

McKinlay's People: A Study of the Academic Dress of the University of Bradford

By Peter William Clarke

On the morning of Friday, 19 February 1965, the Vice-Principal of the Bradford Institute of Technology, Robert McKinlay, and seven other members of the academic staff convened the first meeting of the Academic Dress Sub-Committee.¹ This was the start of what was to be a year-and-a-half-long process of creating the academic dress of the institution. The legacy of that Committee produced a number of striking and unusual examples of academic dress, as well as a number of unusual practices that have endured to the present day. This article will examine the journey and development of the academic dress of the institution and will look at the many factors that have influenced it. While looking at the standard academic dress, particular attention will be paid the dress of undergraduates and the officers of the University who 'wore the most elaborate costumes'.² In the preparation of this article, a large number of primary and secondary source materials were consulted. The University's own archives proved invaluable in this regard. Finally, this article will look at the particular differences between the current regulations and usage of the institution's dress.

The mid-nineteenth century saw the wool industry in Bradford boom. Driven by advancements in technology and engineering, the city soon saw a dramatic rise in the number of companies being established to produce the machinery required to drive such a rapid expansion. Soon the city became renowned for its engineering quality and scale of production. To cater to the needs of the ever-expanding cohort of engineers at the cutting edge of innovation in machinery for the woollen industry, the Mechanics Institute was founded in 1832. As the century advanced the city went from strength to strength, becoming a regional powerhouse as its wealth continued to increase. In 1882 the Institute changed to become the Bradford Technical College as it continued to grow in both size and importance. Since its inception, the College 'has [had] a close contact with industry ... in particular ... with the Bradford woollen industry'.³ However, it was not until 1956 that the College would begin to look at the possibility of higher education when the government declared the College a Centre for Advanced Technology. With this the College continued to meet the 'educational aspirations of the local population and the industrial needs of the region'.⁴ This move changed the fundamental nature of the College to that of higher education, with

1 University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 19th February 1965', 2 March 1965, University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/5.

2 A. Cullingford, 'Wine, Saffron and Gold: Who Chose the University of Bradford's Robes?', University of Bradford Special Collections (July 2015), at <www.specialcollectionsbradford.wordpress.com> [retrieved 18 Nov. 2015].

3 University of Bradford, press statement, Academic Dress at the University of Bradford (Bradford, 1966), p. 1.

4 R. McKinlay, *The University of Bradford: Origins and Development* (Bradford: University of Bradford, 1991), p. 3.

its degrees being conferred by the University of London. While this was a significant step forward, the city itself had changed. Long past the pinnacle of its industrial revolution, it was no longer the powerhouse it once was. However, the desire for prestige persisted and many believed that a new university would be a very bright feather in the cap of the city. This undoubtedly created incredibly close links with the city which persist to this day. This can best be seen by the fact that at degree congregations both the maces of the city and the university are paraded. It is also very common for the Lord Mayor to attend. 'In 1965, the Bradford Institute of Technology was working towards its transformation into the University of Bradford', although, in spite of these grand ideals, the lead-up to the creation of the University represented one of the most turbulent periods in the institution's history.⁵

In 1956 the College was left without a principal due to a failure to appoint a successor. One was not appointed until 1957 when the college chose Dr Ted Edwards. The position of the College was only exacerbated by a damning report by the National Council for Technological Awards. Established in 1955, this was the government body set up 'to administer a new award for higher technological qualifications in technology colleges'.⁶ In the history of the university it is sometimes referred to as the Hives Committee.⁷ Beset by the lack of space, resources and finances, the College and its future began to look uncertain. However, the College was able to consolidate its position with the acquisition of the Congregation-alists College at Emm Lane (part of the Yorkshire United College), which at the time had 'three non-resident students' and only two academic staff. It was only by a considerable effort of the staff that they were able to satisfy the Committee on their return. However, after this brief period of uncertainty, the work of the 'Institute expanded rapidly: in 1957 there were 124 students enrolled on degree courses and 56 lecturers and senior members of academic staff, by 1966 there were 2,600 students and over 350 academic staff'.⁸ It is the opinion of the author that without the vision of Ted Edwards the University would never have received its charter, which it did in 1966.

The Academic Dress Sub-Committee

Riding on the back of the success, excitement and zeal the institution was enjoying in 1965, the Academic Board resolved to form the Academic Dress Sub-Committee, whose remit was:

To consider the design of academic dress for the proposed University of Bradford and submit a report to the Academic Board.⁹

The Academic Dress Sub-Committee was formed of a number of senior academics and led by the Vice-Principal, Robert McKinlay, in the chair.¹⁰ The Principal, Ted Edwards,

⁵ A. Cullingford, 'Wine, Saffron and Gold'.

⁶ R. McKinlay, p. 80.

⁷ 'Bradford Technical College Archive—The University Question', University of Bradford (May 2012), at <www.bradford.ac.uk> [retrieved 5 Nov. 2015]. The Report was written while Ernest Hives, 1st Baron Hives of Duffield, was chairman of the NCTA.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 19th February 1965', 2nd March 1965, University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/5.

