Thousands leaving education face the stark choice—the youth opportunities scheme, the services, or the dole queue

Slump bars son from family path

Surrounded by cutbacks and redundancies, school leavers in a Welsh steel town are left with few options. Paul Hoyland reports

UNLIKE many of his coun-terparts, Graham Meacham has always known where he wanted to work. He can see the place in question quite clearly from his classroom

His father worked there for more than 30 years and his elder brother now works on the site. But 16-yead-old Graham cannot follow in their footsteps.

His ambition has been thwarted by the recession that has knocked the heart out of his town's pride and joy, the steelworks that put Port Talbot on the map, and which are now fighting for survival.

Graham's generation of school leavers are faced with stark options in the west Gla-morgan steel mecca. Jobs are scarce and with each vacancy attracting dozens of applicants, more and more youngsters are choosing to stay on at school, many re-luctantly, in the hope of gaining more qualifications to assist them in what is becoming a gruelling hunt for work. Others are turning to the armed forces.

Port Talbot already has general unemployment above the national average, and the number of 16-to-18-year-olds registered as unemployed is expected to show a big increase when the July figures, swollen by the summer school leavers, are published

As many as 600 youngsters could be out of work and the number is expected to increase during the next few months. To many outsiders 600 might not seem to represent a phenomenal problem but Port Talbot is being ravaged by redundancies, and has been declared a special development area.

town's biggest employer has always been the steel works, once known as Treasure Island because of its high wages, but all that is changing quickly. The British Steel Corporation has cut production by half at Port Talbot as part of its national package of economies.

More than 6,000 jobs are being lost at the plant and a general belt-tightening exerthe number of apprentice-

Among those anxiously observing the demise of the steel works is Mr Dafydd Bowen, head of the careers department at the 1,200-pupil

prehensive school. The employment problems confronting the upper school, which stands directly opposite the steel plant, typify those faced by the town's school leavers school leavers.

Mr Bowen said: "BSC has taken on only about 30 apprentices at Port Talbot this year, compared with about 100 in previous years. The applicants come from a very large area and there's great com-petition. What's much worse is that the ripple effect of the rundown is cutting apprenticeships and jobs in all the local support industries, such as engineering."

Of the 125 boys who made up the Dyffryn fifth form, 53 have not yet got a job, planned further education, or indicated that they will return to school. Only 49 have definitely obtained employ. definitely obtained employ-ment or have courses lined up. Big local employers such as Metal Box and BP have radically limited their intake of apprentices.

Is anyone to blame for their plight? The pupils are in no doubt that it is the Prime Minister who is the villain of the piece. "It's Maggie's fault. She's making all this unemployment," said Graham, whose father has recently been made redundant cently been made redundant at the steel works.

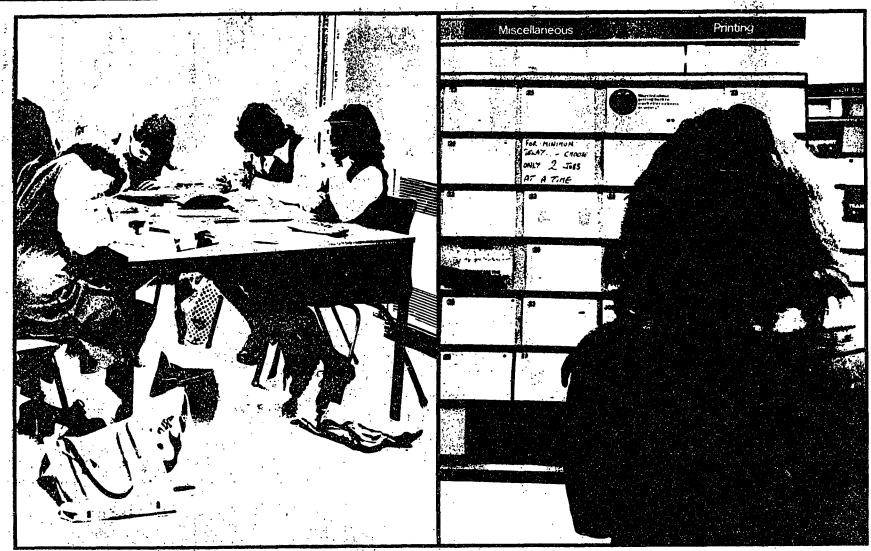
Mr David Williams, second deputy head at Dyffryn, said:
"In Port Talbot we're talking about families where generations have worked in the steelworks and youngs-ters were only waiting to go into steel to join their fathers. With redundancies all around us, if something isn't done in the next few years, we're going to have another Rhondda situation with the more able people leaving the district."

