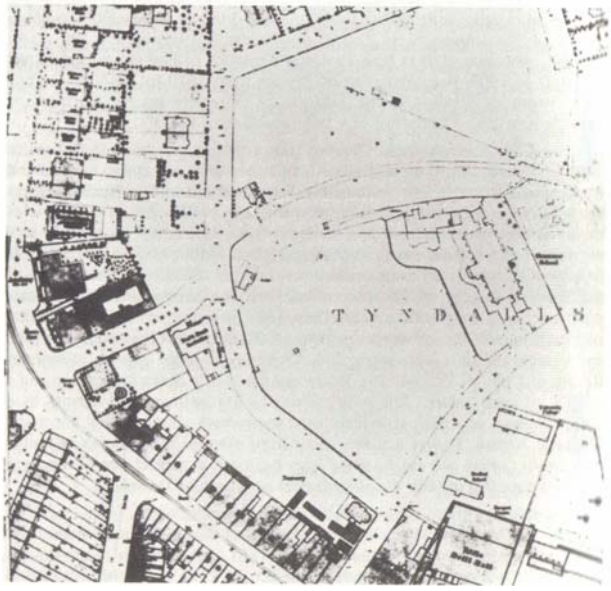
Sixty years of Academic Life in Bristol

A. M. Tyndall

[The following talk was given to the Forum of the Senior Common Room of the University of Bristol on 10 March 1958 by the late A. M. Tyndall, who was at that time Professor Emeritus of Physics, having joined the staff in 1903, been Professor of Physics from 1919 to 1948, and acting Vice-Chancellor 1945—46. The text appeared, in slightly shortened form, in 'University and Community', edited by McQueen and Taylor, 1976: a collection of essays produced to mark the centenary of the founding of University College, Bristol. The Editors were then extremely grateful to Dr Anne Cole for providing a transcript of a tape-recording of the talk; and so are we.]

I thought this was going to be a conversation piece to a small group of intimate friends! As I look at the audience, I realise that I joined the Staff of University College, Bristol at a time when few of the men and, of course, none of the women were born! 1 was a student before that and in fact it will be sixty years next October since I first entered the doors of University College with the intention of studying for a degree of the University of London in a scientific subject. I was one of about 220 students in the University College at that time, of whom 60 were in what was really an affiliated institution called the Day Training College for Women Teachers. The income of the College was then a little under £5,000 a year. There was, of course, no Students' Union and no Common Room worth speaking of. There were rooms where the men and women students were segregated. I never entered the Women's Common Room, but the Men's Common Room consisted of a dozen cane chairs and a couple of card tables. Any really intimate life with other students in a cultural sense occurred at a little cafe somewhere about where Boots the Chemists is now. It was a rather dirty little place kept by an Italian called Giacomelli, where we ate poached eggs on toast on tablecloths which were changed once in a month. We played sport on Durdham Downs.

Map of College buildings 1881 Fig.1



But I would like to go back to a still earlier period of which I know only by hearsay and by such records as remain. My first illustration (fig.1) is adapted from an Ordnance Survey Map of the district in 1881. The first part of the College to be built was at the upper part of the Car Park which has its entrance in University Road, which was then Museum Road and which went up as far as the Grammar School but no further. The present Geography building, also with its entrance in University Road, was then a pre-clinical medical school and is shown on the map below the College. The Chemistry [now Biology] Building is in what was then a field — part of Tyndall's Park. A Blind Asylum, which I shall mention later in my talk, was on the site of the present Main Building [now the Wills Memorial Building]. Tyndall's Park at that time extended out to Priory Road. Still earlier it went right out to Cotham Hill and down to Whiteladies Road. The map shows the Royal Fort House (right centre) with stables occupying the present site of the Physics Theatre wing, and a drive with gates leading from the Park into the top of Queen's Avenue.