¹⁰ It should be noted that Robert McKinlay is author of *The University of Bradford: Origins and Development* and while it contains comparatively little on academic dress, his personal experience make his insights on the subject invaluable.



University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

FIG. 1 The original robes of the senior officers in 1968, now stored by the University. From left: Ted Edwards, Vice-Chancellor; Harold Wilson, Chancellor; Charles Morris, Pro-Chancellor; Robert McKinlay, Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

was also routinely invited to the meetings and consulted, but never attended. The minutes of the first meeting of the Committee, held on 19 February 1965, express little more than vague intentions and emphasize its inexperience and lack of understanding in regard to academic dress. However, there are a number of handwritten annotations to the minutes made post-meeting that are of significant interest. The Committee for example simply specifies the use of a 'Black Gown', which was later changed to a bachelor's gown of 'the London Shape' [b4]. This may have been in light of the fact that the College's degrees were previously awarded by the University of London, although the recommendation was not to be included in the final designs.

There is clear evidence to suggest that the Committee, as well as the senior academic staff of the University, wanted to separate itself from the past and assert that the new University of Bradford would be a strong and independent institution. The break from the London tradition could be interpreted as a clear visual statement of that intent. While at the meeting no choices were made about specific hood or gown designs, the Committee made a suggestion for the master's hood. It proposed that it should be a variation of the bachelor's hood (as yet still undefined) but that it should be 'gold trimmed in white fur [and should] have an edging based on the title of the degree'.¹¹ While this did not make the final designs, it could be said that if implemented these would have made a very unusual

¹¹ University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 19th February 1965', 2 March 1965, University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/5.



University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

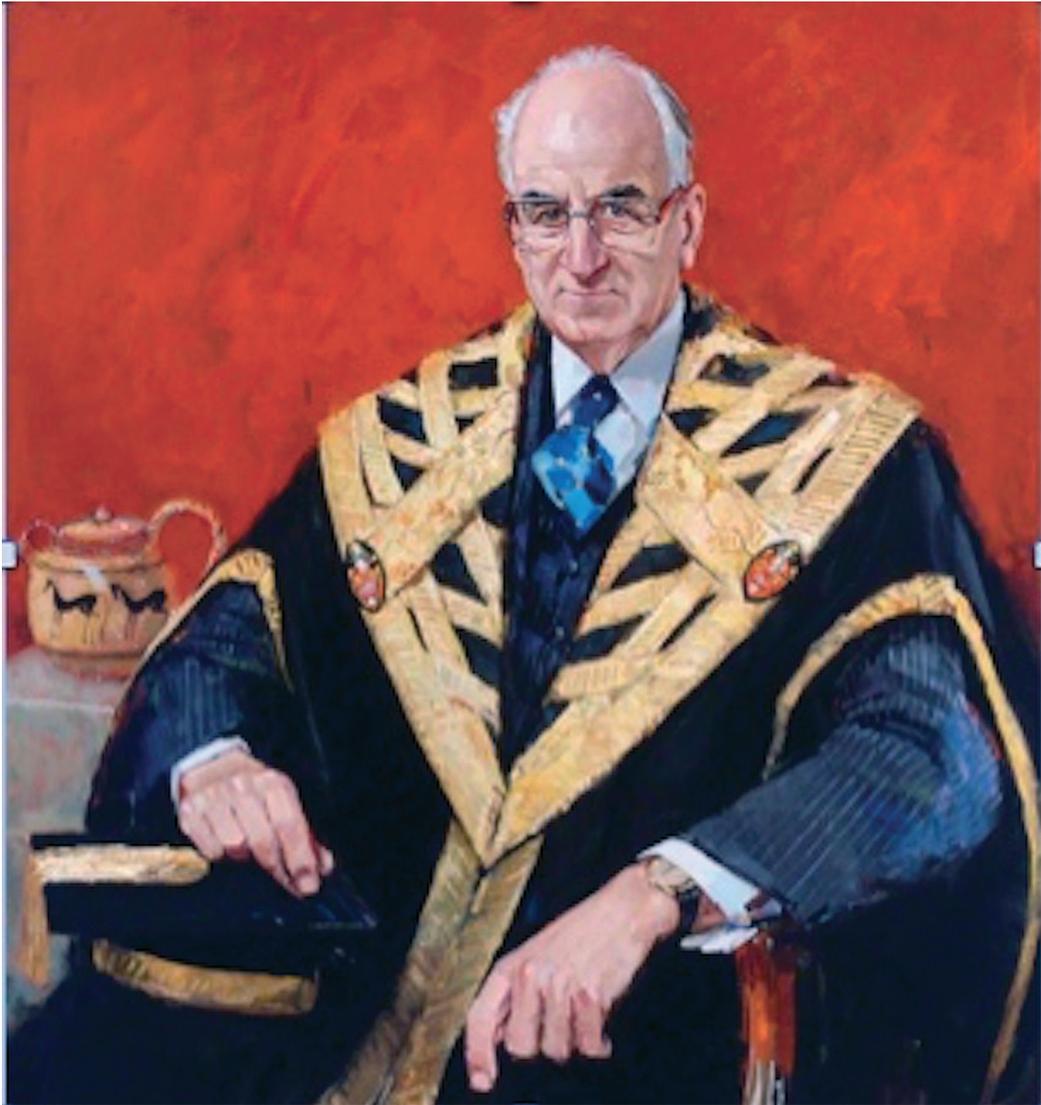
FIG. 2 The Vice-Chancellor, John West, and Chancellor, Sir John Harvey-Jones, in March 1986 in the later style of gown, with Mohammed Ajeeb, Lord Mayor of Bradford, and other honorary graduates. The faculty colours can be seen on the hoods.

