College of Education was a relatively small institution. Whilst its existence was short, it exemplified a particular spirit and a shift away from the pre-war world of residential teacher education colleges. Principal George Wilson resigned on 31 March, 1969. Mary Dennell, the serving Deputy Principal, was appointed Acting Principal of Oastler from 1 April. 1969-70 proved to be the last year of operation for the College. It had grown from an initial intake of 80 students to 415, of which 307 (74 per cent) were women. In its final year as many as 55 per cent⁸⁰, of its students were living at home, reflecting its local character. On 1 June 1970 the newly designated Huddersfield Polytechnic, incorporating the Huddersfield College of Technology and the Oastler College of Education, came into being⁸¹.

Conclusion

The early phase of working class education for adults in Huddersfield began on gendered lines and this was reflected when the two major institutions were established in the mid-nineteenth century, initially, as separate single sex institutions. The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, in effect managed by men, was after almost 40 years of notional independence subsumed within the larger, by then, co-educational Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution. The struggle to establish a school teacher training college within the town was, after a prolonged period of work and

⁷⁷ Association of Chief Education Officers, 'Statement to the Select Committee on Education and Science' in Select Committee on Education and Science, *Teacher Training Documents: Memoranda and Questionnaire* (London: HMSO, 1970), 14.

⁷⁸ D. H. Reading and J. F. Risby, 'Memorandum' in Select Committee on Education and Science, *Teacher Training Documents*, 37.

⁷⁹ Howlings, Correspondence with author, 2007: np.

⁸⁰ Select Committee on Education and Science, *Teacher Training Documents*.

⁸¹ O'Connell, *The Making of a University*. In 1974 the Huddersfield College of Education (Technical) was merged into the Huddersfield Polytechnic.

institutional ambition, damaged by Sadler's 1904 Report and was further dented in 1919 by the unsuccessful attempt to gain approval for an ex-servicemen's teacher training college. The shift from Sadler's⁸² caution against the presumption that girls should become teachers to the views expressed by Hollins some sixty-five years later⁸³ with regard to the ideal nature of teaching as a career for married women, reflected broader changes in social attitudes. Moreover, the patterns of progression by which girls from 'respectable' craft/trades working class backgrounds of the type described by Jackson and Marsden⁸⁴ entered teacher training colleges were themselves in the process of being superseded. The rest of the twentieth century would see an expansion of higher education based on a widening of participation that increasingly embraced sections of the working class which had hitherto been largely excluded. There would also be a dramatic acceleration of the re-structuring of the British economy away from manufacturing and towards service-based employment, and this would lead to complex changes in the constitution and nature of the working class itself. The merger of Oastler College of Education with the Huddersfield College of Technology in 1970 was an example of the amalgamation of a predominantly female student teacher training college⁸⁵ with a much larger, mainly technical institution with a substantially male student population. It was one of a type which would be repeated many times nationally over the following two decades.

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⁸² Sadler, *Report on Secondary and Technical Education*.

⁸³ Hollins, *Another Look at Teacher Training*.

⁸⁴ Jackson and Marsden, *Education and the Working Class*.

⁸⁵ In the 1960s Eric Robinson, then Deputy Principal of Enfield College and, together with his Principal George Brosan, a key voice in the subsequent development of Polytechnics, had been urging that colleges of education should '...join with technical colleges to form a non-university section of Higher Education.' (Browne, *Teachers of Teachers*, 195).