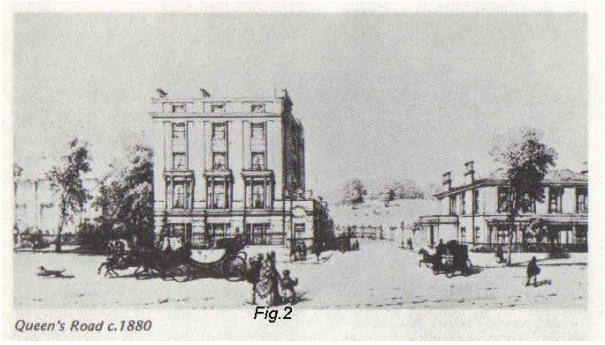

Queen's Road c.1880

Fig.2

The next illustration (fig.2) is of a print of about that time — the 70s — in which these gates are shown. On the left of the entrance to Queen's Avenue is Beacon House [later J. F. Taylor's; now Habitat], which in my student days was Queen's Hotel, as shown in the print. There I learnt to play billiards and snooker. The Embassy Cinema now stands on the opposite side of the road [now replaced by an office block]. The gates of Tyndall's Park are shown in the background and my former secretary, Mrs Terry, has pointed out that they appear to be identical with those which are now at the entrance of the Royal Fort Garden. No doubt when the Park was sold for building and to make the Grammar School field the gates were moved back to the entrance of the Royal Fort grounds. They were certainly in their old position when I was a boy when Onesiphorus Tyndall occupied Royal Fort House with his five daughters, and I remember seeing the carriage and pair containing one or more ladies driving through the gates. I was told that these ladies bore the same name as myself, although we were not related in any recent generation. In this connection I might mention that Peggy Fry, who was Lecturer in Botany during and just after the Second World War, told me that when she first came to Bristol she went to tea with a very elderly couple in Clifton who had known her mother when she was a child. Peggy was interested in place names and had, of course, no difficulty with the derivation of Rupert Street, Charlotte Street and Hotwells, but wanted to know how Tyndall's Park got its name. She was told the story of the big park and its gradual contraction and finally of the last section — the Royal Fort - being purchased by the University. She then remarked 'Oh, there's a Professor Tyndall on the staff of the University; I wonder whether he is any relation'. To which she received the reply-'Oh, I shouldn't think so; the Tyndalls of the Fort were carriage folk!' Such was the social stature of a university professor in those days!

But in University College days profess-ors too had their snobberies. I think that almost without exception the staff lived in Clifton within easy walking distance of the College, and when my wife and I married we naturally joined that commun-ity. But with the pending arrival of our first child we decided we should have to move and rent a house in Cotham, whereupon two of my prof-essorial colleagues came to me and urged me to give up the idea. They told me that if I went the wrong side of Whiteladies Road, no-one would call on my wife. However, we persisted in going to Cotham, fortunately without the dire consequences that were anticipated.

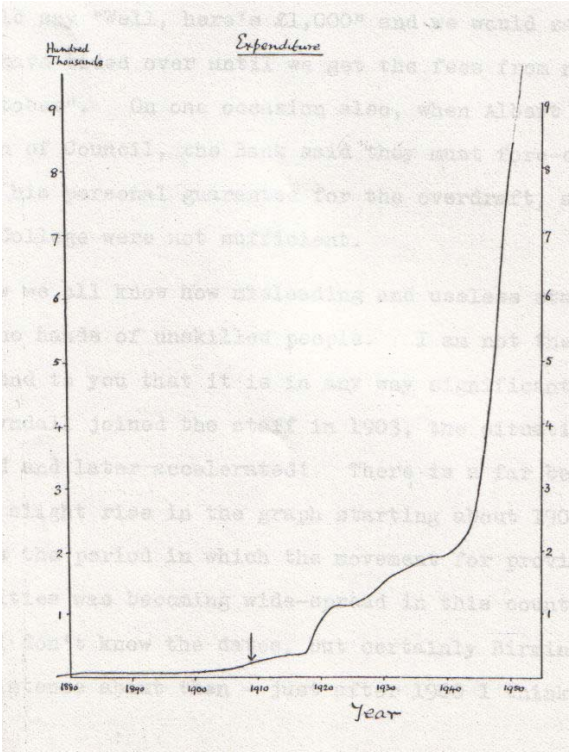
To go back to the period when I first joined the College, the next illustration (fig.3) is a photograph of the staff of University College, Bristol in 1902, although there may be one or two missing. Even a couple of years later when I joined the staff, we could all get in the drawing-room of the Principal's house together with our wives, although actually I was not