and interesting set of hoods for the University. It should also be noted that the inclusion of fur on masters' hoods was very rare at the time.

While the Committee did not meet for another four months, until 4 June 1965, one of its members, Frank Earnshaw, the Librarian, had written to every university in the country to enquire as to its academic dress. The resulting accumulation of responses, ranging from detailed breakdowns to polite refusals, forms a significant collection. These were then used to create a table, detailing in brief terms, the academic dress of nearly every institution in the country. However, the work of Frank Earnshaw seemed to have proved somewhat superfluous as the Committee was also presented a copy of George's Shaw's *Academical Dress of British Universities*. How the book was brought to its attention is unknown, though the most likely source was Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd, who were later appointed as robemaker to the University. It is also strange that since the book would not be published until 1966, the volume presented to the Committee may have been an advance copy.

At this meeting the Committee makes very clear recommendations that it wished graduates to wear a 'Black Gown; style as for Oxford BA [b8] with shorter sleeves (vide: "Academical Dress of British Universities" – Fig. 14. [or] if on the advice of the suppliers, there is likely to be difficulty in obtaining supplies of this style, the Sub-Committee recommends an alternative Fig. 10 or nearest to it'.¹² What is being described is the basic pattern for a bachelor's gown [b1]. However, once again the minutes show a number of handwritten amendments. The recommendation for a bachelor's gown is changed to a Cambridge MA gown [m2], which was eventually prescribed for all degrees. There is evidence to suggest that this was on the advice of the robemaker. It is also at this meeting that the first references to a basic colour for the University is made. While there is much uncertainty as to why the Committee recommended a gold colour, there is strong evidence to suggest that the University of London was a source of inspiration. It is also important to note that the newly appointed Principal of the College, Ted Edwards, was awarded both a BSc and

¹² University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 4th June 1965', 11 June 1965, University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/8.



University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

FIG. 3 Albert J. Thayre, Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Council of the University of Bradford (1969-87), by Trevor Stubley.



University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

FIG. 4 Ted Edwards in his robes as Vice-Chancellor in the late 1960s.



FIG. 5 Undergraduate gown introduced in 1996. Oxford scholar gown, maroon with silver facings, in line with the University's branding at the time.



FIG. 6 Gown of the President of the Students' Union. Blue stuff gown with saffron trimmings. Simplified version of the Bubb design.



University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

FIG. 7 A still from the 1968 promotional film *The Potential Graduate* showing the President of the Students' Union acting as mace bearer, followed by the Chancellor, Harold Wilson. The film was produced by the University.

PhD in science from the University of London, which 'conformed to the new faculty colour scheme ... with the colour of Science being yellow-gold'.¹³ The relatively close University of Manchester (Victoria), possibly under the influence of London, also used gold for all of its doctoral robes. However, to this day the University continues to describe the colour as saffron. It has been suggested by Alison Cullingford that the colour choice was a deliberate reference to the College's prominence in the technology of dyeing.¹⁴ It was also at this meeting when the idea of faculty colours' being added to hoods in the form of an additional band was discussed, although no colours were proposed at that stage. In regard to the robes of doctors, the Committee offers very little other than to recommend the use of a standard 'crimson gown' in line with current academic conventions.¹⁵

By the following meeting later that month, on 24 June 1965, the Committee had finalized its proposals for the dress of undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates. With the exception of doctors it recommended that all students should wear a master's gown of the Cambridge pattern [m2]. This was a decision that proved most unpopular with George Shaw who described it as a 'great pity [that the University] ... was infringing the garments of another university' (see below).¹⁶ The Committee also recommended that all

¹³ B. Christianson, 'Lined with Gold: London University and the Colour of Science', *TBS*, 5 (2005), p. 80.

¹⁴ 'History of Graduation Gowns' [Video], interviewee A. Cullingford, University of Bradford (July 2011), at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_WTCwy_Vpc> [retrieved 11 Sept. 2015].

¹⁵ University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 20th May 1966', 21 June 1966, University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/16.

¹⁶ Dr G. W. Shaw to Mr M. Shattock, University of Bradford Library, Academic Dress

hoods should be of the London shape [f3]. The meeting also obtained a number of samples from Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd.

