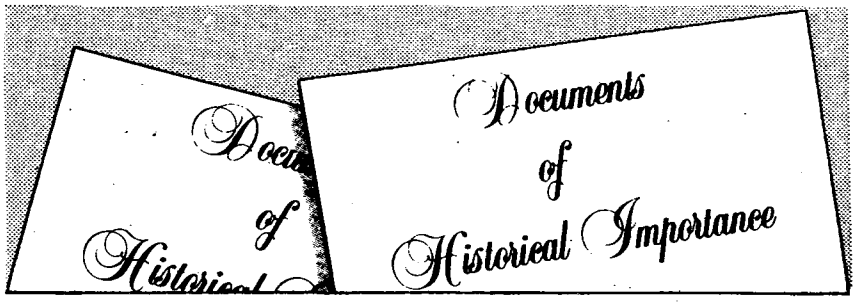
The Village College

H Morris

Being a memorandum on the Provision of Education and Social Facilities for
The countryside, with special reference to Cambridgshire

The monthly interprofessional journal for everyone concerned with young people and youth affairs
Youth in Society



THE VILLAGE COLLEGE

Being a Memorandum on the Provision of Educational and Social Facilities for the Countryside, with Special Reference to Cambridgeshire

by
H. MORRIS
Secretary for Education, Cambridgeshire

Published by Cambridge University Press, 1925

'The rural problem is one that successive governments have ignored in despair. The elementary School buildings are inadequate and insanitary in an appalling proportion of cases; the lack of facilities for continued and secondary education is a disgrace to a highly organised community. All (the necessary) things can be done. What we wish to emphasise is the fact that in rural districts they are not being done, and do not seem likely to be done.'

The Times Educational Supplement
Dec. 13, 1924

EDUCATION AND RURAL WELFARE

I. The immense development of the State system of education in England during the nineteenth and present centuries has been almost wholly an urban development. The towns are rich, and as they are centres of large populations the provision of schools and institutes for higher education has not been administratively difficult because the pupils live in hundreds and thousands at their very doors. The elementary schools of the towns are, on the whole, better built and more generously staffed and equipped than those of the countryside; secondary schools, with a few exceptions, are situated in the towns; so also are the centres of technical education. The most vigorous and systematic popular movement for adult education, the Workers' Educational Association, is an urban movement with comparatively little influence in the villages; there is no corresponding movement for advanced higher education in the countryside.

There are two obvious reasons for the less vigorous development of education in the countryside — its inferior economic position, as compared with the urban centres of industry, and the size and scattered character of the villages which do not lend themselves to easy organisation for the purposes of education and recreational life.

II. Educationally the countryside is subordinate to the towns and its schools are dominated by, and are subservient to, the urban system of secondary and higher education. Owing to the operation of the free-place scholarships system, the abler children are taken from the country schools into the town secondary schools, where they receive a predominantly literary and academic education under urban conditions divorced from the life and habits of the countryside. Either they are lost to the villages and become town workers, or return to their homes unfitted and untrained for life as countrymen and countrywomen. If, as seems possible, the number of urban secondary schools is increased, and the proportion of free places is universally raised from 25 to 40 per cent, the plight of the countryside will be intensified. Already many Education Authorities, confronted with the demand for increased secondary education, are considering schemes for additional secondary and central schools in the town to which country children are to be conveyed on a large scale by train and fleets of motor omnibuses.

With the realisation that the welfare of the countryside depends on 'better farming and better living', much is now being done by the State and by voluntary effort. But adult agricultural education, whether itinerant or centralised in residential colleges and farm institutes, the Women's Institute movement, Rural Libraries, Village Halls, Rural Community Councils, admirable as they are, are not radical and comprehensive enough to bring about the reconstruction of the countryside.

III. The need of the countryside will not be met until, by a recasting of the rural elementary school system, the villages are provided with an education primary and secondary, which will fit boys and girls for life (in its widest sense) as countrymen and countrywomen;[1] until the countryside is provided with an institution in which the wide provisions of the great consolidated Education Act of 1921, especially in regard to higher and technical education, can be applied to and expressed in terms of rural life and industry; until the population of the countryside has guaranteed to it a social and recreational life based on stable foundations. This view is confirmed by that taken in the recently published *Final Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation.* In his review of the Report in the *Economic Journal* (September, 1924), Mr J. A. Venn, the Gilbey Lecturer in the History and Economics of Agriculture in the University of Cambridge, says:

The importance they (Sir William Ashley and Professor W. G. S. Adams) attach to education, using the word in its widest sense, will be seen when it is stated that, out of the forty-four recommendations

contained in this part of the Report, no less than twenty-five are concerned with the means of organising the farmer and of improving his knowledge, not only of the industry itself, but also of its surroundings.