To combat the growing

youth unemployment, the district careers officer, Mr John Talbot, is channelling teenagers into the Youth Opportunities Programme. There are 250 places pro-

viding work experience with a wage of £23.50 each. Nearly 70 per cent of last year's intake found jobs within six weeks of taking part in the programme.

has four or five O-levels, the future is in the Youth Opportunities Programme for the vast majority," said Mr Tal-bot. "There are 50 per cent more youngsters chasing 50 per cent fewer jobs in Port Talbot this year."



Class of '80: facing the dole

TOMORROW'S unemployment figures will show that an extra 100,000 school-leavers have joined the dole queue in the past month and that the total number of people out of work has risen by 20 per cent since May. In the North-east, Northern Ireland, and other black spots the problem is not new, but it is now spreading to parts of the country which in the past have largely escaped.

Struggling against Liverpool's unemployment tide

Alan Dunn on how a Liverpool school comes to terms with its narrowing options

LIVERPOOL'S education and careers staff dig hard for jobs for youngsters, but hundreds of the 9,000 children leaving school this term have none to go to.

For nearly 5,000 children For nearly 5,000 children who registered with the carcers office at the beginning of July the opportunities narrow to four choices: Youth Opportunity employment for six months, the Services, back to school or the dole. Liverpool encourages any

child with ability to return to the sixth form because of those registered with the car-cers office 60 to 70 per cent have "no qualifications of employment value," accord-ing to Mr George Hogg, the principal careers officer ing to Mr George Hogg, the principal careers officer.
"They have low-grade CSEs and employers are looking for O levels or at least high-grade CSEs." The chase for qualifications had intensified, he felt, while one headmaster said that two O

levels were now the breaking point for finding a reasonable post—and that perhaps a lower-grade job than would have been offered in other

Liverpool has one of the Liverpool has one of the lowest percentages of children staying on into the sixth form—said to be 19 percent against a national average of about 23 percent and the southeast average of about 30 percent.

Three hundred children have taken examinations and effectively ended their car-eers in the fifth form at New ton, Liverpool, which has 1,600 pupils. "Ten per cent are likely still to be on the dole by September," said Mr Frank Hardman, the head-

Until examination results are known it is impossible to

master.

grade two, plus typing. Susan tried the work exshow exactly what the future holds, but all the fifth form are invited back in September to discuss their experiences and what they have

New Heys has an active sixth form of 160 pupils, the second-largest in the city. Of the 43 leaving the upper sixth, 32 will go on to higher education, including 26 to universities and polytechnics. Three have employment assured at banks, depending on Adevel results, and the

rest have employment. "You can find a job if qualified," said Mr Hardman, "so we try to encourage youngsters to come back for

the sixth form." One who has taken the school's business studies course is Susan Lewis, aged 17, who left in May 1979 with eight CSEs, mostly

"Mr Hardman and the car-cers staff at New Heys have helped me a lot in the sixth," she said. A bank had promised a job if her examination results were satisfactory. In the meantime she refuses to go on the dole,

preferring to help out in her parents' shop.

Teachers begin careers' counselling in the third year, perience scheme run by the Manpower Services Commiswhen choices are beginning to be made from the 50 examination subjects avail-able. Regular assessments and interviews are held sion at an office, where she was told that she would need was told that she would heed two O levels for a permanent job. She returned to New Heys sixth form and took O-level English language and and interviews are held throughout the fourth, and and fifth years and visits arranged to employers.