At the meeting the Committee specified a 'scarlet gown with sleeve linings and facings in saffron' for doctors, although it did not specify a pattern of gown as it had for other degrees.¹⁷ It also recommended that doctoral hoods should be scarlet in the London shape [f3] and lined with saffron. In regard to hats, it made a recommendation that a square cap should be prescribed for all degrees, including doctors. This proposal, however, was not accepted by the Academic Board who felt that it would represent a significant break with current academic convention. At this stage the Committee gave little thought to regalia of higher officers of the University other than to say their design should be 'considered in light of current practice at existing universities'.¹⁸

The Academic Dress Sub-Committee's recommendations were presented to the Academic Board on Monday, 5 July 1965, and its proposals were mostly accepted. The Board, however, rejected the proposal that the masters' hoods should be lined with fur. While no reason was stated for the rejection in the minutes, it could be argued that the decision was influenced by the fact that fur was a very rare feature of masters' hoods at the time and was a further break from academic convention. Finally, on the advice of the Committee the Board appointed Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd of Liverpool as robemakers to the University. The choice was likely influenced by the relative proximity of the company. It is also worthy of note that there is strong evidence to suggest that the robemakers had significant influence over the Committee, as a number of practices from the University of Liverpool were introduced.

While it was clear that much of the Committee's main remit had been completed, its work was far from over. It next met in the succeeding academic term, on 24 November. Its work now shifted to the design of the robes of the senior officers of the University. At this meeting the Committee was presented with a number of sketches produced by Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd.¹⁹ These, however, to the Committee's disappointment, showed designs that were very conventional and represented the contemporary practices in academic dress. What was proposed was a version of a standard master's gown with a number of gold embellishments (Fig. 16). The Committee at this point made a number of small amendments to the designs and asked for more detailed sketches from the robemaker. This could be seen as an effort by the Committee to assert its independence from the accepted norm.

The Committee's meeting on 18 April 1966 saw a distinct change in its direction in a number of ways. First the Academic Board changed its remit to include the designing of the arms for the University. It was naturally considered by the Academic Board that heraldry and academic dress had a great number of similarities. The Committee also made a number of radical proposals for the gown of the Chancellor. What was proposed was radical and could be seen as a dramatic visual statement which would emphasize the independence of the University. The Committee described a gown:

Sub-Committee (27 June 1966), f., X5/57/357/12.

¹⁷ University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 27th June 1966', (18 July 1966) University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd to J.R. Dale (BIT), University of Bradford Archive (11 March 1966), f., X5/57/357/B.



FIG. 8



FIG. 9



FIG. 10

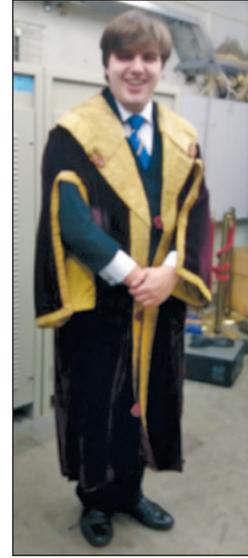


FIG. 11

Figs 8 and 9, University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

A still, Fig. 8, from *The Potential Graduate* showing the bachelor's hood of the Cambridge shape and gown of the Cambridge master's shape (awarded to all degrees), in 1968. In 2011, the bachelor's hood, in Fig. 9, in a still from *History of Graduation Gowns*. The right two photos compare of the new Chancellor's gown, Fig. 10, and the old Chancellor's gown, Fig. 11.

In purple corded silk or damask or in purple or other coloured terylene²⁰ damask, a full long gown but without a train; Fronts, bottoms, cape collar trimmed with gold lace 2½" wide; Sleeves, sides, and back trimmed with gold motifs and olivettes; Epaulettes suitably embroidered

...²¹

Something borrowed, something stolen?

On 27 June 1966 the Committee received a letter from Dr George Shaw of Lancing College, who wrote to express his grave disappointment that the University was 'infringing the garments of another university'.²² While recognizing George Shaw's prominence as an academic dress scholar, it is the author's opinion that his accusation is largely unfounded. While it must be acknowledged that the University used elements from the academic dress of a number of institutions, it had produced a scheme that was unique. The letter is also not clear as to which scheme the University was meant to be infringing. While it makes reference to the fact that the University copied the University of Liverpool's policy of using the same gown for all degrees and suggests that it is also copying a feature of non-gradu-

²⁰ Terylene is a synthetic polyester fibre or fabric based on terephthalic acid, characterized by lightness, crease resistance and was used for clothing, sheets, ropes, sails etc.

²¹ University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 18th April 1966' (20 May 1966), University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/A.

²² Dr G. W. Shaw to Mr M. Shattock, 27 June 1966, University of Bradford Library, Academic Dress Sub-Committee f., X5/57/357/12.

ate hoods of theological colleges—Dr Shaw suggests they commonly used bordered rather than fully lined hoods—the source of the infringement remains unclear.