But if we wish to build up a rural civilisation that will have chronic vigour the first essential is that the countryside should have a localised and indigenous system of education in its own right beginning with the child in the primary school. Itinerant adult agricultural education, rural libraries and village halls, will always be fighting a battle already half lost, if leaving the village system of elementary education as it is, we forget the children and the older boys and girls, and allow the ablest of them to be stolen by the secondary schools of the towns.

THE PROBLEM OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

IV. The first step towards providing the countryside with a more efficient education will lie in the reorganisation of the village schools into a system of Senior or Central Schools in the larger villages, supported by tributary junior schools for children under the age of eleven in the smaller surrounding villages. The reasons in favour of such a policy are well known and need only be briefly recapitulated.

In Cambridgeshire for example there are 33 schools with an average attendance below 30, 14 schools with an average attendance between 30 and 40, 14 schools with an average attendance between 50 and 60, and 41 schools with an average attendance between 60 and 100. Only 21 schools have an average attendance of between 100 and 250.

In these small schools all the children from 3 to 14 years of age are either housed in a single room, or if there is a separate classroom for the infants, all the children above standard I occupy the main room. The main room is sometimes divided by a curtain, less often by a screen. Children of varying ages and varying standards of attainment are necessarily grouped in a single class.

The older children perhaps suffer most — they mark time after the age of 11 or 12; the staff is not large enough to meet their special needs, and if it were, the equipment and accommodation for more advanced instruction is lacking.

In brief, the village school with an average attendance of 100 and under is not susceptible of organisation on any sound principle and the small numbers do not allow of the provision of the staff, accommodation, and equipment, which make a wider curriculum possible. The small school is both inadequate and expensive.

V. An illustration of what happens when the schools of an area are grouped in accordance with a plan is afforded in the Burwell area of Cambridgeshire. In Burwell there were four schools, three voluntary schools and one Council School, each working as a separate entity. One old Church School was closed: the two other church schools were organised as junior schools for those over 10 years. The Senior School was enlarged by the addition of a room for handicrafts and domestic subjects and land for a school garden was hired. Later, the older children from the neighbouring villages of Reach and Swaffham Prior were transferred to the Burwell Senior School.

At Burwell Senior School there are 150 children of 10-15 years of age. They are graded in classes according to age and attainment, each under the charge of a qualified teacher. Handicrafts, domestic subjects and gardening form an integral part of the training. Great importance is attached to the teaching of English (the school produces a play once a year), to local history and to physical training. There is a strong corporate life and there are thriving athletic and hobby clubs. The school has its colours, with a school cap for the boys, and a smock and cap for the girls. The children travelling from a distance take their midday meal together under the charge of a teacher.

VI. The ultimate aim of the Cambridgeshire scheme is to establish some 30-40 senior or central schools under the charge of graduates or specially qualified head teachers. It is hoped then to concentrate all the older children of the county in these centres, and to give them there advanced instruction with a strong rural bias in schools adequately equipped and staffed. Three important results will follow. The numbers of older children in attendance at the Senior Schools will make possible the organisation of a class system in each school that will have regard to age and attainments. It will be possible to concentrate the facilities for handicrafts, domestic subjects, general elementary science, and gardening in a limited number of centres. At the same time the staffs at the tributary schools, relieved of the responsibility of the older children, will be able to devote themselves effectively to the needs of the infant and junior children.

The Cambridgeshire grouping scheme has had two interesting results:

(a) The Senior Schools have made it possible to attract a new type of teacher to the countryside. Apart from specially qualified teachers, there are now eight head and assistant teachers in Cambridgeshire who are graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, London, Glasgow and Birmingham.

(b) Owing to the difficulties inherent in the dual system of voluntary and Council Schools, the Education Committee set up an advisory Committee representative of all denominations and of the teaching profession and presided over by the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Dr E. C. Pearce, Master of Corpus Christi College) with the object of arriving at an agreed syllabus of religious teaching. The work of the Committee was successful and resulted in what is known as the 'Cambridgeshire Concordat', which includes the *Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools.* Two Bibles based on the syllabus ('The Little Children's Bible' and 'The Children's Bible'), edited by Professor Alexander Nairne, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, and Dr T. R. Glover have been published and are in use in Cambridgeshire Schools. (The sales of the Children's Bibles in Great Britain have reached 60,000, and an American edition has been published by Messrs Macmillan.)

VII. The grouping of the schools of the countryside on the lines just described will have consequences of profound importance in rural England. In course of time the vast congeries of rural schools will be formed into an ordered system of two types of school, for those under eleven years or thereabouts and those over that age. With the assignment of a defined and comprehensible function to all the schools, there will accrue immense gains in organisation, in the economical provision of buildings and equipment, in the development and enrichment of the curriculum, and in the training of the teachers. Money will be saved and better spent. The system will be such as to allow, as and when circumstances demand, of the easy and natural development of centrally-situated rural secondary schools. There will at last be possible all over the English countryside a rural education of a secondary type for the training of boys and girls for life as countrymen and countrywomen.