married until 1908. The Principal — Lloyd Morgan — is seen in the centre of the group. He was an eminent scientist, a man of dignity and charm, with a beard which led us as students to wonder whether he bothered to put on a tie for evening functions, and which would blow sideways in a wind. He was quite a well-known figure on his bicycle in the streets of Bristol and around the Downs, with his beard perhaps being blown over his shoulder - a man not without his own propaganda value to a struggling institution. But he was a man for whom we all had a great affection. The group includes the first woman tutor, Miss Rosamund Earle, and George Hare Leonard, for whom there is a memorial lecture. He was a study in brown and green home-spun clothes from the Somersetshire weavers with a green tie and green band to a broad-brimmed hat and a green scarf thrown over his shoulder; quite a character with a clientele of extramural students which was very widespread throughout the whole of Bristol. The group also includes my own chief, Chattock, who had such an influence on my life. It's impossible to describe him in one sentence and therefore I won't talk about him at all. The one who seems to be missing is Brooks, Lecturer in those days but shortly afterwards Professor of Classics. He really was a charming character — a courtly, prim, proper, precise gentleman with a keen sense of humour who, when he came to Bristol must, I think, have been rather surprised to find that one of his earliest and best friends, Chattock, was a scientist. I remember Brooks for many interesting remarks, but particularly perhaps for his farewell speech on retirement in which he said: 'I remember when I first came to Bristol I asked my good friend Chattock "What is physics, or alternatively, what are physics?" He then went on to say with delightful ambiguity: 'In my view every University should have one professor like me, though no doubt Bristol could not *afford* to have two'.

Fig.4:

Top row: Tyndall Sibly - -
Middle: - Miss Earle Chattock Fry -
Bottom row: Priestley -

I don't want to take you through a sort of family album of portraits, but I would like to show you a student group (fig.4) for a particular reason. This was also taken in 1902 and shows all the Senior — Post-Intermediate - students taking Physics. In those days the London Degree was a three-subject degree in which for Honours you took special papers in one subject. This illustration shows all the Honours students who were taking Physics as one of the three. It was certainly two-thirds of all the Science students beyond the Intermediate stage in the College and possibly three-quarters. Now it is to me, at any rate, rather interesting that the group includes Franklin Sibly, who became a Professor of Geology and subsequently Vice-Chancellor of Reading University, Joseph Priestley, who became Professor of Botany at Leeds and, for a period, acting Vice-Chancellor of Leeds, and myself, a Professor of Physics, who became acting Vice-Chancellor of Bristol. By strange coincidence we were, I suppose, three of the most regular members of the dirty table-cloth fraternity.



The next illustration (fig.5) is, I think, interesting as a comparison between those days and the time when I left. It is a scale of expenditure ending with £900,000 in 1950. Since we never got desperately into debt it must represent the approximate income as well as the expenditure. The arrow marks the opening date of the University (1909). Starting in 1880, four years after the foundation of the College, there was a long period of desperately poor conditions - poor equipment and small income - and indeed a period in which, I've been told since, it was sometimes a matter of touch and go whether the College could continue for another session. There was indeed one occasion when half-way through a session it just wasn't known where the money would be found to meet the salaries at the end of the term. However, in such an emergency along would come some benefactor - not in those days a Wills - but a Fry or some friend of the Frys, who would say 'Well, here's £1,000' and we would say 'Thank God, now we have tided over until we get the fees from new students next October'. On one occasion also, when Albert Fry was the Chairman of Council, the Bank said they must foreclose unless he gave his personal guarantee for the overdraft, as the securities of the College were not sufficient.

Now we all know how misleading and useless statistics can be in the hands of unskilled people. I am not therefore going to pretend to you that it is in any way significant that when young Tyndall joined the staff in 1903, the situation immediately improved and later accelerated! There is a far better reason for the slight rise in the graph starting about 1903 because that was the period in which the movement for provincial universities was becoming widespread in this country. I am afraid I don't know the dates, but certainly Birmingham came into existence about then - just after 1900, I think. There was also the Victoria University of Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds from which by 1902 Liverpool was breaking away so that it divided shortly afterwards into three separate universities. So the conception of provincial universities was really in the air and bearing fruit at that time. Its reactions were, of course, felt everywhere. Bristol itself was perhaps a little slow off the mark, but a move was made in 1899 by the establishment of a society for the promotion of a university in Bristol. It was called the University College Colston Society. In order to explain how the name Colston came into this I will diverge for a moment.

