**HIGHER EDUCATION IN GREAT BRITAIN**

There are now 46 universities in Great Britain, 36 of which are in England, 8 in Scotland, 2 in Northern Ireland and 1 in Wales. There are also over 700 technical colleges teaching everything from engineering to satellite communications. Many other types of training colleges include art schools, colleges of education, and commercial colleges. To enter a higher educational establishment in Great Britain, good exam passes alone are not enough. Admission to universities is by ***interviews***, and ***competition*** for places is fierce.

A University consists of a number of departments: medicine, arts, philosophy, law, music, natural science, economics, engineering, agriculture and education. After 3 or 4 years of study students take their ***finals***. Most of them (over 90 per cent) will get a first, second and third class ***degree*** and be able to put BA (***Bachelor*** of Arts) or BSc (Bachelor of Science) after their names.

English Universities greatly differ from each other. They differ in the date of ***foundation***, history, traditions, general organization, government, methods of instructions, types of faculties, ways of student life, etc. Each University has its own problems; each looks in its own way.

However, there are a number of tendencies, which are common to them all. The first is the ***increase*** in number of students that leads to the ***expansion*** of the universities. On the whole, British Universities are small. Most of them have under 3,000, some even less than 1,500 students.

The second tendency is the increase in student numbers studying technical sciences. The third factor is the tendency of university curriculum to ***extend***. We can see the further development of postgraduate courses. Some Universities have extra-mural departments.

Universities govern themselves, although they receive most of the money from the government. They are private, independent, responsible only to its own governing council. The Department of Education has no control over rules, curriculum, exams, ***staff***, or the way they spend money.

The oldest and most famous Universities are Oxford and Cambridge (Oxbridge for short). They are made of ***separate*** colleges where students live and work. Other universities, like Manchester or Bristol do not have separate colleges. These and some other universities are called “Redbrick universities” because of their building material. The difference between Oxbridge and “Redbrick universities” was a class one. “Redbrick universities” ***provided*** education for poorer people. There are also some new universities founded after World War II.

The Open university is the most interesting innovation. It was founded in 1964 to give an opportunity for those above normal student age to get higher education. No formal academic qualification is necessary for entry to this university, but the standards of its degrees are the same as of other universities. The Open university is a non-residential university. In teaching it uses a combination of TV and radio broadcasts, correspondent courses and summer schools, there is a network of listening and viewing centres.