THE VILLAGE COLLEGE

VIII. But if rural England is to have the education it needs and the social and recreational life it deserves, more is required than the reorganisation of the elementary school system; and that which is required is possible.

There must be a grouping and co-ordination of all the educational and social agencies which now exist in isolation in the countryside: an amalgamation which, while preserving the individuality and function of each, will

assemble them into a whole and make possible their expression for the first time in a new institution, single but many-sided, for the countryside.

IX. What this means may be shown in detail.

The County Council is the Statutory Authority for:

(i) Education:
Elementary.
Higher:
(a) Secondary Education and Day Continuation Schools
(b) Further Education.
(c) Agricultural Education.

(ii) The Public Libraries Act, 1919.

(iii) Juvenile Employment and Unemployment Insurance.

(iv) Public Health.

(v) Agriculture (including the lesser rural industries).

The County Council is therefore the Statutory Authority for the whole of the legislation which provides for the social and economic welfare of the countryside by means of educational, recreational and community facilities,[2] except that in regard to the two latter, its powers are shared by the Rural District and Parish Councils. But the functions of the major Statutory Authority are carried out in separation in the village, and there is no co-ordination of County Council services with those of the minor local authority. The main reason for this is that the village elementary school is not adequate to the wide conception of education as covering all ages and activities and including social and physical training as it is expressed in the consolidated Education Act of 1921. In most, if not all, villages there will be found, side by side with a piece of elementary education, a group of evening classes held in the elementary school if no other building is available. There may be a Women's Institute Class and a British Legion Class; a Choral Class in a private house; and one or two Agricultural Education Classes held either in the school, or in the parish hall, or in a barn or other farm buildings.[3] The branch of the County Library has no appropriate home — it is housed in a corner of the school or hall or in a private residence.[4] The recreation ground belonging to the Parish Council is stationed in an outlying corner of the village. If there is an Infant Welfare Centre, that is housed in another corner.

The existing activities are not only carried on in isolation from one another, but the greater number are not suitably accommodated. Again, the existing elementary school building does not allow of the development of fuller educational facilities for young people and adults. Finally, if there is no suitable village hall, the Voluntary Associations of the countryside have no place in which to meet except the children's school; there a large number of social gatherings must be held; and there even, accommodation for the work of village local government must by law be found rent free.

X. All the activities and facilities that already exist in the countryside, and all those which by statute could be provided, should be brought together in and around one institution.

In Cambridgeshire the aim would be to establish in about ten carefully selected centres where Senior Schools are already organised, a system of village colleges which would provide for the co-ordination and development of all forms of education — primary, secondary, further and adult education, including agricultural education — together with social and recreational facilities, and at the same time furnish a community centre for the neighbourhood.

In these centres the isolated elementary school as such, with all the narrower conceptions associated with it, would be abolished; it would be absorbed into a larger institution.

Let us, for sake of illustration, visualise the village college as consisting of two wings or three-sided courts, one containing the school portion, the other accommodation for adult activities, and with the village hall between, thus:

The village college would provide for the following:

(1) A nursery schoolroom which would also serve for use as an Infant Welfare Centre.

(2) A primary school for the children of 5—10 years of age of the central village only.

(3) A school providing a rural education of a secondary type for children from 10-15 or 16 years in the central village and the tributary villages of the chosen area. Such tributary villages would be within reasonable walking or cycling or train or motor-omnibus distance (on the average 2—3½ miles in Cambridgeshire); and the tributary villages would retain a junior school for infants and juniors up to the age of 10 years. The school thus forming part of the village college would in addition to classrooms contain a workshop for handicrafts, a room for domestic science (cookery, laundry, house-wifery, etc.) and a room for general elementary science. These three rooms would also be used for evening adult education in crafts, domestic subjects and agricultural science.

(4) A staff room for teachers, and the usual offices for teachers and children.

(5) The village hall, which would serve
(a) for use in the day, as a school assembly hall, for the midday meal, school functions, physical training and school plays and concerts;
(b) in the evenings, for broadcast programmes at stated hours, concerts, performances by the village dramatic society, exhibitions by the travelling cinema of the Cambridgeshire Rural Community Council, lectures, dances, whist drives and public meetings.

(6) A room divided into two parts — a library section containing a permanent nucleus of books and the monthly supply of books from the Cambridgeshire County Library, where villagers could read and study in peace and reasonable comfort; and a reading-room section containing newspapers and periodicals.

The Library would thus be intimately associated with every stage and type of educational work carried on in the college, and would be used by every student from the youngest to the oldest. A new conception of the Public Library as that department which provides the educational tool known as 'books' would be realised. Schoolboys and girls, their older sisters and brothers, and their parents would freely pass to and fro between classroom or lecture-room or the demonstration plot and the Library.

(7) A room definitely set apart for agricultural education, containing maps, charts and specimens, to be used jointly with the science laboratory (Paragraph (3)).