This time was a period of strain and struggle partly in Bristol University College itself, but also because there was another institution in science and engineering in the Merchant Venturers' Technical College and the divided loyalties amongst prominent citizens in Bristol led to a bitter rivalry. This division was, no doubt, partly political in origin. Those of you who know Bristol well, know there are still Colston Societies in Bristol. Among them are the Dolphin Society and the Anchor Society and, whatever the case now, in the early days these had definite political roots. The Dolphin was a Conservative Society and the Anchorites were Liberals. The Dolphins built the Victoria Rooms and the Anchorites built the Colston Hall for their meetings and annual dinner at which they had a speaker from their own particular political party. The Merchants were definitely Dolphinites and, in fact the dolphin is in the University arms as it is in the Merchant Venturers' arms as a symbol of that connection. On the other hand, the University College supporters included, of course, the Fry family who were Quakers and also Henry Hobhouse. J.W..Arrowsmith, head of the firm of Arrowsmith the printers, too was prominent in University College days and was a life-long liberal.

So there was just that political cleavage which may have started the rivalry which remained and affected the growth of University College. Ultimately, heads were knocked together and there came an agreement which led to a union between the two bodies and the promotion of the Charter. Prominent in bringing this about was the University College Colston Society started by people who adopted the attitude 'Let's get away from this party background and form another philanthropic society on non-party lines to promote a university in Bristol'.

There was a notable speech made in 1902 at the Society's annual dinner by Richard Haldane, who ultimately became Viscount Haldane and Chancellor of the University. He was a great supporter of the provincial university movement and throughout his life was one of the few politicians who had a profound belief in university education and did an enormous amount to promote the movement. In his speech at the Colston Dinner in 1902 he advocated a Federal University Scheme consisting of University College, Bristol, the Merchant Venturers' Technical College, Exeter and Southampton. Five years later, however, he said he'd completely changed his mind; the days of federal universities, he said, were over and he advocated that Bristol should aim for a University of Bristol instead of a University of the West.

Bristol was, however, a little slow in getting going and it still needed a catalyzer. This, in my view, came with the appointment to the staff of the College of a most vigorous and energetic young scientist - Morris Travers - a man 32 years of age who had done some brilliant physical chemical work at Ramsay's laboratory and had been elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society at this very early age. He came to Bristol and I met him about half an hour after his appointment when he was brought to see the Physics Department. I am told that I said to my colleagues after he had gone: "Well, that's like a breath of fresh air". My metaphor, however, was quite wrong — it should have been a tornado! He was a wonderful spring cleaner, but by Jove, he broke some crockery in the process! Yet in the 3¾ years in which he was in Bristol, the whole situation was transformed. I have been told that the following sort of conversation took place and, getting to know Travers quite intimately later, I can well believe it:

> 'What are your plans for a University?'
> 'Oh well, you know we haven't got any money yet.'
> 'I said what are your plans?'
> 'Well, you know it's no good making plans until you know how much money you're going to get.'
> 'Stuff and nonsense, I've never heard such rubbish' (and he could say that to a man he'd just met for the first time) — 'you will never get any money until you make some plans.'

Whereupon he sat down and drew up a pamphlet, which he discussed with his colleagues, on the immediate requirements of a University. He then went to members of Council and finally a definite committee was formed to promote a university in Bristol and the committee published the pamphlet that Travers had first brought out.

Fig.6
The Blind Asylum

Then we had a stroke of luck! The next illustration (fig.6) shows the original Blind Asylum in Queen's Road where the University Tower now is and, on the right, the position of what later became the Wills Memorial Library. The Blind Asylum was somewhat the shape of the existing buildings in miniature. Now in those days the telephone system in this country was at a rather primitive stage of development and it was quite common to have two

institutions, X and Y, on the same line so that if X was making a call and Y happened to lift his receiver, he could listen in to the conversation. It happened that University College, Bristol and the Blind Asylum were on the same line and when Travers lifted the telephone one day he heard the Blind Asylum authorities discussing the sale of their property. Travers, with all the instincts of the Secret Service, listened and got all the tit-bits and then rushed off to Lewis Fry and said: 'Look here, we must buy that property'. Lewis Fry, with no money behind him, was rather hesitant about it, but Travers said: 'Well, go to the bank and get the money' and, one way and another they secured the property. So much for Travers.

At the same time negotiations were going on with the Society of Merchant Venturers until eventually the Merchants decided to join a petition for a Charter. But we were told that we wouldn't get a Charter from the Privy Council unless we could find another £100,000. And then, 50 years ago on 14 January 1908, came a dinner of the University College Colston Society at which I was present. Mr George A. Wills was the President and he got up after the dinner and said he would like to make an announcement. He had a letter from his father which he would like to read. It said: 'I should be glad to offer a sum of £100,000 for the establishment of a University in Bristol, provided a Charter is obtained within the next two years'. Well, of course, today £100,000 is, shall we say, a 10% instalment of £1,000,000 from an impersonal State for some particular department in the University. But picture the atmosphere of that dinner. I was probably the youngest person there and certainly one of the few in their twenties and there were men present who had struggled to create University College and who had helped in keeping it alive. The atmosphere, therefore, on the announcement of this gift of what seemed a complete fortune was electric. We all stood up, waved our napkins and proceeded *recklessly* to order champagne at 7/6d per bottle!


