

TRANSACTIONS OF THE BURGON SOCIETY

Volume 17

2017

Published October 2018

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The online edition of *Transactions* can be identified by ISSN 2475-7799, for serials.

New Prairie Press, hosted by Kansas



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Burgon Society On-line Bibliography

The aim is to build up a comprehensive resource for those researching the design, history and practice of academical dress.

The Introduction is a brief survey of the key materials on academical dress that are either in print or available in the larger public and university libraries.

The Alphabetical list that follows is intended to cover what has been published on the subject since the beginning of the nineteenth century; earlier items are listed if they include engravings that provide important evidence of robes of the period.

The bibliography grows every year. Suggestions for additions (or corrections) are

The Burgon Society Library

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Bibliography of Academical Dress

compiled by Alex Kerr

This **Bibliography** is in two parts. The **Introduction** is a brief survey of the key materials on academical dress that are either in print or available in the larger public and university libraries. The **Alphabetical list** that follows is intended to cover what has been published on the subject since the beginning of the nineteenth century; earlier items are listed if they include engravings that provide important evidence of robes of the period. Successful dissertations submitted for the Fellowship of the Burgon Society, whether published later or not, are listed separately on the [Submissions](#) page of the Research section of this website.

Note. Please send any suggestions for corrections or additions to registrar@burgon.org.uk or webmaster@burgon.org.uk (remembering to include "Burgon" somewhere in the subject line).

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The Burgon Society

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Burgon Society Events in 2017

22 April **Spring Conference and AGM**

OFFICES OF DELOITTE Athene Place, 66 Shoe Lane, London

Programme included the AGM and the following talks:

John Harding — *Is There a Philosophy of Academic Dress?*

Jennifer Daley and Andrew Breer — *From the Parade Ground to the Classroom: When Military Dress Becomes Academic Dress*

Jonathan Cooper — *Reforms to Scottish Graduate Dress during the 1860s*

Kerstin Fröberg — *What's in a Name? Silk, Satin and Other Textile Words*

Alex Kerr — *George Davis's Picture Postcards of Academic Dress*

27 May **Visit to the University of Stirling** marking the Golden Jubilee of the University receiving its Royal Charter in 1967

THE COURT ROOM, QUEEN'S COURT, UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Hosted by Colin Fleming

Programme included the following:

Colin Fleming — *Introduction to the Academic Dress of the University of Stirling (examples of robes for graduates and officials were on display)*

Tour of the University's art collection

Neil Dickson — *The Different Scottish Universities*

14 October **Congregation**

THE SENIOR PARLOUR, GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Admission to the Fellowship of the Burgon Society

Alice Hynes (by submission — *Development of Academic Dress in Kingston University*)

Martin Lewis (by submission — *Weaving the Fabric of Success: Exploring the Academic Attire of Eton College from 1440*)

Nicola Hardy (honoris causa — *Senior Esquire Bedell of the University of Cambridge*)

Programme included the following talks:

Simon Morris — *The Invention of Tradition: New Benefactors' Gowns Being Introduced at Cambridge Colleges*

Sandra Wearden — *How Material Objects Contribute to the Perpetuation of Degree Ceremonies*

Martin Lewis — *An Academic Dress Supplier's Experiences*

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(as at 15 August 2018)

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Editor's Note

Rules define how gowns and hoods and tassels and tufts are worn. When I was a newcomer to academic dress, enthusiastic about deciphering the meanings and reasons behind all the shapes and colours, rules were the frame through which I came to understand why we wear it and how it is to be worn.

Studying the distinctions among universities and within universities led me to focus on those telltale differences between this hood and the next. But, as I was attempting to learn to tell a Cambridge [f1] from a London [f3], the distinctions and the rules governing them led me to see academic dress in only one of two ways: right or wrong.

Lining up before a commencement ceremony and reading the outfits, I would tut-tut at the professors who chose a trim colour because they preferred red to crimson and smirk at those who had their hoods on inside out. They weren't following the rules, I told myself, without which academic dress loses its meaning.

Or so I thought at the time. The more I learn about the history of academic dress the more I enjoy the departures from statutes governing these specialized clothes. The evolutions they have undergone to arrive in their modern forms, I understand now, are part of each item's story. When a professor or student changes how her gown looks, it becomes personal to her because she added her own meaning to the gown.

Most changes of that sort are unique. They do not get copied or if they do, the change tends to last only a short time. But other changes take hold and become the new standard, such as which side of a hood we wear on our backs, which Nick Groves describes in a portion of his article starting on page 76. Some other changes are said to come with the weight of tradition, such as the significance of American faculty colours, when in fact they turn out to be chosen with more imagination and fewer historical antecedents, as Kenny Suit continues to demonstrate starting on page 39.

So while tradition and precedence set the tone for academic dress, variations set the rhythm, because without change, academic dress, like most other traditions and rituals, become monotonous, or sartorial fossils. Today I embrace change and variation in cap and gown. It helps keep academic dress relevant and meaningful to the newest scholars, those who will be the ones who decide if universities wear it in the future.

—*Stephen Wolgast*