Such a room with the laboratory would provide for the theoretical portion of that type of agricultural education — Local Courses and Local Instruction — which in accordance with the scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture does not come within the scope of the Farm Institute. The village college would also be the natural centre near which instruction in manual processes such as thatching, hedging and ditching and the use of agricultural machinery, would take place, and demonstrations given in veterinary science and farriery; and where technical instruction and advice on rural industries would be available.

The demonstrations of crops would be organised at farms near the village college. In Cambridgeshire all demonstrations carried out by the Agricultural Education Sub-Committee of the Education Committee would thus be concentrated in village college centres, and could be co-ordinated with the work of the school and also with the adult Agricultural Courses given in the college. The village college would then form a centre for agricultural and horticultural education.

(8) Two or three rooms primarily for adult evening classes, and also for village meetings connected with the Women's

Institutes, the British Legion, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, and committee meetings connected with village activities such as the Horticultural and Flower Show, the Summer Festival and Athletic Sports, the Village Football, Cricket and Tennis Clubs, and for such activities of rural local government as must by law be accommodated in a public elementary school if no other public building is available, *e.g.* Parish Council meetings, local government inquiries, meetings under the Allotment Acts, Candidature for persons for either district or parish councils, any parish or local government committees appointed to administer public funds and endowments within the parish (Local Government Act 1824, Sect. 4).

(9) Simple shower baths and a dressing room (both in a basement) for the use of the school children, and of the Athletic Clubs of the village. (Village athletes hardly ever enjoy the luxury of a hot bath and rub-down after the game!)

(10) The village recreation grounds provided by the Parish Council alongside. This would provide additional playing-field accommodation without extra cost for all the children at the school, and would take the place of the old asphalt or concrete schoolyard.

(11) A plot of ground to serve for a school garden, and for the smaller demonstrations in horticulture.

(12) A centre for carrying out the Education Authority's work connected with Choice of Employment and Juvenile Unemployment Insurance.

(13) The Warden's House.

(14) Accommodation for Indoor Recreations. There is nothing to prevent the Local Education Authority renting the rooms of a County Council building for recreational purposes, such as clubs and games. And it should not be forgotten that the Local Education Authority have powers under Section 86 of the Education Act, 1921, to provide facilities for social and physical training for children, young persons and adults. But a centre such as that in which the village college is situated might reasonably and naturally require accommodation explicitly set apart for indoor games, especially billiards, and controlled by village trustees.

It is important and essential that the accommodation for such indoor recreations should not be disassociated from the village college, if that institution is to realise its functions as a community centre for the area — educational and social.

The following is put forward as a perfectly satisfactory solution of this problem:

(a) As in the case of many Central and Secondary Schools the school buildings or other part of the village college could be utilised in the evenings for boys' and girls' clubs, the Debating Society, the Chess Club, the Dramatic Club, the Natural History Club, the Photographic Club, and indoor games.

(b) The block containing a billiard room and one or more small rooms for the various indoor games could be built adjacent to the college. The two buildings need only be separated by a few yards; they would be actively associated in use in daily life and habit, though administratively they would be separate entities.

Such recreation rooms would be provided out of voluntary funds; or if thus associated with a village college they might be made eligible for a grant from any funds set aside for the purpose by the Development Commissioners and the Ministry of Agriculture. They would be under proper control, *i.e.* of trustees consisting of the Village Social Council.

(c) On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent the recreation room expressly forming a part of the village college; and it would be interesting if the Development Commissioners and the Ministry of Agriculture, co-operating with the Board of Education and the Local Education Authority (regard being had to the latter's powers under Section 86 of the Education Act, 1921) followed out this plan for experimental purposes if a village college is established in Cambridgeshire.

It should be noted that a building serving all the needs enumerated in Paragraphs (1) — (14) can be provided and maintained by the Statutory Authority.

All that part concerning elementary and higher education (including school garden and playground) would rank for grant from the Board of Education. All the services of elementary and higher education carried on within its walls would be statutory service provided and maintained by the Local Authority and aided by the Board of Education.

The services of agricultural education would be eligible for the 66⅔ per cent maintenance grants of the Ministry of Agriculture who also have power to contribute a grant of 75 per cent towards the capital cost of any part of the building not eligible for grant from the Board of Education and used primarily for agricultural education for persons over the age of 16 years.

The capital cost and the maintenance of the Library and Reading-room section of the building would be a rate aided service only, except in so far as it might be possible for the Board of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture to contribute to the capital cost and maintenance on account of work done in connection with elementary and higher agricultural education. (See Paragraph (6) above.)

The hall portion would be eligible for the grant of the Board of Education as it would be an integral part of the school and would be available for social and physical training under Section 86 of the Education Act of 1921.

In this connection the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Development Commissioners who are considering the question of grants to village halls might be enlisted.