Cartoon showing Wills and Arrowsmith Fig.7

Then, of course, the Charter had to be drawn up and there were still arguments with the Merchants. The Merchants, perhaps naturally, as the oldest guild in Bristol, were taking the line of independent status as a college within the University. Ultimately an agreement was reached whereby University College gave up the teaching of engineering and the Merchants gave up the teaching of science for degree purposes, and an agreement with the Merchants was incorporated in the Charter that they would provide and maintain the Faculty of Engineering within the University. Prominent in the subsequent negotiations, but not always sympathetic to the Merchants' attitude, was Napier Abbott, a well-known lawyer in Bristol, a classical scholar and a keen supporter of University College and subsequently of the University. He was a delightful person and a man who behind the scenes as solicitor to the Wills family probably did more for the University in securing the support of that family than will ever be disclosed. He is shown (appropriately dressed to suit his name) in a cartoon of that period reproduced in the next illustration (fig.7). It shows the approach of Henry Overton Wills with a bag containing £100,000. It also shows J. W. Arrowsmith the Secretary of the University College Colston Society whispering in the ear of Abbott, and in the background Haldane and Augustine Birrell the President of the Board of Education of that time and a Member of Parliament for Bristol. Arrowsmith is obviously telling Napier Abbott that Henry Overton Wills might be persuaded to enter the building; while symbolically in the background is what we should now regard as the tiny tower in University Road — the Albert Fry Tower. It is a very good likeness of Henry Overton Wills and an exceedingly good likeness of J.W.Arrowsmith.

Napier Abbott had a lot to do with the design of the University Arms which incorporates the Wills sun, the Fry horse, the Colston dolphin, the arms of the City of Bristol and a book inscribed 'Nisi quia dominus'. He was also responsible for choosing the motto which many people cannot translate! A slightly scornful friend of ours, doubtful of the cultural value of science, said to me 'Well, you have got the right motto at any rate — Vim removes stains!' Abbott himself with caustic wit told his friends that he had rejected an earlier suggestion 'Nisi dominus frustra', to be freely translated 'Unless the Master of the Merchants prevents!'

Now that was the sort of atmosphere in which the second Vice-Chancellor of the University was appointed. The first Vice-Chancellor had been Lloyd Morgan, who was Vice-Chancellor for six months before retiring to a Chair in the University. (By the way, I should have mentioned an interesting point about Lloyd Morgan. He started as a Professor of Geology, Biology and Zoology and later was Professor of Geology and Zoology. He then became Professor of Psychology in the University College and finished as Professor of Psychology and Ethics in the University. Those were the days!) So it was with a feeling that the union between the Merchants and the University College was a most delicate operation that a new Vice-Chancellor had to be found who was a diplomat and accustomed to dealing with such things; and in this spirit Isambard Owen was appointed. I might anticipate by saying that all these fears of difficulty between the Merchants and the University College were falsified by events and quite happy relations were soon established and have been maintained ever since. But Isambard Owen had previously had experience in the University of Wales, being more or less responsible, I believe, for the Charter of the University of Wales — a tripartite arrangement which, of course, always presents difficulties. He had then gone to Newcastle where there had been a fearful dispute between Armstrong College and the School of Medicine which he had apparently settled very amicably. So he seemed to be just the man for us and this was thought, no doubt, to compensate for the fact that he was nearly sixty years of age when he was appointed, the post in those days having no retiring age.

Owen's first job was to draw up the Ordinances, Regulations and Standing Orders, and these have remained substantially the same ever since. He also drew up all the ceremonial and, I think we should agree, it is a very dignified ceremonial that we have for our degree ceremonies which is largely unchanged since his day. He also designed the University gowns, but there I would criticise as far as my own gown - the Doctor of Science — is concerned. I think the combination of salmon pink facings with the scarlet is perfectly hideous; but in fairness to Owen he was very disappointed himself. He wanted the salmon pink to be as near as possible to the colour of some of the rocks of the Avon Gorge after rain and they just couldn't find the dye to do it. Well, that was Owen's great work. One is inclined to think of him later on at a period when perhaps age was telling on him and hence to be a little more critical of his activities; but that was how it started.

The University, however, was soon to run into very troubled waters and who was to blame I am not quite sure; I never heard. The first difficulty was one which I think arose from inexperience. I mention it because I think it is a matter of historical interest and it created such a stir at the time. Provincial universities of that date were looked upon askance in the older universities as funny little places, and they wondered what sort of degrees the provincial universities would give with their poor staff and so forth. So quite naturally Council and the senior members of Senate in starting a new university said: 'Look here, we must get the best staff possible. We must see whether the existing staff of the University College are fit to be promoted. They were after all appointed to a College, not to a University. Are we sure they are people that we *want*, to establish the reputation of the Bristol degree?' They came to the conclusion that three of the people were not suitable, and so they were served with notice. Immediately, not in public but within university circles, there was grave criticism, particularly from the *older* universities. This was an attack on academic security. Here was a matter, you see, in which Council — a lay body which was, of course, always under suspicion from the older universities since the idea that lay people should help in the government of the University was quite foreign to them — was undermining academic security. At the same time one can understand the lay people saying 'We really want the best staff we can get for the youngest university in the country'. As a

result of the pressure of opinion in academic circles in two out of three cases the dismissal was withdrawn. In the third, because of the pleas that he was doing important research work, the person in question was given a post with no duties whatever at about two-thirds of his professorial salary to complete the work within the next two years. After this, as far as opposition still continued, it went underground.

Then came the second incident which, I can't help thinking, was very largely Owen's responsibility due to his love of ceremonial, although he did have the support of Senate. This occurred on the installation of Haldane as Chancellor in 1912. A mammoth degree ceremony was arranged with 70 honorary degrees — 50 Doctors and 20 Masters. I noticed the other day that at the quincentenary of the University of Glasgow they gave about 50 and nobody made any comment about that. But of course, the older universities can get away with murder and 70 for this young child ... Well! I can remember my own feelings, the flush of shame when I read it in the newspaper, and I cannot understand to this day how it could have been regarded as a reasonable proposition. However, I was a party to it in the end — / *carried the Mace!*

But the result was that within a few months the storm broke. There was a violent and unscrupulous article in *The Observer* by a member of the University staff which was mainly an attack on the lay body of the University. To those of us who knew the leading members of that lay body the whole thing was exceedingly distasteful because it was so completely untrue; for instance the statements that the staff of the University were shaking in their shoes and didn't know whether they were going to be dismissed tomorrow, and that the lay members had no idea of university standards and all they were interested in was bricks and mortar and were playing with the staff as though they were pawns in a game. The result was, of course, that within the University all the ranks closed. The controversy was carried on in other journals, particularly in the weekly journals — the *Spectator* and others — and became more and more violent and unfair. It led in the end to the representative of the University of Oxford calling a special meeting of Court to ask that the Visitor, in other words the Privy Council, should be called to make an investigation into the affairs of the University of Bristol. Within Bristol, however, everyone was united and the resolution was defeated by — I forget the numbers — but 200 odd to 3, and the agitation then died a natural death, although there was a smear on our name for a good many years.

The smear, in the eyes of many thinking people was, I am sure, removed — accidentally — by another great gift from the Wills family. The fact that Haldane was Chancellor meant, of course, that Henry Overton Wills, the first Chancellor, had died. George and Harry, his two sons, offered the University a sum of money to create the Main Building in Queen's Road. I don't know that the sum was ever mentioned; they were just going to foot the bill. It was to be a memorial building to their father and everything had to be of the best regardless of expense. At that time it must have meant that they were prepared to give at least two or three hundred thousand pounds and it was far more than that in the end. Their idea was merely to do something for the City of Bristol but, psychologically, thinking people said to themselves 'Look here, Bristol University can't be such a rotten place if hard-headed businessmen are prepared to put down hundreds of thousands of pounds in its support.' And it must be remembered that in those days it was in magnitude a completely unprecedented gift to any university in this country. Soon after that came the First World War.

Perhaps this is the point at which I might say something about George and Harry Wills, because this was, of course, only the first of a number of magnanimous gifts from them. They were both multi-millionaires, men of great integrity, simple minded, with no extravagant tastes unless you call a shooting moor in Scotland an extravagant taste for a multi-millionaire! They were nice amiable men with no particular intellectual interests, who yet believed in people who had such interests; and they felt a great responsibility in the wealth that they possessed. They were not the kind of businessmen that one would say Lord Nuffield is, although I've never met him, who rose to his position by sheer business efficiency. They were kindly folk with a certain shrewdness which enabled them to put reliable and trustworthy people into their firms. One thing I remember very well as an illustration of their responsibility with regard to their wealth. Harry Wills told me during the First World War

that they were in a business which, given good management, couldn't help prospering at that period and he said: 'The way the tobacco business is making money now is to me positively frightening'. This was just a candid statement made to myself, a rather casual acquaintance of his. But it illustrates the way they looked upon their wealth; and they were anxious to produce something in Bristol which would be worthy of the money they were spending.

In this respect, however, they also showed a certain degree ot obstinacy. Isambard Owen wanted to use the material of the times, this being the beginning of the age of ferro-concrete, and he tried to persuade the Wills to put up a building in this new material. But they looked at Oxford and Cambridge and said 'Now *there* are university cities which glory in buildings standing after 400 years. We want Bristol to glory in buildings which will be standing 400 years from now'. And they asked Oatley, the architect, his prediction of ferro-concrete and whether it would last for 400 years. Oatley replied that it might, but that they had only 30—40 years experience of it and he didn't really know the answer. The Wills brothers then said 'Well, it shan't be in ferro-concrete then. We want something that we know will be there in 400 years' time'. And that, helped perhaps a little by the architect's own views, is what determined the stone architecture of the main buildings [now the Wills Memorial Building].

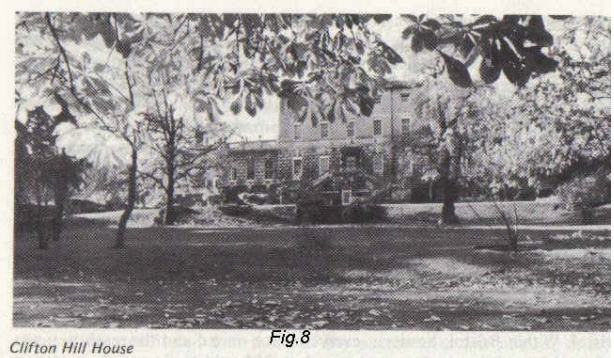

Clifton Hill House

Fig.8

Another illustration of the obstinacy of both brothers came with a dispute - a perfectly friendly dispute - after the First World War. By that time the women's Hall of Residence of Clifton Hill House (fig.8) and Callendar House was well established although Manor Hall hadn't then been built. There was no hall of residence for men except at Canynge Hall, now the home of Preventive Medicine and Pathology, which was then a temporary hostel for men. Most of you will know that the University has recently acquired Goldney House, a great asset for the future development of women's halls of residence in Clifton. But to go back to about 1923, George Wills as Chairman of Council got up in his nice simple somewhat naive way and said 'Gentlemen, I now have an item on which I want your advice. I recently purchased Goldney House with the idea of giving it to the University as a hall of residence for men. Now, since I have done this, I have been told by Miss Staveley, the women's tutor and warden at Clifton Hill House,that if I persist in doing this she will resign. What am I to do? I am asking you to tell me'.

Thereupon, of course, there was dead silence. What were we to say? Here was an offer that obviously meant not only the site, but also that he intended to put up the building or buildings. The silence was broken by his brother Harry, Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, standing up in the body of the Senate Room of those days and saying *'Let* her resign'. We still remained silent and those two argued it out, first one and then the other. Well, in the end George got his way and Harry Wills bought a site then called Downside, which is now, of course the site of Wills Hall (fig.9). So the halls of residence for men developed in that neighbourhood and Goldney House remained in George Wills' hands. George Wills unfortunately then took the view, 'Well, clearly the University doesn't want this'; so he used it for other purposes and it subsequently fell into different hands. Fortunately, however, it came on the market recently and the University purchased it although it might have acquired it as a gift many years earlier. One may look back and ask who was right. I think today we should say that Miss Staveley was right, although I don't think I thought so at the time!

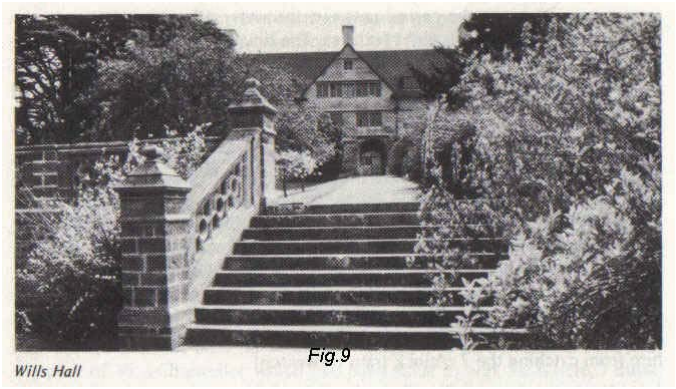

Wills Hall

Fig.9

I don't know how many people here have seen a picture of the Great Hall in its original form with its hammer-beamed roof and its linenfold panelling, all hand done, that arose from the Wills' gift [in 1958, not yet rebuilt after war damage]. It was a beautiful piece of work, despite the fact that we now know from more scientific data which was not available to the architect at the time whan he designed it, that a hammer-beamed roof like that was bound to be accompanied by acoustic defects.

I must now go on to the period between the wars, although I shall only run quickly over some of its salient features. The time came when with advancing years Isambard Owen resigned and his place was taken by Thomas Loveday. Now the contrast between these two was most striking. Owen, all through this period and certainly towards the end of his life, was a man that one never knew very well. One felt that he was a master of manoeuvre and one never quite knew what was in his mind. I had a lot of discussions on the Physics Building with Harry Wills, but not a single conversation with the Vice-Chancellor of that period on the subject. Discussions no doubt took place between Harry Wills and Owen, but never between Owen and myself, which was slightly disturbing as I never knew if I was doing the right thing for the University. This rather influenced my views of Owen in his later years. Moreover he went to live in Weston-super-Mare and when he came up for meetings he didn't wish to go back during the rush-hour so that he didn't mind how long a meeting went on provided it was not long enough to prevent him from catching the 7 o'clock train to Weston!

Loveday came along and, with business much less than what it is today, he would always apologise if a meeting of Senate took more than an hour, which it rarely did! You had to be exceedingly quick to say anything before he was on to the next item on the agenda. Under Owen we had got into the way of reading the agenda and reports at the meeting itself, but that turned out to be completely useless when Loveday came into the chair. Some of you will remember John Crofts, the Professor of English at one period — a brilliant speaker and public orator. He made an exceedingly poignant and impassioned speech at Senate on one occasion but, unfortunately he made it at the wrong meeting, as arising out of the minutes of the previous meeting in which he discovered that Senate had passed a resolution with which he profoundly disagreed. Well, of course, Loveday had to point out, quite rightly, that the matter had been settled and he couldn't change it, at least without notice. This was, of course, perfectly true and Crofts didn't blame him; he merely turned to me after the meeting and said 'Senate is just a jazz band'.

Well, that was Loveday, a charming and delightful man who, living in a city, always had one foot in the country. He was a member of an old Oxfordshire country family with special country interests and he, more than anyone else, established happy relations with others of the same interests — Hiatt Baker for instance who followed J. W. Arrowsmith as Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and in whose memory the botanical garden was established — Badock too, another man with a garden — perhaps not comparable with Hiatt Baker's, but still an attractive garden — and an interest in current country affairs. I think also that it was Loveday who first established the happy relations between the University and the counties of Gloucestershire, Somersetshire and Wiltshire which still exist today. Also Loveday was the first Vice-Chancellor to secure the full confidence of the leading members of Council and to solve the difficulties that used to occur occasionally in a conflict of function between Council and Senate. If you look at the Statutes of the University you will find that Professors are elected by Council after a report from Senate. The Chair of Physics when my predecessor retired, was discussed by two independent committees, one a committee of Senate and the other a committee of Council. Their short lists didn't agree and

the result was that no appointment was made for some time. Loveday was the first to introduce, with the agreement of Badock as Chairman of Council, the scheme of Joint Committees of Senate and Council on important matters. This scheme which works so admirably today has cemented the happy relations between the lay and academic members which, I think, those of us who know about them, feel Bristol is particularly fortunate in possessing.

Loveday stayed on to help us during the Second World War until 1945, despite his having passed the retiring age, leaving a short interval in which I had to hold the fort until Sir Philip Morris was free to consider the offer of the post of Vice-Chancellor which had been made to him. He is here, I think, tonight so he can talk about his life in the University if he wants to. But perhaps there may be some young person here who in 50 years' time will come to a future Forum and tell it what we ***really*** thought of Sir Philip! But, as I took some part in his appointment, I am 'getting out' ***now***!