Additionally 26 specialists from the city careers office

commerce, retook CSE mathematics, sat CSE general studies, and pushed up her interview every member of fifth forms at the 90 secondtyping speed plus audio typ-Since February Susan has applied for 30 effice jobs. Of the first 17 only seven replied. She was given one inary schools; spending at least 30 minutes with each child.

Among options offered at New Heys is the return-and-learn scheme, funded by the MSC. Youngsters may return

to any of the city's schools for up to three days and still draw the dole. The scheme worked in a

limited way, said Mr Hardman: they had had up to 24 coming back, but are now down to 10.

Fears, too, for the privately educated

Dennis Johnson in an area of privilege

THE CONTRAST between school leavers at a large comprehensive school in an industrial area and those at one of Britain's best known public schools is almost total.

All but a tiny minority of the 180 or so who left Marlbor-ough College in Wiltshire, when term ended last weekend, had a pretty clear idea of their immediate future, and it did not include enforced unemployment.

It seemed likely that fewer than a dozen faced real un-certainties, and even they were thought by masters to include a high proportion whose unemployment would be voluntary.

For the year just ended, the fees at Marlborough, which has 950 pupils, were £98% a term, and parents have already been told to expect an increase for next year. For their £3,000 or next year. For their £3,000 or so a year, they expected, and received, an education for their children which all but assured them of A-levels, given reasonable application.

Even without the prestigious background of a career at Marlborough, that gave them mariborough, that gave them an immediate edge in the market. More particularly, as the products of a reputable public school, it assured them of a place in the universities or in professional training schemes.

Because the public school summer term ends before that of state schools, all the Marlborough leavers had packed their bags and gone when this survey was carried out. But masters confirmed that it would have been difficult to find more than a handful who would have voiced genuine fears about the next few

Although it was too early to have produced an accurate analysis, partly because of the system of conditional offers of university places, the careers master, Mr John Powell, said that about 80 per cent of the leavers would go on to some form of higher education.

You have to remember that hardly anyone leaves Marlborough with fewer than two or three A-levels," he said. "For this reason probably only around 2 per cent will remain unemployed, and in certain of those cases it may be voluntary." Two per cent of 180 represents three or four pupils.

Mr Powell said that some of the leavers had firm university offers, some conditional. Still others would apply to university after the results were known later in the summer, and would first take a year off to follow some acti-vity of their own.

Of the remaining 20 per cent, about half would go into some form of "direct entry" training, such as accountancy, and a quarter would go into the services. Thus only about 5 per cent of the total number of leavers would be unsure of their immediate prespects a fource mediate prospects, a figure not noticeably different from that in more prosperous

A housemaster, Mr T. E. Rogers, said he knew of no-one in his house who was leaving without anything planned. Of about a dozen leavers, six had applied for university places in 1981 and would be taking a year off.

and local levels. For the first time, the NUS intends to pro-

This reflects a change in which the union has gradually moved away from

Regional officers will replace

Dyffryn co-educational com-An average comprehensive with a distinct edge in the hunt for jobs

SOUTHFIELDS school in south London is an average modern comprehensive. Its Wandsworth-Wimbledon catchment area includes inner city council estates as well as middle class suburbs. But it has achieved a re-

markable record of finding jobs for its latest batch of school-leavers. It claims that one in 10-at most two in 10-will leave without the immediate prospect of a job. About 250 have just lefteither at the first opportunity

at 16 or having stayed on in

half a dozen sixth formers will go on to university or

The key to the impressive success-rate in finding jobs is the willingness of local employers to offer work, and the emphasis the school places on getting leavers into

careers advice programme last year the careers teacher Mr Leslie Quinsey introduced the idea of one-day conventions to be held in March and November.

school invites about 70 companies to take part and around half accept, including banks, supermarkets, fac-tories as well as further education colleges. Each pupil is timetabled to attend the con-vention and given a ques-tionnaire to help them to ask

a first job.
As part of the intensive

For these conventions the

the right questions of the firms they are interested in.
In Mr Quinsey's own group of 40 fifth formers this year

17 decided to stay on in the sixth form, and 23 chose to leave.