It may be noted that in all villages the premises of council schools which are the property of the Local Authority are rented for general purposes and when not required for educational purposes; and this would apply to village colleges.

The recreation ground is a service provided by the Parish Council; associated with it might be any land provided by the Education Authority as a playing-field under Section 86 of the Education Act of 1921.

XI. *Government.* The control of the village college would be vested in a body of governors responsible to the Local Authority, consisting of

(a) The managers of the elementary school. As the school would serve more than one village, such a body would by statute be a composite body consisting of managers appointed by the County Council, and managers appointed by the minor local authorities of the area served.

(b) Members appointed by the County Council as representing local interests, to supervise higher, including agricultural, education.

The Parish Councils (or Parish Meetings) as statutory minor local authorities for elementary education might appropriately be associated with the supervision of higher education.

(c) A representative appointed by the Senate of the University of Cambridge.

(d) Representatives of other interests, *e.g.* the Parish Council as owners of the recreation ground.

The body of governors would be appointed under an approved scheme providing for the proper discharge of statutory functions. The body of governors when acting as a *whole* would act in an advisory and consultative capacity only except when they might as a whole properly act executively, as for example, in regard to all forms of higher

education. Executive acts in regard to certain other services would devolve on the constituent section statutorily responsible, as for example, in the case of the elementary school on the managers. The governing body in so far as it carried out services for which the County Council is the Local Authority would be responsible to the County Council.

XII. *Head of the Village College.* The Head of the village college following on the co-ordination of educational services, would combine several functions. A new type of leader and teacher with a higher status and of superior calibre would at last be possible in the English countryside. An appropriate title expressing this new status and wider scope is therefore required — especially if we are to escape from the old conception of the Village Schoolmaster. He might be styled the *Warden* — we should read then of the *Warden of Sawston;* the *Warden of Bourn;* and why not *Provost,* or *Master,* or *Principal* in some cases?

He would have to be a man country-bred and trained at a University; a Science Degree would be an additional qualification; above all he would have to be a man with a love of and understanding of rural life, with powers of leadership.

As Headmaster of the school he would be entitled to the appropriate salary under the allocated Standard Scale; in addition he would be paid sums for duties supervisory and otherwise in connection with higher education.

The scope of the Warden's duties, the amount of his remuneration, and the allocation of proportions of it, e.g. to Elementary Education (or to Secondary Education if the School within the College is designed to comply with the Regulations for Secondary Schools), Further Education (and perhaps Agricultural Education) are questions that require more detailed treatment than is possible in this brief memorandum. The problem is one that would best be stated not in the abstract, but when specific proposals for a village college are formulated to the Board of Education (and the Ministry of Agriculture).

XIII. *Architecture.* The possibility of bringing together all the various educational and social services that would find a habitation within the village college, the possibility of achieving this remarkable synthesis depends in the first place on the provision of the building.

The building that will form the village college will be so new in English architecture, and its significance so great, that the design and construction of the first village colleges should be very carefully provided for. For we are in measurable sight, if we use imagination and have administrative courage, of giving to the English countryside a number of fine and worthy public buildings. The schools of rural England are nearly always bad and seldom beautiful — never a form of art, as they might and ought to be. The greater portion of them were designed to serve the joint purpose of a school and parish hall, and at a time when the standard of staffing and accommodation, the quality of the curriculum and the conception of teaching were vastly inferior to those of our own day. As the Education Act of 1921 is progressively put into operation, the buildings are bound to be replaced. During the next few decades large numbers of new educational buildings costing large sums of money will spring up in England and Wales, and the process will be accelerated if, as seems possible, the system of 'dual control' of Voluntary and Council Schools is abolished within the lifetime of the present Government. There is no reason why the erection of the new buildings should not be made the opportunity of adding to the public architecture of the countryside; and there is additional reason that the opportunity should not be missed because there is not likely ever to be any other constructive movement so national and widespread, so completely affecting the lives of the whole community, as that of public education. The provision of buildings for the system of public education will in the present century be one of the chiefest ways in which the art of architecture can influence the body politic. If the opportunity is not taken it will only be through dullness and lack of vision.

The difference between good and bad architecture is more often the difference between a good design and a bad design, rather than the difference between cheap and costly material. Assuming that good material will be available for a village college, the important thing is to see that it has a significant design. Such a design must be simple, but it could be beautiful. Using our imagination, let us say to the architect: 'Education is one of our greatest public services and one of the most widely diffused. Every year we spend on it some £80 million. Every town and every village must have its educational buildings. Education touches every citizen. We have a conception of a new institution for the countryside, an institution that will touch every side of the life of the inhabitants of the district in which it is placed. Will you think out a design for such a building, a village college? A building that will express the spirit of the English countryside which it is intended to grace, something of its humaneness and modesty, something of the age-long and permanent dignity of husbandry; a building that will give the countryside a centre of reference arousing the affection and loyalty of the country child and country people, and conferring significance on their way of life? If this can be done simply and effectually, and the varying needs which the village college will serve realised as an entity and epitomised in a building, a standard may be set and a great tradition may be begun; in such a synthesis architecture will find a fresh and widespread means of expression. If the village college is a true and workable conception, the institution will, with various modifications, speed over rural England; and in course of time a new series of worthy public buildings will stand side by side with the parish churches of the countryside.'