Throughout the letter Dr Shaw argued that the University should have ‘something unique’ and he provided a number of sketches of how the University could incorporate a unique shape and characteristic in both a bachelor’s and master’s gown. This took the form of an inverted-V cut in the sleeve of both gowns. The minutes of the Academic Dress Sub-Committee made no reference to these sketches, which suggests that they were dismissed out of hand (see Fig. 15).

While at first glance the master’s and bachelor’s academic dress for the University of Bradford appear identical, there are in fact very subtle differences. While the hoods of the bachelors have a cowl that is bordered with 4” of saffron, on the hood of the masters the inside of the cowl is lined fully with saffron silk. Nicholas Groves states that it is ‘unclear why the higher doctors have faculty borders, but lower degrees do not’.²³ The reason lies in the fact that while faculty colours for all degree hoods were suggested in early meetings of the Academic Dress Sub-Committee, it was the will of the Academic Board to create a simplified set of academic dress. In both cases graduates wear a plain stuff master’s gown of the Cambridge pattern [m2]. Likewise, both wear the standard square cap and a full hood of the Cambridge shape [f1] (in spite of the fact that the Academic Dress Sub-Committee specified a hood of the London shape [f3]).

The dress of higher doctors incorporates the University’s saffron colour in the facings of the dress robe. It is a scarlet gown of the Cambridge shape [d1] with saffron facings down the front and on the sleeves. The hoods for doctors are of the Cambridge shape [f1], all lined with saffron and bordered with faculty colours. The original colours were DTech in violet, DSc in spectrum blue and DLitt in white.²⁴ Since then, other colours have been included for other higher degrees including EdD in maroon, DEng in mid-green, LLD navy blue and DUniv in silver-grey.²⁵ The undress gown is the same as for the masters. The cap worn for full dress colours is a black Tudor bonnet while a black square cap is worn with undress robes. In all, the dress for both doctors and other graduates and doctors seems to take on a distinctively Liverpool flavour. As the archives hold only one correspondence from the robemaker, the minutes give a far better indication of when the Committee made contact as they make reference to ‘advice from the supplier’ in June 1965. It was also at this time that the Committee began to use recognized terms for academic dress. This suggests that the robemakers from Liverpool most likely made a number of suggestions and gave examples of current practices at the University of Liverpool.

The minutes of the Academic Dress Sub-Committee show that a significant amount of effort and thought went into the design and construction of the robes for the senior officers of the University. In the early stages of this process the robemakers to the University, Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd, produced a number of very conventional designs with only minor differences between the gowns of the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor, but these were dismissed with very little consideration. (See Fig. 16.²⁶)

²³ N. Groves (ed.), *Shaw’s Academical Dress of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd edn (London, 2011), Vol. 1, p. 96.

²⁴ University of Bradford, Minutes, ‘Academic Dress Sub -Committee Meeting held 18th April 1966’, (20 May 1966) University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/A.

²⁵ N. Groves (ed.), *Shaw’s Academical Dress*, p. 97.

²⁶ ‘Senior Officers of the University’, University Archive Special Collections, University of Bradford (1968).

Detail of the back of the Bubb Chancellor's gown (Fig. 12) and the Bubb Vice-Chancellor's gown (Fig. 13). Vice-Chancellor's gown front (Fig. 14).



FIG. 12



FIG. 13



FIG. 14

After the rejection of the proposed Ravenscroft & Willis designs, Bradford decided to look for a local solution. The Bradford College of Art, across the road from the University, had gained a 'considerable reputation in textile design'.²⁷ The resulting competition to design the robes of the senior officers of the University came with a prize of £20 and received a large number of entries of a high standard. The final design was produced by a student named Geoffrey Bubb (Fig. 17) and the final gowns are still held in the University's collection. His designs were unusual in the fact that they incorporated large lapels into the gowns as well as a distinctive sleeve design (Fig. 1).²⁸ The design was also extended to the robes of the officers of the Students' Union (Fig. 6). The final gown in all was produced almost entirely out of velvet, an unusual choice as velvet was rarely used in academic dress of the time. The process was helped greatly by the fact Lister & Co Ltd offered to donate the material for the robes. This was an excellent opportunity for the company to promote its material but also to show the quality of Bradford's manufacturing. This act by the company also creates a link with the institution's past, as the Mechanics Institute was designed to serve the needs of the weaving industry which the company remained part of up until the turn of the twenty-first century. Lister & Co Ltd were also the owners of Manningham Mill, which was the largest silk factory in the world.