This was a higher number than usual choosing to stay on which may be a reflection of the youth unemployment problem since the school impresses on pupils that when unemployment is high those

with no qualifications fare Of the 23 leavers seven have taken up apprentice-ships in garages, factories or the building industry. Four girls went to work in banks,

one in hairdressing, another

Penny Chorlton finds a successful job scheme in a typical London comprehensive

to a factory and one into the Post Office. Three went to colleges of further education, one boy became a trainee projectionist and one boy found a job as a storeman.

The school's programme of practical advice about getting jobs, starts with a compulsory meeting with the carpupil reaches 15. They are given practice interviews and work experience, if they want it.

This year, 34 pupils worked for a week at a local branch of the National Westminster Bank and 24 of the leavers went into banking. Several girls spent a day in

a local hospital, many of them following it up by starting job: in nursing.

Between 30 and 40 pupils

left school at Easter as soon

is they were old enough to leave. All were unqualified and the school has no record of what job they found. A further 30 or so left at Whitsun when they too, became ald enough to leave school. old enough to leave school.

The remaining 180 who left at the end of the summer term over the age of 16 took a minimum of one "O" level; 48 had finished a first year of the sixth form. Eight sixth-formers dropped out during the year, but most of them found jobs.

Miss Anita Ward, the sixth

form coordinator, said: "I don't know of any boys who haven't found jobs, but there are four girls who aren't doing anything as far as I know. "Many of the rupils stay on an extra year if they mis-sed the boat last time round

and they hoped by staying on and getting a few more CSE's to improve their chances of a job. Most of them do find something eventually. If its a question of choice

between a job offer outside school and taking one or two CSEs, the core will often. be for the pupil to take the

job.
There are new 17 in the upper sixth form taking A levels, eight of whom have

applied to go to university. Two plan to take a year off before university, one is going into the police, another to art college, another to do more A levels, two to study nursery nursing and one to

work in the law courts.

Those university places may not seem much out of Southfields' 1,300 pupils but Miss Ward, points out that these pupils, came to the school when it was competing with grammar schools ing with grammar schools which creamed off many of the brighter kids.
Southfield may not boast

the most distinguished academic record of all London's schools, but it can be proud of placing such a high proportion of young people in work

Shake-up to end NUS cash crisis is approved

By Wendy Berliner Education Staff

union from financial disaster and focus its work more sharply on student matters.

and focus its work more sharply on student matters.

The social and political campaigns the union ran during the late 1960s will end, and it will concentrate on issues such as student grants and overseas students fees.

Which the union has graded ways from trying to persuade—with the help of mass demonstrations and petitions—towards trying to influence directly those who make the decisions which affect students. students fees.

The streamlining is necessary because the union's spending power could be reduced by with local authorities. This is as much as £100,000 next year particularly necessary with the through inflation and a change in the union subscriptions system. The NUS is already £15,000 in the red.

Regional officers will replace field officers and they will have a content will have eleved and the system of student union financing due to be introduced next year.

The union's international descriptions are system of student union for the union's international descriptions.

Union reserves are very low partment will be closed and because of commercial and one officer with responsibility financial problems caused by for international affairs will be the collapse of the NUS travel moved to another department. service and other commercial ventures four years ago.

paigns such as those on abortion, gay rights and womens' dents in Britain. The financial sure groups. The NUS would still take an interest in issues where they directly affected students, but would no longer duplicate campaigning work as in the past.

Eight jobs will be lost in the reorganisation, but the union pleased.

reorganisation, but the union pleased, hopes to avoid compulsory re "Ther

opes to avoid compulsory re- "There are neanderthals undancy for at least four. who are still living in the One of the big changes is a shadow of 1968 but they don't dundancy for at least four.

Mr David Aaronovitch, Communist president of the NUS,

The idea is that the NUS said that the union was on will leave general cam-course to become much more paigns such as those on abor-relevant and responsive to students in Pairing Principles. relevant and responsive to stu-dents in Britain. The financial

stronger concentration on polisee that the times or the stu-tical lobbying at both national dents' needs have changed."

the sixth form. If the examination results are similar to last year about

Oxford Class List The following Class Lists have been issued:

EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Phil): W. P. Forster, CCC, Oakhan (Phil): W. P. Forster, CCC, Oakhan (Phil): BACHELOR OF CIVIL LAW EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Class I. — Sara J. Carr. St Anne, Rc-Chery County S. Exponn: P. M. Innals, New, King's C. Wimbledon; Let, L. Lawson, St. Ed H. Winchester.

Class II. — I. Allan, Qu. Brighton C. G. C. H. T. Allen, Univ. Cliffon C. G. L. H. T. Allen, Univ. Cliffon C. G. L. H. T. Allen, Univ. Cliffon C. G. H. T. Allen, Univ. Cliffon C. G. L. H. T. Allen, Cooper, Univ. Ton-bridge S; Mrs. Katalin Coltrell. St Hugh. Fottoos Lorand Univ. Budapest; W. J. Drysdale, Pemb. Halleybur; M. H. Lyson, Pemb, Magd C. S., Oxfd.; M. H. Lyson, Pemb, Magd C. S., Oxfd.; M. H. Lyson, Pemb, Magd C. S., Oxfd.; M. H. Lyson, W. H. Lang, BNC. Lincoln Inst., Mchourne; Julia C. A. Mulligan, J. Hugh, Wyggsston Girls' S; Janet M. Owen, St Anne, Oswestry Girls' IIS: J. A. Ozlmek, Wadh, King Jdward's, Birninpham; Mrs. Virginia A. II. Patterson, St Hild, Southwestern C. Memphis, D. P. Taylor, CCC, Worth Abbey S; D. A. Thomas, St J. Kingsfield S, Bristol; J. S. Thurston, St Ld H, Brighton Hove and Sussex GS: Sara-J. M. Whiltry, Som. St George's Girls' S, Edinburgh.

No Class III.

PSYCHOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY

AND PHYSIOLOGY

Class I. — T. J. Finigan, CCC. John Hisher S, Purley (Psychology and

Class I. — T. J. Finigan, CCC. ohn Fisher S. Purley (Psychology and hilosophy); Julia V. Nehring, Som, Start's Conv S. Combridge (Psychol and hyslo). Philosophy); Julia V. Nehrling, Som. St. Main's Coon's, Combridge (Psychol and Physio).

Class II. — Lucy L. Annett, St. Hild. Danie Alice Harpur S. Bedford (Psychol and Physiol); M. R. Blackburn, New Marting Marti ford GS (Psychol and Phil).

Class III. — Ruth E. Alexander-Mornan. Wadh. Newton Manor, Swannoe
(Psychol and Phil). D. H. Conney. Ball.
Wiccor'la Medical S (Phil and Physiol:
Cally St.
Feler's S., Bournemouth (Psychol and

S'(Psychol and Phil).

BACHELOR OF CIVIL LAW

Class I. — W. V. Clark, Jesus.
On Mary, Co., Lond. Univy: Elleen E.
Cillese, Wadth, Alia Univ. Canada; P.
F. C. Howard, Wadth, Osygoode Haill
Law S. P. A. Pagman, Wadth, Univ.
Of Brit Columbia, V. Richard, Cath.
Heberdashes, Aske's Elstree,
Cath. Heberdashes, Aske's Elstree,
Canada; M. Sterling, B. N. C.,
Hereford Cathedral S; Mary L. Sloke,
B. N. C., Long Road VI Form C.
Cambridge; S. J. Whittaker, St J. Torquay Boys' GS.
Class II. — I. J. Arstall, Linc, Bir-

The following Class List has been issued: MODERN HISTORY AND MODERN LANGUAGES

Class 1 — T. M. Kuhn, St. J. N. casile-upon-Tyne RGS (Germ); Jean Leadheater, St. Anne. Kinn Edward Girls' HS, Birmingham (Germ); P. Melly, New., Maidstone GS (Fr); D. Rossington, Ibil, St. Albans S (T.) D. Rossington, Hall, St Albans S (17)
Class II. — C. M. Allflatt, Keble
Perse S. Cambridge (17): P. F. Buckke
St J. St Bede's S. Bradford (17): Jan
Standard (17): Som. Greenacre S
Bancoud (17): Gillian L. Growther
Bancoud (17): Gillian L. Growther
Donkin Ou. Bootham S. York (Germ
A. D. Garmon, New, Westminste
Tutors (Fr): M. L. Hillard, New, Radie
(Germ): P. Hodgson, Mapd, Westminste
(Span): Carolyn A. Holdsworth, St Hile
Si Anne's Conv S. Southampton (17)
A. S. Jinman, Keble Klina's S. Wes (Gern): P. Hodgson, Mapd, Westminst (Span): Carolyn A. Holdsworth, St Hill St Anne's Conv S. Southampton (Fr A. S. Ilman, Keble, King's S. Wocester (Fr): K. I. Jones, St Ed I. Handsworth GS (Fr): K. F. H. May well, Ball, Mariborough (Fr): J. C. D. Orders, Trin, Winchester (Fr): CS, Presco., Linc., Lton (Germ): D. C. Roberts, Keble, St. Paul's S. (Fr): F. F. M. May Ward, St. J. Trin S. of John Winstanley, St. Ld H. Mesnes HS, Wing (Hall, March 1988).

(ital).

Class III. — Flona J. Crawley. L.

H., Cedars S. Leighton Buzzard (Russ):
G. P. Hackett, Qu. Downside Abbry
(Russ): S. C. R. Jones. Trin. Trin

of John Whitgitt, Croydon (Span):
A. P. R. Sunderland, Qu. Doncaster

GS (F1).

Exhibition challenges the Church

By Martyn Halsall Churches Correspondent

The debate about women's ordination will continue its revival this week through the medium of an art exhibition at Manchester Cathedral.

The arguments are in paint,

pastel and pencil in the most comprehensive show of works by the late Anglican Deaconess Phoebe Willetts, artist and leading campaigner for women's ordination. They are arguments awaiting conclusion, for Deaconess Wil-

letts died of cancer in March 1978 with her Church still refusing to ordain women

She was at the centre of national controversy in January 1978 when she publicly co-celebrated Holy Communion with her husband, the Rev Alfred Willetts, Rector of the Church of the Apostles in Miles Platting, Manchester.

This contravention of the canons of the Church of England came only three months after the Reverend Alison Palmer, validly ordained in the (Anglican) Episcopal Church of America, had been flown to England at the Willett's expense to become the first woman priest to celebrate Palmer, validly ordained in the (Anglican) Episcopal Church of America, had been flown to England at the Willett's expense to become the first woman priest to celebrate Holy Communion in England.

Many of the 45 works, which will hang until August 3, are concerned with women's place

monstrations. She could have gone free, but refused to pay the fline, Mr Willett said.

The exhibition is not for the past year Mr Willetts theologically squeamish. Her paintings include figures of the exhibition. One of his wife's final pictures was a self-traditional parish church, and of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, locked out of a Church. This of light. She left it for him painting bears the slogan:



in the Church and with pacifism.

Deaconess Willetts recorded in hostile grey tones the six months she spent in Holloway and Hill Hall prisons in 1960 after anti-nuclear weapons demonstrations. She could have gone free but refused to nay where death is by hoth hanging.

Twelve are saved as ship sinks

TWELVE people were rescued from the sea off Anglesey last night after a 30-foot fishing vessel sank when it was hit by a freak

The crew of an RAF rescue helicopter dumped fuel so that they could get everyone aboard during the pickup. The navigator Fl. Lt. John Mullan, said later: "The life raft, which had two people inside and several hanging on to its side, was being blown towards the eliffs by a strong towards the cliffs by a strong north wind. "We would have had no

further survivors on a second flight. By the time we had nicked up the last survivor the life raft was only some 30 yards from the cliffs, so it was getting pretty tight." Helicopter winchman Bob Danes had to pick each per-son up individually because of the heavy seas and waves

lime to return to pick up

up to 15 feet high. The 12 survivors were taken to hospital but all were discharged later.

One of the survivors, the owner of the vessel, Mr Hayden Jones, of Holyhead, said afterwards: "I am lucky to be alive. We were hit by a freak wave and she must have gone down in just two min-utes. We didn't even have time to send out a distress call or fire any flares,"

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