XIV. The village college as thus outlined would not create something superfluous; it would take all the various vital but isolated activities in village life — the School, the Village Hall and Reading Room, the Evening Classes, the Agricultural Education Courses, the Women's Institute, the British Legion, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, the recreation ground, the branch of the County Rural Library, the Athletic and Recreation Clubs — and, bringing them together into relation, create a new institution for the English countryside. It would create out of discrete elements an organic whole; the vitality of the constituent elements would be preserved, and not destroyed, but the unity they would form would be a new thing. For, as in the case of all organic unities, the whole is greater than the mere sum of the parts. It would be a true social synthesis — it would take existing and live elements and bring them into a new and unique relationship.

§ The village college would change the whole face of the problem of rural education. As the community centre of the neighbourhood it would provide for the whole man, and abolish the duality of education and ordinary life. It would not only be the training ground for the art of living, but the place in which life is lived, the environment of a genuine corporate life. The dismal dispute of vocational and non-vocational education would not arise in it. It would be a visible demonstration in stone of the continuity and never ceasingness of education. There would be no 'leaving school'! — the child would enter at three and leave the college only in extreme old age. It would have the great virtue of being local so that it would enhance the quality of actual life as it is lived from day to day — the supreme object of education. Unlike non-local residential institutions (the public schools, the universities, the few residential workingmen's colleges, and, to take a continental example,

the Danish High Schools) it would not be divorced from the normal environment of those who would frequent it from day to day, or from that greater educational institution, the family. Has there ever been an educational institution that at one and the same time provided for the needs of the whole family and consolidated its life — its social, physical, intellectual and economic life? Our modern educational institutions provide only for units of the family, or separate the individual from the family by time and space so that they may educate it apart and under less natural conditions. The village college would lie athwart the daily lives of the community it served; and in it the conditions would be realised under which education would be not an escape from reality, but an enrichment and transformation of it. For education is committed to the view that the ideal order and the actual order can ultimately be made one.

§ We are witnessing in this country through the extension of the principle of ownership the disappearance of the old land owning class, and at the same time a modification of the influence and authority of the Squire and the Parson. There are social and political, as well as economic problems, arising out of this change. The responsibilities of leadership and the maintenance of liberal and humane traditions in our squireless villages (which are the rule not the exception in Cambridgeshire) will fall on a larger number of shoulders — they will fall on the whole community. The village college will be the seat and guardian of humane public traditions in the countryside, the training ground of a rural democracy realising its social and political duties. Without some such institution as the village college a rural community consisting largely of agricultural workers, small proprietors and small farmers will not be equal to the task of maintaining a worthy rural civilisation. The alternative would be a countryside like that in some continental countries, prosperous perhaps, but narrow and materialistic, without native distinction and charm, and with no instinct for even the popular arts.

§ The village college by linking up the local representatives of the county authority with the minor local authorities and uniting them in the concrete task of administering a many-sided local institution and powers visibly affecting the life around them from day to day, would revitalise rural local government. The Parish Council, still exercising its own powers, but concerned in the exercise of larger ones, would be endowed with new life. Good government and self-government might at last be combined in the countryside. Rural local government languishes because there is no institution that provides a centre of reference and a means of expression. The village college would meet that need.

§ The village college would provide the chance for creating for the countryside a new type of village leader and teacher with a new status and a wide function embracing human welfare in its biggest sense — spiritual, physical, social and economic.

§ The village college would provide an opportunity for creative architecture. Our State system of education has not yet produced noble architecture on the same scale as that of all the other great movements of the national spirit. And there has been no public architecture in the English countryside since the Parish Churches were built — that is, since the Middle Ages. Apart from these inheritances from a past age, the biggest and most impressive public buildings in the countryside are the asylums and the workhouses: big asylums and poor schools — a sight to put all Heaven in a rage.

§ The village college would have in it all the conditions of permanence. It will be formed by welding together existing institutions already planted deep in the habits and affections of the people. Its activities will have statutory authority, and statutory financial support, and its financial stability is therefore guaranteed.

§ Finally, the village college would not outlive its function, for the main reason that it would not be committed irrevocably to any intellectual or social dogma or to any sectional point of view. Intellectually it might be one of the freest of our English Institutions.

THE SUGGESTED PLAN FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE

XV. The County of Cambridge has already been mapped out in a series of about 30-40 areas which should be served by Senior Schools; and on an examination of the areas it appears that there are ten centres at which village colleges could be effectively organised. These centres are:

Sawston	Burwell
Bourn	Cottenham
Harston	Waterbeach
Linton	Weston Colville
Melbourn	Steeple Morden

These centres have been provisionally chosen because they dominate a suitable large and homogeneous area.