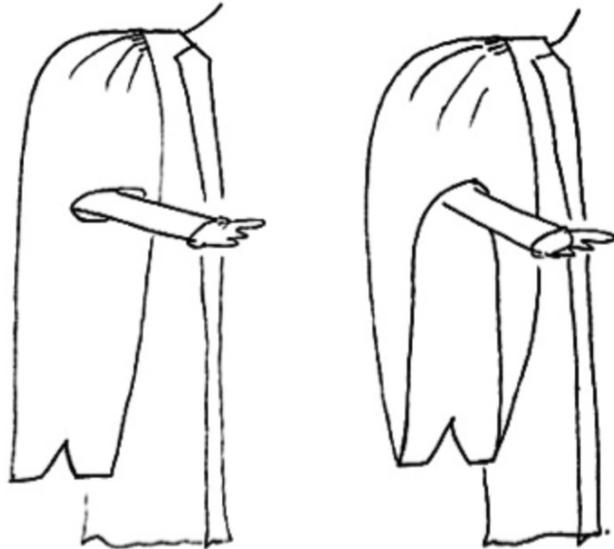
This included the most impressive gown of the Chancellor who was the then Prime Minister Harold Wilson. He apparently determined 'the cap for the senior officers ... should be a traditional mortar board'.²⁹ Robert McKinlay explained the rationale behind the decision was that 'he had been the victim of unusual headwear imposed upon him at ceremonies in various universities'. McKinlay argued that in this regard at least Bradford

²⁷ McKinlay, p. 145.

²⁸ University of Bradford, sketch, 'Chief Officers Robes', University of Bradford Archives (June 1966), X5/57/357/13.

²⁹ McKinlay., p.146.

FIG. 15 Hand-drawn sketches by George Shaw outlining his proposal for Bradford University gowns. Masters' (left) and bachelors' (right). These designs were not adopted.



University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

was 'conservative and conforming'.³⁰ Also McKinlay, as the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, insisted that 'facings on his robes should be Quaker grey'.³¹ Wilson's appointment was another indication how important the institution was. The University, however, subsequently decided to produce a new gown for each of the senior officers meaning the original velvet gowns have not been used since they were worn by the University's first senior officers. This led to the gowns' being replaced in 1986 with more conventional ones for the senior officers. Coincidentally, these new gowns were almost identical to the ones proposed by Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd two decades earlier. Today only the robes of the President and officers of the Students' Union continue to use the unique Bubb design.

The original descriptions for the senior officers' robes are unusually vague as the sketches produced provided most of the detail for the robes. The details given for each of these robes are as follows:

	Material	Colour	Collar	Lining (Silk)	Cap
Chancellor	Velvet	Wine	Gold on Gold	Related Wine Tone	As sketch
Pro-Chancellor	Velvet	Black	Gold on Black	Grey	As sketch
Vice-Chancellor	Velvet	Light Royal	Gold on Blue	Lighter Blue	As sketch
Pro-Vice-Chancellor	Velvet	Black	Black on Grey	Grey	As sketch ³²

One of the most notable aspects of these designs is that of the use of velvet, 'itself ... a high-status material'.³³ While it is a material that is still in use by a number of institutions, it is mostly employed for little facings and trimmings. It was also controversial at

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

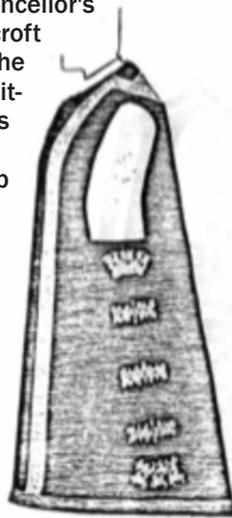
³² Academic Board, 'Document D - Chief Officer's Robes', Bradford Institute of Technology (June 1966), p. 1.

³³ N. Groves, 'With Velvet Facings: The Original London Robes', *TBS*, 5 (2005), p. 77.

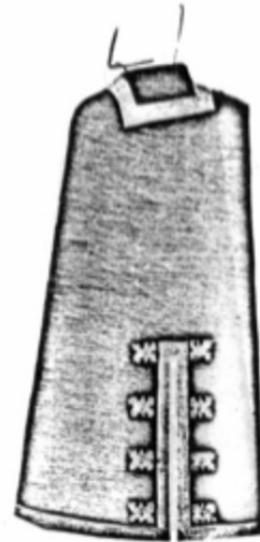
FIG. 16 Sketches for the Chancellor's gown submitted by Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd of Liverpool to the Academic Dress Sub-Committee. These designs were rejected in favour of the Bubb design, in Fig. 17.



SLEEVE.



FRONT - SIDE.



BACK - COLLAR.

University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford

the time, as many believed it should have been made out of wool, the material that the city was famed for. Indeed on the day of the Chancellor's installation 'one textile baron was so incensed by this ... that he publically paraded in his own academic gown, made, of course, of the real stuff—Yorkshire-produced wool'.³⁴ While the choice of materials may have been controversial, the design of the gown was not. Nearly all parties concerned supported the innovation and vision of the student who had designed it. As an outsider to the world of academic dress he was able to approach the challenge without prejudice and the established restraints and customs of traditional gown design.

The dress of undergraduates

The undergraduate dress at the University is a survival that continues to be unusual, especially in the twenty-first century. It is an era in which undergraduate academic dress is rarely found outside a handful of ancient universities. These include Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Bristol and 'St Andrews [which] is the only one of the Scottish universities where the gown is still seen frequently in the twenty-first century'.³⁵ However, this represents an excellent example of practice differing hugely from the regulations. Throughout the eighteen-month existence of the Academic Dress Sub-Committee it fervently asserted that no academic dress of any kind would be provided for undergraduates, with the one notable exception of the President and officers of the Students' Union. Although, it could be argued that while the office is usually always filled by an undergraduate, the holder could be seen as an officer of the University. This would put the robes in the same category as those of the senior office holders. However, in spite of this, anyone attending a graduation ceremony of the University would see a great number of individuals wearing undergraduate gowns.

³⁴ McKinlay, p. 145.

³⁵ J. C. Cooper, 'The Scarlet Gown: History and Development of Scottish Undergraduate Dress', *TBS*, 10 (2010), p. 37.

The gowns themselves are of the Oxford scholar's shape [u2] but maroon in colour and with silver facings (Fig. 5). The wearers are usually undergraduates assisting with the ceremony or other individuals who are not entitled to wear any other form of academic dress. While there is evidence to suggest that these gowns are linked exclusively to the office of a marshal officiating at a ceremony, it could be argued that these gowns form the basis of the undergraduate academic dress of the University. It is interesting to note that at its meeting on 20 May 1966 the Academic Dress Sub-Committee made a recommendation that 'the Oxford Scholar type [gown] be prepared for students officiating at ceremonial occasions'.³⁶ However, this recommendation was not adopted by the Academic Board at the time.



FIG. 18



FIG. 19

University of Bradford logos used in 1996 (Fig. 18) and in 2011 (Fig. 19).

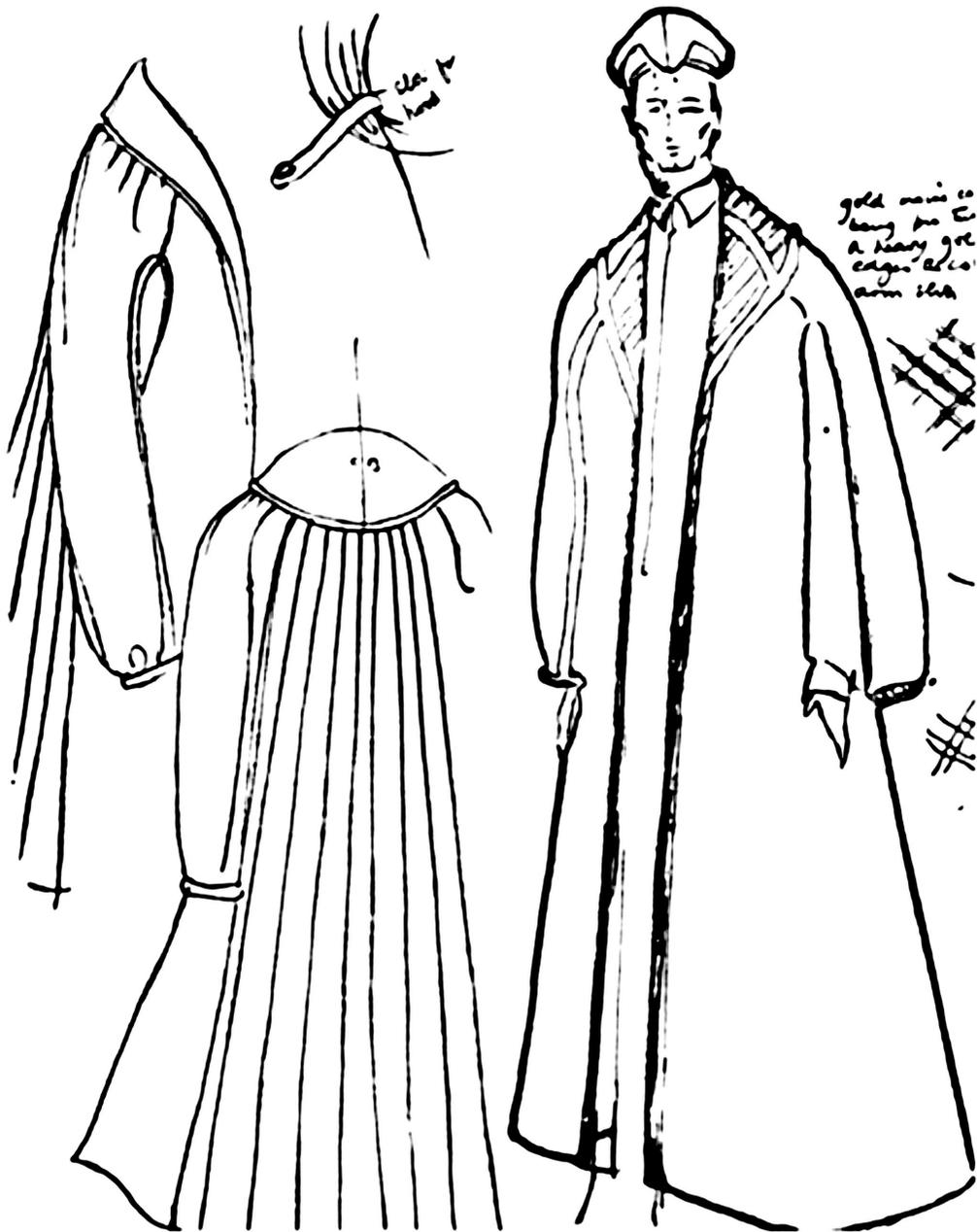
As recently as 2011 the University has since undergone a subsequent rebrand predominantly incorporating the colours black and purple. While there were plans to produce a new set of gowns accordingly, the plans have subsequently been scrapped due to budgetary constraints.³⁷ However, if it was produced such a gown would be very striking. It is unclear when J. Wippell was appointed as robemaker.

A particular set of gowns which has survived since the University's creation is the robes for the officers of the Students' Union. While it could be argued that these gowns are not strictly undergraduate gowns in the traditional sense, they certainly constitute part of the academic dress for some undergraduates. While the minutes of the Academic Dress Sub-Committee give no explanation for its inclusion, historian Alison Cullingford believes that it was the influence of the University's first Vice-Chancellor and the Principal of the predecessor institution, Dr Ted Edwards, who felt it was of considerable importance to involve students in the governance of the University. Such a decision to include this academic dress would have served as a very powerful visual link between the student body and the University's governance.

While the original gowns for the senior officers of the University are no longer in use, these robes remain the only examples of the Bubb style of gown still in use today. The front of the gowns is distinctive, as half-way down the garment a set of lapels folds back to the

³⁶ Sub-Committee on Academic Dress, 'Minute 3.b', Bradford Institute of Technology (20 May 1996), p.1.

³⁷ Personal correspondence with the Graduation Department of the University.



University Archive, Special Collections, University of Bradford
FIG. 17 Original unpublished sketches drawn by Geoffrey Bubb detailing his design for the senior officers of the University. This design was adopted and also inspired the design for the President of the Students' Union's gown. The hat was not adopted.

shoulders. The colour of the gown is royal blue with a 1" saffron facing on the lapel and on the edge of the sleeve. Like the senior officers' gown they are not worn with hoods. The officers of the Students' Union also wear a blue square cap with a 1" line of saffron. These gowns were replaced in 2015 and made to the same design as the originals.

Summary

The academic dress of the University of Bradford was not the result of a singular vision but was the result of an exercise in compromise. The Academic Dress Sub-Committee balanced the needs of a modern institution with those of academic dress convention. The University also made significant innovations in gown design that were both sympathetic and in keeping with what had come before. The new robes demonstrated both the independence and importance the University wished to portray. While the scheme was influenced in a number of ways by the University of London the result remains unique to Bradford. In all, the academic dress reflects many of the challenges the University was facing; as it was an institution that was respectful of its long past but eager to shape its future in order to cope with the demands of a modern university.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Academic Board, 'Document D—Chief Officer's Robes', Bradford Institute of Technology (June 1966).
Dr G. W. Shaw to Mr Shattock, University of Bradford Library, Academic Dress Sub-Committee (27 June 1966), f., X5/57/357/12.
- University of Bradford, Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 19th February 1965', 2 March 1965, University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/A.
- , Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 4th June 1965', 11 June 1965, University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/8.
- , Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 27th June 1966' (18 July 1966), University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/13.
- , Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 18th April 1966' (20 May 1966), University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/A.
- , Minutes, 'Academic Dress Sub-Committee Meeting held 20th May 1966', (21 June 1966) University of Bradford Archives, X5/57/357/16.
- , press statement, Academic Dress of the University of Bradford (Bradford, 1966).
- , sketch, 'Chief Officers Robes', University of Bradford Archives (June 1966), X5/57/357/13.
- Ravenscroft & Willis Ltd to J.R. Dale (BIT), University of Bradford Archive, (11 March 1966) f., X5/57/357/B.
- 'Senior Officers of the University', University Archive Special Collections, University of Bradford (1968).

Secondary Sources

- 'Bradford Technical College Archive—The University Question', University of Bradford (May 2012), at <www.bradford.ac.uk> [retrieved 5 November 2015].
- Christianson, B., 'Lined with Gold: London University and the Colour of Science', *TBS*, 5 (2005), pp. 80–89.
- Cooper, Jonathan C., 'The Scarlet Gown: History and Development of Scottish Undergraduate Dress', *TBS*, 10 (2010), pp. 8–42.

- Cullingford, Alison, 'Wine, Saffron and Gold: Who Chose the University of Bradford's Robes?', University of Bradford Special Collections (July 2015), at <www.specialcollectionsbradford.wordpress.com>.
- Groves, Nicholas, "With Velvet Facings": The Original London Robes', *TBS*, 5 (2005), pp. 76-79.
- Groves, Nicholas (ed.), *Shaw's Academical Dress of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: The Burgon Society, 2011-14), Vol. 1: *Universities and Other Degree-Awarding Bodies*.
- McKinlay, Robert A., *The University of Bradford: Origins and Development* (Bradford: University of Bradford, 1991).