An immediate opportunity of establishing two village colleges on an experimental basis has now arisen at Sawston and Bourn. Each of the areas surrounding these two villages present different features, and would require secondary modifications of the general plan of the village college to fit in with local conditions.

Sawston. The population of Sawston is 1530. In addition to agriculture there is an important rural industry — the heating of pelts, which are converted into chamois leather for domestic use and for gloves. There is also a mill employing about 400, engaged in making special kinds of parchment and hand-made papers, for which the waters of the River Granta are used. The neighbouring villages are Whittlesford (population 980), Babraham (population 238), Pampisford (population 255) and Duxford (population 734). These villages are predominantly agricultural, except Whittlesford, which contributes workers to a paper mill and to a works for making agricultural implements.

The school at Sawston is a Council School with an average attendance of 227 and already serves the purpose of a Senior School for a portion of the district.

It occupies a commodious site which could, if necessary, be sold and the proceeds devoted to the purchase of a large site abutting on the recreation ground. The village has no hall at present, though some funds have been collected. A village college at Sawston would be able to provide effectively for the needs of the rural community of an area of five square miles and including typically agricultural villages such as Babraham, Pampisford and Duxford. Such an institution would provide for:

(1) A nursery, infants', and junior school for Sawston only.
(2) A rural school for the children of 10 years to 15 years of Sawston, Whittlesford, Babraham, Pampisford and Duxford.
(3) A community centre for Sawston.
(4) A centre of further adult and agricultural education for the area of Sawston, Whittlesford, Babraham, Pampisford and Duxford.

Bourn. Bourn (population 623) lies at the centre of a tract of purely agricultural country containing the villages of Caxton (population 398), Longstowe (population 249), Kingston (population 173), Caldecote (population 161) and Toft (population 205).

A village college at Bourn would follow the general lines of the college at Sawston. The area is very poorly

served both with educational and social facilities, and there would be an opportunity of showing the maximum effect that a composite institution like the village college would have on the educational, social and economic life of a population wholly engaged in agricultural pursuits. At Bourn it would be possible to make the village college the centre of agricultural education and demonstration for young men and women and adults in the surrounding area.

CONCLUSION: CAMBRIDGESHIRE AS A DEMONSTRATION AREA FOR RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

XVI. The steps by which two experimental examples of a village college could be established in Sawston and Bourn have now been described. But the compact rural County of Cambridgeshire affords a tract of England in which a system of village colleges might be established. Here is Cambridgeshire wholly agricultural with its representative agricultural community; the University in the middle with the great Department of Agricultural and Horticultural Research, and the National Institute of Agricultural Botany; its scheme for grouping rural schools and fashioning an efficient system of rural education; a County system of agricultural and horticultural education; a scheme of rural adult education in working order; a progressive policy of public health; its County Rural Library with a branch in every village; its Rural Community Council working with the assistance of the experts of various Departments of the University; its Council of Musical Education and Musical Festival.

Picture it with its educational, economic and social life reborn by a system of village colleges, starting with Sawston and Bourn, and gradually increased to about ten. If the Carnegie Trustees and the Development Commissioners could father such a scheme, they might perform a work of reconstruction of first-rate national importance. The possibilities are so great that they do not require stressing. The Trustees might initiate an educational advance which would be one of the greatest in the history of state education. They might make possible at last after a generation of discussion a really massive contribution to the rural problem which it could be said without exaggeration would surpass anything that has been done in any country, more comprehensive for instance than the Danish High School Movement.

One swallow does not make a summer; and a single college at Sawston or at Bourn, though it might mark a turning point, would not afford the palpable and concrete demonstration of rural reconstruction as would a tract of rural England like Cambridgeshire its whole life re-orientated by a system of village colleges.

The time is ripe for a great constructive step forward in the rural problem. The work of re-establishing the life and welfare of the countryside is admitted to be really urgent; it is required in the interests of our national life and health. And as we may not always remain predominantly an industrial country, it is necessary that the problem of the reconstruction of the village should be dealt with in good time. There are certain economic aspects of rural welfare that can only be dealt with by governments; but all the other aspects of rural welfare are such as can be dealt with by education (in its widest sense) and by the rebuilding of the social life of the countryside.

And if this great work cannot be carried out in accordance with some such plan as has been briefly described, in what way is it possible to conceive its ever being done?

REFERENCES

1 Such an education will not unfit them for life in any sphere, whether in the country or the town; or prevent those who are fitted from entering upon any form of higher education of an academic type; nor need the training given commit the error of being 'prematurely vocational.'

2 By community facilities are meant parochial buildings for non-ecclesiastical purposes, recreation grounds, etc., and *not* services provided, *e.g.* by the Rural District Council as the 'Sanitary Authority'.

3 Everybody with experience of rural adult education knows that one of the greatest handicaps is the lack of an appropriate building, and that young people and adults do not like going back to the elementary school with its juvenile atmosphere and desks and equipment.

4 An almost universal need is felt in the villages for a worthy home for the library, with room for reading during the long winter evenings when the small cottage is filled by the family and the light is none too good for reading.

I THE WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF HENRY MORRIS

Copies of the documents marked with an asterisk are lodged with the Chief Education Officer, Shire Hall, Cambridge.

The Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools Cambridge University Press 1923

* *The Village College. Being a Memorandum on the provision of Educational and Social Facilities for the Countryside* Cambridge University Press 1924

* 'Institutionalism and freedom in Education' *New Ideals Quarterly* ii, March 1926. This was one of the most closely argued expressions of his philosophy

* 'A modern philosophy of education' review article *The Nation and Athenaeum* 25 August 1929

* Rural Civilisation. Paper read to the British Association in Blackpool, 15 September 1936

* 'The Danish High School Myth' *Adult Education* December 1941

* Postwar Policy in Education. Paper for the Association of Directors and Secretaries of Education, 31 July 1941

* The Post Primary Curriculum. Paper for the Association of Directors and Secretaries of Education, 30 May 1942

The New Senior School in Britain. Broadcast Talk on North American Service of the BBC, 14 September 1942

* 'Adult education' in *Education Handbook* Norwich, Jarrold 1943, Ed. E. W. Woodhead, pp. 87-97. This contains the essence of his thought; he admits here that he quotes liberally from his *New Ideals Quarterly* article and from two lectures he gave at the Cambridge Institute of Education in 1925, which have not survived

The Village College. Broadcast talk on Far Eastern Service, BBC, February 1944

Community Centres and the School in Rural and Urban Areas. Paper read to British Institute of Adult Education, 22 April 1944

Community Centres. Paper read to the Association of Directors and Secretaries of Education, January 1946

Buildings for Further Education. Paper read to the RIBA, 26 April 1945

Education and Planning. Paper read at the annual

conference of the Town and Country Planning Association, April 1946

* Liberty and the Individual. Broadcast talk, Home Service BBC, 13 November 1946

* Report on the West African Institute of Industries, Arts and Social Science, Colonial Office, November 1947

Amusement and Education. Paper to the All Souls Group, October 1953

Education, Community Centres, and other cultural institutions (1948). Paper sent to Managers of the Development Corporations of every New Town

* 'The idea of a village college' broadcast talk, Home Service BBC, printed in *The Listener*, 10 February 1955

* The Contemporary Artist and the Community, June 1955

* Architecture, Humanism and the Local Community. Paper read to the RIBA and published in *RIBA Journal* 15 May 1956

Style Maketh Man. Paper read to the Council of Visual Education, 1957

II OTHER WORKS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

* ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS AND SECRETARIES OF EDUCATION, *Post War Policy*, HMSO 1942 (the Orange Book)

* BIMROSE, DOROTHY *The Story of Digwell: A Matter Done*. Foreword by Henry Moore. Available from the Maynard Gallery, Welwyn Garden City

CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION *Children and their Primary Schools* (Plowden Report) HMSO 1967

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION *The Education of the Adolescent* (Hadow Report) HMSO 1926

EDUCATION, BOARD OF *Handbook for Teachers* HMSO 1937

EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF *Community Centres* 1946

EDUCATION, BOARD OF *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers* HMSO 1947

ELLIS, HAVELOCK *My Confessional* Bodley Head 1934

FARNELL, D. J. 'Henry Morris: an architect of education' unpublished thesis, Institute of Education, Cambridge. A very valuable source

FISHER, NORMAN 'Henry Morris' *Education* 29 Oct. 1954

FISHER, NORMAN Henry Morris. Pioneer of education in the countryside. Arthur Mellows Memorial Lecture 1965. Available from Arthur Mellows Trust, Glint, Peterborough

GIEDION, S. *Walter Gropius; work and teamwork* Architectural Press 1954

HOWE, JACK *New College of Further Education Architectural Brief*

PEVSNER, N. *Cambridgeshire: The Buildings of England No. 10* Penguin 1954

POSTER, C. *The School and the Community* Macmillan 1971

POSTER, C. 'Village colleges today' *New Society* 9 Oct. 1969

RASHDALL, HASTINGS S. *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* Oxford University Press 1936

READ, HERBERT *Annals of Innocence and Experience* Faber 1940

READ, HERBERT *Education Through Art*, Faber 1958

ROBERTSON, BRIAN Introduction to *British Sculpture and Painting* from the collection of the Leicestershire Education Authority, Whitechapel Gallery, London 1967

SCOTT,GEOFFREY *Architecture of Humanism* Constable 1914

Typeset by James Preston
Published by the National Youth Bureau,
17-23 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD