

Department for Continuing Education
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Durham University: Last of the Ancient Universities and First of the New (1831-1871)

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Abstract

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This thesis is a study of Durham University, from its inception in 1831 to the opening of the College of Physical Science in Newcastle in 1871. It considers the foundation and early years of the University in the light of local and national developments, including movements for reform in the church and higher education. The approach is holistic, with the thesis based on extensive use of archival sources, parliamentary reports, local and national newspapers, and other primary printed sources as well as a newly-created and entirely unique database of Durham students.

The argument advanced in this thesis is that the desire of the Durham authorities was to establish a modern university that would be useful to northern interests, and that their clear failure to achieve this reflected the general issues of the developing higher education sector at least as much as it did internal mismanagement. This places Durham in a different position relative to the traditional understanding of how universities and colleges developed in England and therefore broadens and deepens the quality of that narrative. In the light of the University's swift decline, and poor reputation, from the mid-1850s what were the ambitions of the founders and how did this deterioration occur? Were the critics' accusations against the University – principally that it was a theologically-dominated, inadequate imitation of Oxford, bound to the Chapter of Durham and ruled autocratically by its Warden – based on fact or prejudice? And if the critics were wrong, what were the factors that led to the University's failings?

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Abbreviations

Bal	Balliol College, Oxford
CARUD	Chapter Acts Relating to the University of Durham
CC	Chevallier Correspondence
CERC	Church of England Record Centre
ChCh	Christ Church Library
COB	Chapter Order Book
CPSMB	College of Physical Science Minute Book
DCI	Dean & Chapter In-Letters
DCL	Durham Cathedral Library
DCO	Dean & Chapter Out-Letters
DDR	Durham Diocesan Records
DUL	Durham University Library
DUR	Durham University Records
JP	Jenkyns Papers
NCS	Northumberland Collections Service
NUL	Newcastle University Library
OSHDB	Old Shire Hall Deed Boxes
Pem	Pembroke College, Oxford
SC	Smith Correspondence
SHL	London University: Senate House Library
TC	Thorp Correspondence
TGL	Thomas Gaisford Letters
TNA	The National Archive
TRS	The Royal Society
UCCMB	University College Council Minute Book
UCL	University College, London
UWL	University of Wales, Lampeter
VML	Van Mildert Letters
WC	Whitley Correspondence

Introduction

Higher Education in the Age of Reform

'Historians', we are told by Joanna Innes and Arthur Burns, 'have variously employed the notion of an "age of reform"' to describe events from the late-eighteenth into the mid-nineteenth century. While 'parliamentary reform was, undoubtedly, *the* reform par excellence', they continue, the reformers' zeal extended to other allegedly 'exclusive, corrupt, and oppressive institutions' including the Established Church and the universities.¹ The local story of Durham University's creation spans both these national institutions.

In respect of Church reform, Richard Church's book on the Oxford Movement (1891) and Henry Liddon's biography of Edward Pusey (1893-4) did much to create and sustain the stereotype of the pre-Tractarian High Church as being mere 'Church and King men' with 'high and dry' worship and theology.² Bishop Van Mildert and most of the Chapter of Durham were amongst the greatest archetypes of High Churchmanship and hence were easily portrayed as anti-liberal, anti-reform and even 'unspiritual, formal, unevangelical, [and] self-righteous'.³ Yet Burns has argued that the pre-Tractarian High Church 'was of crucial significance' to 'mid-nineteenth-century Church reform' and not 'an obstacle to its progress'.⁴ Peter Nockles demonstrated similarly that old High Churchmen like Van Mildert possessed a distinctive, coherent, and spiritual theology, and were drivers of reform while still

¹ A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 1-3.

² A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, c. 1800-1870* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 15-6; P.B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 6-7, 25.

³ R.W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years 1833-1845* (London, 1891), pp. 8-11.

⁴ Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, pp. 14-5.

opposing the greater liberalisation advocated by vocal Whig leaders.⁵ The thrust of these revisionary approaches is to deepen and widen the concept of reform from a simple dichotomy of proponents and resisters to a more nuanced understanding of differing approaches to reform.

Yet Durham University's place in the history of universities is still problematic. As an Anglican institution with many traditional aspects and which consciously adopted practices from Oxford and Cambridge, it has not fitted into the prevailing narrative regarding the development of English higher education in the nineteenth century. The period has quite rightly been recognised as the time when many of the classic debates about the role of higher education first shaped the universities that we can recognise today. Typically, the period has been defined by reform at Oxford and Cambridge, hastened and extended by Royal Commissions; the development of new forms of higher education in London that were influenced by European, Scottish and North American models; and the growth of technically and industrially orientated civic colleges (later to become universities) partly through the expedient of the London University External Degree and the federal university model. This was a 'process of competing provision and bludgeoning criticism followed by pre-emptive emulation and reform' in the words of Harold Perkin.⁶

Eric Ashby's description is similar. Since around 1800, he argued, Oxford and Cambridge had 'been reawakening to their responsibilities', and had introduced long

⁵ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 25-32.

⁶ H. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880* (London, 1969), p. 298; M. Sanderson, *The Universities in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1975), pp. xi-xii, 22-3, 26-32, 80; W. Whyte, *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities* (Oxford, 2015), p. 21.

overdue changes. But as the universities 'showed no sign of yielding' on some of the most critical issues, the Royal Commissions of the 1850s were needed to force through the reforms they persisted in obstructing. Ashby praised London University for its 'broad spread of academic and professional studies', while he condemned Durham for being 'obsessively anglican' and having 'made such poor progress ... that there was talk in 1857 of closing it down'.⁷ Asa Briggs simply left Durham 'in the background' due to its 'clerical foundation' not fitting the 'simple narrative account of the development of English universities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.⁸

Michael Sanderson, at least, recognised Durham's attempt to pioneer engineering as a subject of university study, especially to appeal to its 'Northern milieu'. Still, however, he concluded that the University's 'origins were not especially noble' as the Chapter were simply attempting to forestall an attempt 'to dispossess it of funds' and hence it 'slipped into a poor imitation of Oxford and Cambridge'.⁹ Perkin too asserted the University's foundation 'stemmed from larger fears of Church disestablishment and spoliation'.¹⁰ William Whyte suggested that the foundation of the University was driven by 'fear that the State would sequester Church funds'.¹¹ Keith Vernon's remark was that the University was 'an attempt to divert some of the Cathedral's wealth' to avoid the scrutiny of a reforming government.¹²

Within an unrevised understanding of High Church values, Durham has all

⁷ E. Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African* (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1966), pp. 19-28.

⁸ A. Briggs, 'Development in Higher Education in the United Kingdom', in W.R. Niblett (ed.), *Higher Education: Demand and Response* (London, 1969), pp. 95-116, p. 97.

⁹ Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 32.

¹⁰ Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society*, p. 298.

¹¹ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 33.

¹² K. Vernon, *Universities and the State in England 1850-1939* (London, 2004), p. 101.

too often been dismissed as an anachronistic reaction to the febrile atmosphere of reform in the early 1830s. Characterising the Chapter as High Church, stubborn anti-reformists has supported the argument that the motivation for the University's foundation was unambitious, self-serving, and lacking the aspirational values found in other contemporaneous establishments, and especially London University. Vernon, for example, extolled the 'innovations' of the University of London, and the attempt there to pioneer 'a new form of higher education', while dismissing Durham's 'educational poverty'.¹³ Even Burns and Innes praised London University as 'the most ambitious product of this age of educational projects' in contrast to Durham which was simply founded 'by a bishop and chapter who hoped in this way to defend their revenues from anticipated church reform'.¹⁴

The person who suggested the University, Archdeacon Charles Thorp, always had it in mind that the project would 'preserve the Revenue to the church', so such comments are not without foundation.¹⁵ But the analysis is too limited. It fails to recognise the nuances and ambition of the development at Durham, for sure, but it also simplifies and therefore misunderstands what was happening elsewhere. This is the mistake made by Alan Bartlett and David Goodhew, who recognised the breadth of the initial vision for the University yet ascribed the University's 'sad failure by the 1860s' to 'the vestiges of "Old Corruption", not the least being an anachronistic attempt at control' of the University by the Chapter.¹⁶ Similarly, Brenda Pask

¹³ Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, pp. 63, 102.

¹⁴ J. Innes and A. Burns, 'Introduction', in Burns and Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform*, pp. 1-70, p. 39.

¹⁵ [Bal] JP, IVA.6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 11 June 1831.

¹⁶ A. Bartlett and D. Goodhew, 'Victorian to Modern, 1832-2000', in D. Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral: History, Fabric, and Culture* (London, 2015), pp. 111-27, p. 113.

attributed the failure to the 'autocratic behaviour' of the University's leadership and to the 'reluctance of the canons to countenance loss of control'.¹⁷ Attributing Durham's failure to the management of the University repeats an all-too-easy analysis that relies on the verdict of a partisan Royal Commission in the 1860s.

To be understood correctly the University must be studied in both its local and its wider context: in the momentous events of the early 1800s; as a response to the tumultuous educational, religious, political, and social changes that were convulsing an increasingly agitated nation. Since its inception in 1831 Durham University has also shaped the City it inhabits arguably more than any other development, save only the arrival in 995 of the body of St Cuthbert and the establishment of the Cathedral itself.¹⁸ For the University is also a great local institution: the long-expected northern university. Ever since the foundation, the distinctive characters of both the University and City have been mutually shaped as had been seen before in cities as diverse as Florence, Leiden, and Edinburgh.¹⁹

Historiography of the University

The University's history has been covered before. The earliest was written by Joseph Fowler, and published in 1904 as part of the College Histories series.²⁰ This work covered previous foundations, the first four Wardens, and developments in Newcastle. It is a source of useful information, but contains little by way of critical

¹⁷ B. Pask with D. Brown, 'Post-Reformation Clerical Scholarship', in Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral*, pp. 469-81, p. 476.

¹⁸ S. Foot, 'Cuthbert and the Search for a Patron', in Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral*, pp. 9-25, pp. 23-4; D. Pocock, *The Story of Durham* (Stroud, 2013), pp. 14-20.

¹⁹ T. Bender, *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present* (Oxford, 1988).

²⁰ J.T. Fowler, *College Histories: Durham University – Earlier Foundations and Present Colleges* (London, 1904).

analysis or comparative study. This may in part be explained by Fowler's personal sympathies and closeness to the events he was writing about, for he was a student of the University, entering Hatfield Hall in 1858 and graduating LTh in 1860, BA in 1861, and MA in 1864, and stayed there for much of his career including being appointed Vice-Principal of Hatfield Hall in 1870. He remembered, and was fond of, the first Warden, Charles Thorp. So Fowler's work may in some respects be seen more as a primary source: for it contains first hand recollections of the University from mid-century and records some of the memories of those who were involved from the start.

An enlarged and more rigorous history was produced by Charles Whiting for the University's centenary in 1932.²¹ Unlike Fowler, who was a theologian and Hebrew scholar, Whiting was Professor of History at Durham, as well as Vice-Principal of St Chad's College, and his more professional expertise is evident in his expanded and considered volume. In addition, Whiting makes greater use of the Thorp Correspondence, which was formally accessioned into the University Library in 1918, but which was accessible to and catalogued by Fowler. Although he does not shy away from the more complex elements of the University's history, including Thorp's legacy, his analysis relied heavily on the account provided by the Commissioners in 1862. Nevertheless, Whiting's book has since its publication been the authoritative volume on the University's history. And although a new history by Nigel Watson was published to coincide with the University's 175th anniversary, this was a less formal account.²² However, what Watson's book lacks in academic analysis it compensates for with extensive and interesting photography and drawings.

²¹ C.E. Whiting, *University of Durham 1832-1932* (London, 1932).

²² N. Watson, *The Durham Difference – The Story of Durham University* (London, 2007).

Two other authors are worthy of mention. First comes Alan Heesom, for many years to be found amongst the senior staff of the University including as a member of the History department, who delivered the Durham Cathedral Lecture in 1982 on the University's foundation. Published as a pamphlet by the Cathedral, Heesom provided extensive local and national context and was the first serious and thoroughly-researched attempt to locate the University's foundation within its broader political context.²³ Heesom has also produced three important articles for the *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* that cover the question of who thought of the idea of the University of Durham, and its political enfranchisement.²⁴

The second modern historian to offer detailed consideration of the University's foundation is Elizabeth Varley.²⁵ Her biography of the last Prince Bishop of Durham, William Van Mildert, included an extensive chapter that looked at the prelate's engagement with Thorp and other members of the Chapter as they attempted to decide what their new institution should be and as they sought to recruit staff. Although Varley's work is restricted to the brief but important period before the Bishop died in 1836, she was the first person to make extensive use of the Van Mildert Correspondence and Jenkyns Papers that complemented the material in the Thorp Correspondence.

²³ A.J. Heesom, *The founding of the University of Durham* (Durham, 1982).

²⁴ A.J. Heesom, 'Who thought of the idea of the University of Durham?', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 29 (1982), pp. 10-20; A.J. Heesom, 'The Political Enfranchisement of the University of Durham Part I: Failure, 1832-1867', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 50 (1993), pp. 47-58; A.J. Heesom, 'The Political Enfranchisement of the University of Durham Part II: Success, 1867-1918', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 51 (1993), pp. 56-77.

²⁵ E.A. Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops: William Van Mildert and the High Church Movement of the early nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1992).

As a collegiate university, Durham's colleges have also attracted the attention of institutional historians. These histories are, however, of an extremely variable nature and quality. Some, like *Doves & Dons*, the history of St Mary's College, are largely made up of reminiscences, extracts of letters, and summaries from the archive.²⁶ The finest is Henry Tudor's history of St Cuthbert's Society, which manages to analyse as well as describe some of the events and developments it relays.²⁷

Many of these College and University historians, people who perhaps should have known better due to their proximity to the University, have published opinions on Durham's early years that are as clumsy as some of the external historians already quoted. The science staff in 1931, for example, noted that 'no laboratories were built' when the University first opened, implying that all local knowledge of the first Chemistry Lecturer's laboratory had been forgotten.²⁸ Marilyn Hird, the editor of the history of St Mary's College from 1982, wrote that Durham was simply 'modelled on the ancient universities in its academic bias and its whole way of life'.²⁹ In 1984, Ernest Bettenson, the former Registrar of Newcastle University, pronounced that the Chapter simply founded the University in an attempt 'to keep as much of their wealth as possible out of the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners'.³⁰ In 1996 Edgar Jones, the historian of University College, noted that Durham was 'by reason of its

²⁶ M. Hird (ed.), *Doves & Dons: A History of St Mary's College Durham* (Durham, 1982).

²⁷ H. Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society 1888-1988* (Durham, 1988).

²⁸ *The University of Durham (Durham Division) Department of Science: Conversazione* (Durham, 1931).

²⁹ Hird, *St Mary's College*, p. 8.

³⁰ E.M. Bettenson, 'History of the Medical School', in G. Dale, et al, (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine, 1834-1984: Sesquicentennial Celebrations: Proceedings 17-21 September 1984* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1985), pp. 10-7, p. 10.

ecclesiastical origins, an ailing institution'.³¹

The early years of what became Newcastle University in 1963 are an important part of the development of Durham University, and both Fowler and Whiting cover these events. Newcastle University itself, however, has produced fewer histories than its parent. The two main works are by Bettenson (1971) and Norman McCord (2006).³² The more recent work provides a useful introduction but, as might be expected of an official and corporate volume, places greater emphasis on celebration and progress than impartial consideration. Nevertheless, some of the misrepresentations contained within it are bizarre: that John Gibbins could describe Durham as 'a child of the University of Cambridge', for example, shows a complete lack of engagement with the University's origins, as does his assertion that 'its governors balked at the call to develop non-humanistic disciplines aimed at saving bodies and enhancing well-being rather than saving souls'.³³ These are shining examples of how historical facts sometimes can't defeat deeply-held local prejudices. Bettenson's book is the better of the two.

Of more interest in the Newcastle context are the volumes produced from the sesquicentennial celebrations of the Medical School in 1984.³⁴ These two books contain both a useful repository of original texts and some thoughtful accounts of the Medical

³¹ E. Jones, *University College Durham: A Social History* (Aberystwyth, 1996), p. 14.

³² E.M. Bettenson, *The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne: A Historical Introduction 1834-1971* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1971); N. McCord (ed.), *Newcastle University: Past, Present and Future* (Newcastle, 2006).

³³ J. Gibbins, 'Origins to Armstrong College: From College of Physical Science to Armstrong College', in McCord (ed.), *Newcastle University*, pp. 12-6, p. 12.

³⁴ G. Dale, et al, (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine, 1834-1984: Sesquicentennial Celebrations: Proceedings 17-21 September 1984* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1985); G. Dale, et al, (eds.), *Newcastle School of Medicine, 1834-1984: Sesquicentennial Scrapbook* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1985).

School. In 1890 Dennis Embleton, one of the lecturers at the Medical School, produced his own account of the School's history and progress, including the Disruption of the early 1850s.³⁵ Like Fowler's work, however, his history must be approached with caution as he is inevitably partial to his own point of view – though this is also what makes his writings useful as a primary source.

The Value of Revising Durham's Place in Higher Education History

This thesis attempts to complicate the simple narrative of higher education in the nineteenth century by reframing Durham not as a poor and failed imitation of Oxford, created as the dying act of staunch High Churchmen who refused to recognise the changing times in which they lived, but as an attempt at educational reform in its own right. The problem with the simple narrative is not only that Durham's story is undeservedly relegated to the footnotes of university history, which while unfortunate for the University's friends would in itself be unproblematic, but that failing to deepen our understanding of Durham's near-collapse means that the causes of success and failure in English higher education during the nineteenth century are misunderstood.

I shall argue that the Durham Chapter, led by Thorp, intended to establish a modern university that would benefit northern interests, and that the clear failure to achieve these initial ambitions reflected the general issues of the developing higher education sector at least as much as it did the internal mismanagement and maladministration that was so publicly paraded in the early 1860s through the Royal Commission into the University's progress. This broader story crucially includes the fact, which has hitherto been given scant attention, that the University's foundation

³⁵ D. Embleton, *The History of the Medical School afterwards the Durham College of Medicine at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for forty years 1832 to 1872* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1890).

coincided with a 40-year period of limited growth for higher education throughout Europe: the early 1830s turned out to be probably the worst time in the entire century to found a university.

While in part it is my aim to resurrect Durham's early reputation, my overall ambition is more than a parochial corrective, it is to demonstrate that the general understanding of higher education during the nineteenth century fails to grasp the complexities of a system in development and competing perspectives on reform. For the narrative of the period is more than the story of some institutions which reformed, others which pioneered, and a few which failed, but about the creation of new models of higher education that shaped our understanding of the purpose of a university education and which remain with us today.

Thesis Outline

The scope of this thesis is far broader than a history of Durham University from 1831 to 1871. To place its development in context, Durham's story needs to embrace not only the general development of higher education in the mid-nineteenth century and the local history of the north-east, but also the rise of the professions, national political movements, the reform of secondary education, general changes in society, and ecclesiastical history. And while the story is a local and northern one, it eventually widens to embrace both the Caribbean and West Africa.

The research towards this thesis is similarly wide-ranging. It has been grounded in a thorough examination of primary and secondary sources. Intensive use has been made of archival material, principally in Durham and Oxford, including previously unused sources. Parliamentary reports, local and national newspapers, and other primary printed sources have also been employed. An extensive and unique

database of Durham University students has been created that includes over 6,000 records, extending from the first entrants in 1833 to 1905. Statistics derived from these records have been compared to existing published information for other institutions, notably King's College, London, and St Bees College, Cumbria.

The period covered spans four decades and starts in detail with Durham's inception in 1831, but the first chapter considers the local and national context back to about 1800. The foundation itself is then explored in the second chapter, in which the original idea of Durham University is illustrated and contrasted with the contemporaneous development of other institutions.

The next two chapters cover specifically academic matters. Chapter 3 relates to academic staff and covers the process of appointing the first professors and lecturers, while Chapter 4 covers the curricula and academic infrastructure. Taking evidence from both these sections I will argue that Durham was founded to offer so-called useful knowledge for a modern, commercial, and industrial society as well as a traditionally English residential provision in liberal arts. The development of the collegiate system, which provided that residential setting, is covered in Chapter 5, along with other aspects of the built estate. Taken together, these three chapters explain and explore the character of the University in its first few decades. The next chapter then reviews the University's growth to and decline from the mid-1850s.

Chapter 7 explores parallel developments in Newcastle during the same period, which were only ever in part fully independent of the University and which soon became connected with it where they were of a separate character. These critical components of the local context are frequently overlooked as integrated aspects of the intertwined local development of higher education.

The Royal Commission in the first years of the 1860s was the pivotal moment in the University's early existence and is explored in chapter 8. Durham's failures, especially from the mid-1850s, were brought into sharp focus by the arguments presented for the establishment of the Commission, its membership and work, and then the Ordinances it recommended as the cure for the University's ills. For most historians the Commission is the defining judgment on Durham's early history, but I shall examine its foundation, progress, and conclusions in a more critical manner.

The final chapter explores the University in the years immediately after the Commission up to the foundation of the College of Physical Science in Newcastle in 1871. This section explores Durham's first international developments, as well as those in the north-east. It is this period, under new and very different leadership, that effectively sealed the University's reputation into the mid-twentieth century.

My thesis is that Durham's stresses, difficulties, and eventual recalibration can be more thoroughly understood by being related to the developing sense of an English higher education sector than has hitherto been achieved. A more refined view of local developments in Newcastle, and the assimilation by the University of these initiatives which could otherwise have been quite distinct, also creates a more nuanced view of Durham's initial decades than has typically been the case. This has necessitated a detailed scrutiny of the archival sources and has resulted in a thesis that examines in detail the motives and actions of leading north-eastern figures. A meticulous study of this kind into the University's foundation and initial progress has not previously been attempted.

This is the age of reform: Next in importance to our religious and political establishments, are the foundations for public education.¹

William Hamilton, 1831

Introduction

'Bloody scenes now appear to be renewing in Paris', Bishop William Van Mildert wrote to his close friend Charles Thorp, the Archdeacon of Durham, in June 1832, '& who shall say how long it may be before we have such in London?'² This was not idle speculation. By the summer of 1832 the entire established order was under sustained literal attack. For at least the previous five years, political confusion, social unrest, ideological confrontation, and religious revolution had gripped an increasingly agitated nation. Calls for radical change had been growing louder since the end of the eighteenth century and the fulfilment of some of the reformers' key desires had been achieved by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, Catholic emancipation in 1829, and the Reform Act which had been passed just days before Van Mildert wrote to Thorp.³ These Acts were successive victories for liberal interests, radicals, Catholics, and Dissenting Protestantism. With the equilibrium of the Church-State relationship shifting, opponents of Establishment sought opportunities to push their advantage as far as possible, while Churchmen formulated various defences for what remained of

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, 53/106 (1831), p. 384.

² [DCL] VML, 253-5: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 June 1832.

³ O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 3rd edn (2 vols., London, 1966), vol. 1, pp. 7-24; B. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? England 1783 – 1846* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 379-91.

the status quo.⁴ Its many critics argued that the Church of England had become greedy and exploitative of both its wealth and its privileged position. It was not hard to find individuals to accuse the Bishop, Dean, and Chapter of Durham of being the worst examples of such abuse. Van Mildert therefore had good reason to suspect that the teetering equilibrium of British society, and with it the position of his beloved Established Church, was just one small step away from bloody violence and destruction.

Yet in an eagerness to understand Durham's foundation within this national, political, and ecclesiastical context, insufficient attention has been paid to the specifically local and academic influences that both shaped the idea of the new University and which formed the necessary conditions for its suggestion in the first place. This chapter explores all of these contexts, and places the creation of what was intended to be a truly northern university within the broadest range of influences to deepen our understanding of Durham's place in the history of higher education.

Durham and Higher Education: 1286 to 1831

Durham's own connection with higher education goes back at least to the thirteenth century. In 1286 Hugh of Darlington, Prior of Durham, made provision for some of his monks to obtain an education at Oxford University through the establishment of a house of studies. Durham monks had been studying at Oxford for some time, certainly during the 1270s, but this marked the first permanent establishment under the Priory's ownership. The Hall became a College in 1386 but

⁴ O.J. Brose, *Church and Parliament: The Reshaping of the Church of England 1828-1860* (London, 1959), p. 1; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 26; A.B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The story of a layman 1771-1855* (London, 1954), pp. 88-9.

after almost three centuries of operation it was wound-up during the Dissolution, and the buildings surrendered to the Crown in December 1539. The last Warden of the College became the Prebendary of the 1st Stall in the newly constituted Chapter of Durham Cathedral. The Chapter also received most of the estates belonging to the College and made some attempt to keep it going but this plan came to nothing and it was once again surrendered in 1544. The site of Durham College was purchased by Thomas Pope in February 1555 to house his new foundation Trinity College, while the reformed Cathedral establishment under the foundation charter granted by Henry VIII inherited a specific clause in relation to education.⁵

The second Durham college was quite different: it was a short-lived institution which had a half-existence during the Protectorate, a time when several unsuccessful schemes for new universities or colleges developed.⁶ On 30 April 1649 an Act of Parliament was passed which dissolved all the Cathedral Chapters in England. This resulted in the castle, cathedral and college buildings being forcibly vacated and falling into disrepair. In April 1650 a petition was sent from the High Sheriff of Durham to Parliament with a request to authorise their use for a 'college, school or academy'.⁷ Progress proceeded painfully slowly, and it was possible that a rival and very similar claim from York could have confused matters.⁸ Whatever the cause, it

⁵ *Forerunners of the University: An exhibition to mark the 150th Anniversary of the University of Durham* (Durham, 1982), pp. 2-5; H.E.D. Blakiston, *University of Oxford College Histories: Trinity College* (London, 1898), pp. 1-28; J. Catto, 'Durham College at Oxford, 1286-1542', in Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral*, pp. 458-67; Fowler, *Durham University*, pp. 1-13; C. Hopkins, *Trinity: 450 Years of an Oxford College Community* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 9-10; J. Ingram, *Memorials of Oxford: Volume II* (London, 1837), pp. 1-6; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 15-7.

⁶ W.H.G. Armytage, *Civic Universities: Aspects of a British Tradition* (London, 1955), pp. 108-116; G.R. Evans, *The University of Oxford: A New History* (London, 2010), pp. 231-2.

⁷ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 18.

⁸ C.G. Grant, *The British Universities* (London, 1944), pp. 34-5.

was not until May 1657 that Letters Patent were issued for the College's establishment.⁹ A large number of eminent staff were appointed though it is uncertain how many took up residence. Whether students ever entered is also unclear, though one of the appointed tutors did leave a record implying he had had students while in Durham.¹⁰ The Letters Patent did not mention degrees and a new patent was prepared in 1658 granting the College university status and degree-awarding powers. On 3 September 1658, however, Cromwell died and his son, Richard, as the new Lord Protector, received petitions from both Oxford and Cambridge against the powers proposed for the College. Richard conceded on 22 April 1659, perhaps unsurprisingly given that he was at the time Chancellor of Oxford University and MP for Cambridge University. Only a month later Richard Cromwell's protectorate formally came to an end and with it all hope of completing the foundation of the College.¹¹

The Chapter and Diocese of Durham

On the back of desires to root out corruption the journalist John Wade, a staunch Utilitarian, sold almost 50,000 copies of his *Extraordinary Black Book* in which he attempted to 'show the manifold abuses of an unjust and oppressive system'.¹² In florid terms he assailed the whole edifice of the Tory establishment, including politicians, lawyers, municipal corporations, the East India Company, and the military: in fact almost all those in authority.¹³ However, Wade reserved a special

⁹ The full text of the Letters Patent issued on 15 May 1657 may be found in: W. Hutchinson, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, Volume 1* (London, 1785), pp. 518-27.

¹⁰ C.D.R. Ranson, *Oliver Cromwell's College at Durham* (Durham, 1913), p. 6.

¹¹ Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 17-29; Fowler, *Durham University*, pp. 15-21.

¹² J. Wade, *The Extraordinary Black Book* (London, 1832), p. v.

¹³ Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 33-4; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, pp. 430-1.

vehemence for his attack on the Established Church and especially the Bishops with their 'excessive greediness of filthy lucre'. With particular vigour he condemned 'the rich diocese of Durham', where, he said, it was 'known begging subscriptions are had every year for the poor clergy and their families' highlighting not only the wealth of the Bishop but his apparent disdain for the impoverished working clergy.¹⁴ Wade was not alone in thinking the Dean and Chapter of Durham were uniquely scandalous.¹⁵ When (rather than 'if') reform came to meet them the Durham Prebends, who occupied what were commonly called the 'golden stalls', were themselves convinced that they would be the first to be assaulted.¹⁶

While many of the accusations against the Chapter were exaggerated, they were not without foundation.¹⁷ Durham was indeed the richest see in the Church of England (save perhaps for Canterbury) and pluralism and non-residence were commonplace.¹⁸ The Cathedral's enormous wealth was a by-product of the rapid industrialisation of the north-east. For while the management of agricultural land was

¹⁴ Wade, *Extraordinary Black Book*, pp. 27-8.

¹⁵ A. Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited', in Burns and Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform*, pp. 136-62, p. 150; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 39; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, pp. 524-5.

¹⁶ [DUL] TC, 2: Durell to Thorp, 20 July 1831. The phrase 'golden stall(s)' was used interchangeably to refer either to the 11th stall in particular (the richest) or all the stalls in general. This comment in *The Times* neatly summarises the use of the term: 'All the stalls at Durham may, from their value, be denominated golden; but the golden prebend *par excellence*, is the one held by Lord Barrington [the 11th].' *The Times*, 23 February 1829.

¹⁷ Bartlett and Goodhew, 'Victorian to Modern', pp. 112-3; Brose, *Church and Parliament*, p. 9; W.B. Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham, 1774-1856: The Bishop and Chapter as Patrons', *Northern History*, 26/1 (1990), pp. 103-30, pp. 103-4.

¹⁸ R. Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England: The case of the Durham Diocese in the Nineteenth Century', *Past & Present*, 191 (May 2006), pp. 165-88, pp. 168-9; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 105-8; A. Orde, 'Ecclesiastical Estate Management in County Durham During the Eighteenth Century', *Northern History*, XLV/1 (2008), pp. 159-71, p. 171; A. Orde, 'From the Restoration to the Founding of the University, 1660-1832', in Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral*, pp. 97-109, p. 106.

largely passive (but still lucrative), there was a more proactive approach to urban and industrial possessions as well as the exercise of mineral rights.¹⁹ While the Bishop and Chapter were not insensible to the situation of the poorer clergy and the need for *some* reform, they supported only limited measures and those too slowly.²⁰

As social, industrial, and religious reform continued to change the north-east, it became an increasingly radical region leaving the Chapter as an isolated pocket of conservatism.²¹ A few notorious incidents emphasised this contrast. Following the Peterloo Massacre in August 1819, for example, Henry Phillpotts (Durham Prebend, Rector of Stanhope, and later Bishop of Exeter) published a vindication of the government for supporting the local magistrates who had used cavalry to quell the demonstration. At best their actions were reckless, but in any case the military intervention led to the deaths of as many as 15 protestors. Phillpotts' stance ran counter to general public sympathies. In his infamous pamphlet, described by the historian Geoffrey Best as 'eloquent, abusive, and brilliantly partisan', Phillpotts attacked those local radicals and Whigs who sought an enquiry into what they perceived as the government's attempt to whitewash the magistrates' actions. Amongst his targets Phillpotts especially criticised the well-known MP for County

¹⁹ Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham*, p. 11; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', p. 106; Orde, 'Ecclesiastical Estate Management'; Orde, 'From the Restoration to the Founding of the University', pp. 104-6.

²⁰ G.F.A. Best, *Temporal Pillars, Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 274-6; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 38-9; Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', p. 168; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 114, 126; A. Orde, 'William Van Mildert, Charles Thorp, and the Diocese of Durham', *Northern History*, XL/1 (2003), 147-66, p. 149.

²¹ Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', p. 169; R. Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield, 1810-1926: clergymen, capitalists and colliers* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 21; Pask with Brown, 'Post-Reformation Clerical Scholarship' in Brown (ed.), *Durham Cathedral*, pp. 475-6.

Durham, John Lambton (also known as Radical Jack).²²

An even more infamous episode, that again involved Phillpotts, was the libel action brought by the Durham Chapter against John Williams, the editor of the radical newspaper *The Durham Chronicle*.²³ The case concerned Williams' editorial on the cathedral's decision not to toll a funeral bell on the occasion of Queen Caroline's death in 1821. For while George IV had wanted no public acknowledgment of his estranged wife's passing, the bells of most churches were tolled nevertheless. Williams did not spare his vitriol: the Church was 'at war with the spirit of the age', he declared, and continued that the Durham clergy, like 'beetles who crawl amidst its holes and crevices', made 'the very name of our established clergy odious till it stinks in the nostrils'.²⁴ Although Williams was eventually convicted, the trial, where he was defended by the highly influential Whig politician Henry Brougham, became of national interest and was considered a triumph for the radical cause.²⁵

Such high profile public disputes marked out the Durham Cathedral clergy as arch-conservatives and staunch supporters of the establishment. These essentially local disagreements, however, took on a national dimension when in November 1830, following the collapse of Wellington's government, Lambton's father-in-law, Earl Grey, became Prime Minister.²⁶ Grey brought Lambton, now Lord Durham, into his

²² Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 245-6; Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited', in Burns and Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform*, p. 147; Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham*, pp. 15-7; E. Pearce, *Reform! The fight for the 1832 Reform Act* (London, 2003), pp. 11-2.

²³ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 246-50; W. Fordyce, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1857), vol. 1, pp. 340-1; Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham*, pp. 18-20; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 110-1.

²⁴ *Durham Chronicle*, 18 August 1821 quoted in *Trial of John Ambrose Williams for a Libel on the Clergy contained in the Durham Chronicle of August 18, 1821*, 2nd edn (Durham, 1823), p. 27.

²⁵ *Edinburgh Review*, 37/74 (1822), p. 351; Pearce, *Reform!*, pp. 7-9.

²⁶ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, pp. 411-20.

cabinet with Brougham now as Lord Chancellor.²⁷ With radicals in the ascendency, the fears of the Durham Chapter seemed entirely legitimate.²⁸

In addition to these political disputes, the north-east was turning away from the Established Church towards Dissenting Protestantism, especially Methodism, to a greater extent than anywhere in the country outside Cornwall.²⁹ Robert Lee's judgment on this migration was that Nonconformity simply offered a more 'robust, down-to-earth embrace' than Anglicanism's 'party disagreements and internal power struggles'.³⁰ Michael Sadgrove, Dean of Durham from 2003 to 2015, likewise noted the 'rift' between the industrialised masses and the Chapter's 'history, traditions and great wealth'.³¹ The Cathedral and Diocese struggled to respond to their new industrial circumstances.³² While Van Mildert praised the building of fourteen new churches, and that eight more were under construction, this was utterly inadequate to meet the needs of the vast expansion and urbanisation of the population.³³ The result was that, by the 1850s, Methodism was spoken of as the established religion of the Durham Dale and Nonconformity dominated; the House of Lords thought the north-east was an area of 'spiritual desolation'.³⁴

To make matters even worse, the Cathedral establishment was increasingly

²⁷ Orde, 'From the Restoration to the Founding of the University', p. 107.

²⁸ Heesom, *The Founding of the University of Durham*, p. 20.

²⁹ Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 18; W.B. Maynard, 'The Ecclesiastical Administration of the Archdeaconry of Durham, 1774-1856' (Durham University PhD thesis, 1973), pp. 444, 461.

³⁰ Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 28.

³¹ M. Sadgrove, *Landscapes of Faith: The Christian Heritage of the North East* (London, 2013), p. 190.

³² Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 523-6.

³³ Maynard, 'Ecclesiastical Administration of the Archdeaconry of Durham', p. 450.

³⁴ Maynard, 'Ecclesiastical Administration of the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 448, 456; Sadgrove, *Landscapes of Faith*, p. 191.

isolated from the rest of the region's clergy.³⁵ Their social exclusivity, emphasised by the continued practice of sumptuous dinners that each Prebend was required to host during their period of so-called 'hospitality residence', was insult added to the injury of the disparity in wealth: some parochial livings in the Diocese brought in an average of only £73 compared to the Dean and Chapter's combined revenues of £28,000.³⁶ Their status was equally incomparable. Among the 13 members of the Dean and Chapter at the time of the University's foundation there were four Bishops,³⁷ one future Archbishop of Canterbury,³⁸ and two close relatives of Prime Ministers.³⁹ Posterity has recognised all but three of these Prebends with an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the Prebends were not without their supporters. One individual, derisively described by Owen Chadwick as a 'hopeful pamphleteer', argued that the Prebends were exemplary 'for learning and eloquence', were 'honourable to themselves and to the Church', and held 'soirees' that were 'so temperately enjoyed as seldom to rob the coming day of its first hour'.⁴¹ His view, however hopeful it may have been, was certainly in the minority.

³⁵ Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 24-6.

³⁶ J.T. Fowler, 'Residence Dinners in Durham', *Notes and Queries*, 10/3 (January 1905), pp. 1-2; Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham', pp. 106-7; P. Mussett, 'Hospitality Residence at Durham Cathedral', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, new series 6 (1982), pp. 67-70.

³⁷ In June 1831 Jenkinson was Bishop of St David's (1825-40), Sumner was Bishop of Chester (1828-48), Phillpotts was Bishop of Exeter (1830-69), and Gray was Bishop of Bristol (1827-34).

³⁸ Sumner (1848-62).

³⁹ Jenkinson was the cousin of Robert Banks Jenkinson (Lord Liverpool) and Wellesley was the younger brother of Arthur Wellesley (Duke of Wellington).

⁴⁰ Those without entries are Wellesley, Durell and Ogle.

⁴¹ Anon. [Luchnos], *Durham in the Year 1831* (London, 1834), pp. 9, 12, 15. Luchnos is presumably from the Greek *lúchnos*, meaning a light or lamp, which is used as a description of John the Baptist (John 5:35).

Reform and Anticlericalism

While perhaps the best-known target, attacks on Durham were but part of a broader anti-clerical sentiment. During the winter of 1830-1 there was increasing clerical unpopularity, mostly linked to demands to reduce tithes, leading to threats and physical intimidation.⁴² During 1831-2 the Bishops were under attack again, this time for their opposition to the passage of the Reform Bill. When the Bill failed in the House of Lords much of the resulting public rage was directed against the Episcopacy. This was because when the Lords had rejected the Bill in October 1831 by 199 votes to 158, there were 21 bishops in the majority (sufficient to swing the vote) with only two voting in favour of reform (the Whigs Bathurst of Norwich and Maltby of Chichester).⁴³

The outcry spilled over into violence. Three days after the vote a mob of 8,000 paraded through Carlisle and burnt an effigy of the bishop at the market cross;⁴⁴ an effigy of Van Mildert was burnt at the Castle gates and he feared that 'it was intended and still is to watch an opportunity of doing me personal violence';⁴⁵ the Archbishop of Canterbury was jeered at and chased from the streets;⁴⁶ and in October the Bishop's Palace at Bristol was razed to the ground alongside prisons and 45 houses during terrible riots.⁴⁷

⁴² P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 11.

⁴³ A. Briggs, *Age of Improvement 1783-1867*, 2nd edn (Harlow, 2000), p. 218; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, pp. 421-2; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 145.

⁴⁴ Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 27.

⁴⁵ [DUL] TC, 61: Van Mildert to Thorp, 2 November 1831.

⁴⁶ Briggs, *Age of Improvement*, p. 219; Pearce, *Reform!*, p. 203; R. Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act: Preaching against Reform, 1831-32', *Journal of British Studies*, 53/02 (April 2014), pp. 378-99, p. 389.

⁴⁷ Briggs, *Age of Improvement*, p. 219; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, p. 421; Pearce, *Reform!*, pp. 204-6.

Amidst this rebellion and convulsion, the Reform Act was eventually passed, though only after Earl Grey resigned as Prime Minister and forced William IV to consent to appointing new Lords should that become necessary in order to secure a majority for the Act's safe passage. The tactic worked. When the Lords passed the third reading of the Bill in June 1832 there were only 22 dissentient votes including not a single Bishop.⁴⁸

For many conservative Anglicans there was a millennial feel in the air during the early 1830s.⁴⁹ This sense of urgency – of *panic* – can be seen clearly in the correspondence flying between members of the Chapter in the summer of 1831 and the apparent haste in which the University was established.⁵⁰ It is in this national context, at a decisive moment in the history of both Church and State, during the volcanic heat of the reform debate (in which the young William Gladstone perceived 'an element of the Anti-Christ'), that the idea of founding the University came forward.⁵¹

These calls for church reform led inevitably to political interventions. Earl Grey established the first commission of enquiry into church revenues in 1832, to discover what needed reform.⁵² In 1833, before they had reported, however, the Church Temporalities (Ireland) Bill was introduced to Parliament. This Bill proposed a radical reorganisation of the Established Church in Ireland leaving the funds thus

⁴⁸ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, pp. 421-2; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 147.

⁴⁹ Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 35-6; Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', pp. 379-80, 384-5, 396.

⁵⁰ It was less than a year between the Chapter resolving to establish the University (28 September 1831) and Royal assent being given to the Durham University Act (4 July 1832).

⁵¹ Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', pp. 378-9.

⁵² Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 293; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 40-1.

released to the discretion of Parliament through a new body to be called the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.⁵³ It was an abomination to Van Mildert, and he was far from the only churchman shocked by the extensive changes it proposed.⁵⁴ Though the Bill which gained Royal assent was stripped of its most objectionable aspects, it still suppressed ten bishoprics.⁵⁵

When Robert Peel returned as Prime Minister at the end of 1834, after William IV dismissed the Whig Ministry under Lord Melbourne, conservative Anglicans felt relief.⁵⁶ But reform was not off the agenda, it was simply in more friendly hands. Thus, in January 1835, following discussions with Archbishop Howley and Charles Blomfield, Bishop of London, Peel established the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Their purpose included the investigation of ways in which to use church revenues more productively.⁵⁷ But Peel's ministry did not last and in April 1834 the Commission passed into the hands of a Whig ministry.⁵⁸ Once again, the conservative clergy feared a forced reorganisation by radicals.

Criticism of Higher Education in England

The Church was not the only object of the reformers' zeal. Demand for liberalisation of the English universities started in the eighteenth century and produced what William Whyte has accurately labelled 'a welter of books, articles, and

⁵³ Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 54-60; Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', pp. 382-3; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 183-7.

⁵⁴ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 293.

⁵⁵ Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, p. 60.

⁵⁶ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 295.

⁵⁷ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 296-8; Brose, *Church and Parliament*, pp. 120-35; Burns, 'English "Church Reform" Revisited', in Burns and Innes (eds.), *Age of Reform*, p. 148; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 101-6.

⁵⁸ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, pp. 299-300.

pamphlets' advocating reform.⁵⁹ The focus of concern in the early nineteenth century was that the two English universities had become the preserve of a narrow social and religious elite, where outmoded subjects were taught by over-worked tutors in the absence of a meaningful professoriate. In support of this argument the wealth and waste of the English system was sometimes contrasted with the relative poverty and efficiency of the universities in Scotland.⁶⁰ With only a few brief exceptions, including the short-lived secessionist universities at Northampton⁶¹ and Stamford,⁶² England had only ever sustained two universities which concentrated academic energies. Scotland in contrast possessed five.⁶³ The student population in Scotland had grown throughout the eighteenth century, and embraced a broad social base, while the number of students at the two English universities had declined.⁶⁴ In Scotland the universities enjoyed what Robert Anderson termed 'a golden age of intellectual progress' which followed the legislative union with England in 1707. The Scottish

⁵⁹ A.J. Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: The Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), p. 2; B. Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780 – 1870* (London, 1974), pp. 84-7; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 4; D.A. Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 148-9.

⁶⁰ Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 17.

⁶¹ 1260-5 – Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 36-8, D. Walmsley, *An Ever-Rolling Stream: The Ongoing Story of the Development of Higher Education in Northampton and Northamptonshire* (London, 1989), pp. 1-5.

⁶² 1333-5 – Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 43-5; M. Smith, *Stamford Myths & Legends* (Stamford, 1998), pp. 15-28.

⁶³ St Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Marischal College and King's College at Aberdeen, which merged in 1860 following the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858. Two other institutions might also be included. The University of Dumfries opened and closed in 1831. From 1828 to 1877 Anderson's Institution in Glasgow was known as Anderson's University. Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, Ireland had one university (Dublin, with Trinity as its single college), and the Belfast Academical Institution had been founded in 1810 following the government rejection of a proposed Ulster University. Though St David's College had opened in 1827, there was as yet no university in Wales.

⁶⁴ R. Anderson, *Universities and Elites in Britain since 1800* (London, 1992), pp. 17-25; Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, pp. 134-5.

universities not only retained their professional links but also developed and enhanced learning in these fields, especially in relation to medicine.⁶⁵ In England professional education had moved out of the universities to the Inns of Court or the teaching hospitals.⁶⁶

Edward Gibbon offered a prime example of the type of criticism which came to dominate.⁶⁷ Gibbon entered Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1752 as a gentleman commoner but upon his conversion to Roman Catholicism the following year was moved by his family to Lausanne where he studied for five years. In his memoirs, first published in 1796, he celebrated his migration which meant he had avoided spending his formative years 'steeped in port and prejudice among the monks of Oxford'. The 14 months Gibbon did spend at Magdalen College he declared to be 'the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life'. The cause of this stupor he put down inter alia to an inefficient tutorial system and the absence of an active professoriate.⁶⁸ Although some modern historians have looked more favourably on pre-reform Oxford and Cambridge, following Gibbon it became a common view that, devoid of practical relevance or academic rigour, an English higher education for most students was more about applying a veneer of classical respectability than about a lively academic

⁶⁵ R.D. Anderson, *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 34-6; N.T. Phillipson, 'Culture and Society in the 18th Century Province: The Case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment', in L. Stone (ed.), *The University in Society* (2 vols., London, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 407-48; W. Rudy, *The Universities of Europe 1100-1914* (London, 1984), pp. 86-8; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 34.

⁶⁶ R.D. Anderson, *British Universities Past and Present* (London, 2006), pp. 7-8, T.N. Bonner, *Becoming a Physician: Medical Education in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, 1750-1945* (London, 1995), pp. 48-52.

⁶⁷ Rudy, *Universities of Europe*, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁸ E. Gibbon, *The autobiography and correspondence of Edward Gibbon, the historian* (London, 1869; original edn 1796), pp. 24, 27, 49.

challenge.⁶⁹

The scorn of the critics, however, would sometimes run beyond the available facts. The *Edinburgh Review*, a Whig journal, carried a series of articles between 1808 and 1810 which were highly critical of the universities yet, as it would later emerge, were not entirely factual.⁷⁰ Edward Copleston, the High Church intellectual and Provost of Oriel, took up the defence of Oxford in his *Three Replies to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review*, published between 1810 and 1811.⁷¹ While Copleston supported the introduction of new examination statutes, developed the tutorial system at Oriel helping to make it one of the most successful Oxford colleges, and advocated the teaching of social and natural sciences too, he still argued that philosophy, mathematics, and divinity should form the only basis for a degree.⁷²

In 1809, Richard Edgeworth, an Anglo-Irish educational writer and engineer, published his *Essays on Professional Education*, in which he argued for the benefits of a broader university curriculum. This greater diversity, he contested, would be more suited to the practical and contemporary needs of different professions: 'ancient establishments have ... continued stationary' he declared, with the result that 'many studies and many dogmas, which have long since been exploded, continue nevertheless to make a customary part of university education'.⁷³ The poet laureate

⁶⁹ Anderson, *British Universities*, pp. 20-2; G. Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford* (New Haven, 1996), pp. ix-x; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 85-6; P. Slee, 'The Oxford Idea of a Liberal Education 1800-1860: The Invention of Tradition and the Manufacture of Practice', *History of Universities*, VII (1988), pp. 61-87, pp. 63-4.

⁷⁰ A. Briggs, 'Oxford and its Critics, 1800-1835', in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 6: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1*, pp. 134-45, pp. 134-5; Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 16-8; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 87-90.

⁷¹ Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 17; W.R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London, 1965), pp. 16-20.

⁷² W.J. Copleston, *Memoir of Edward Copleston* (London, 1851), pp. 36-40.

⁷³ R.L. Edgeworth, *Essays on Professional Education* (London, 1809), p. 26.

Robert Southey praised Edgeworth for combating 'the excessive abuse of classical learning in England'.⁷⁴

In his book *Phantasm of a University* published in 1814, Charles Kelsall argued that 'the prime defect' in the universities was that 'little attention' was 'paid to the natural drift of the student's genius'.⁷⁵ He therefore promoted the idea that universities should adapt their curriculum 'whereby the student's career in the science or art for which he shows genius or inclination is best facilitated'. Those subjects most lacking from the university curriculum, he argued, included agriculture and political economy.⁷⁶

Not only did their critics argue that the curriculum was limited and the standards low but the expense of studying at the ancient universities was prohibitive too. Only the rich could afford to attend an English university, unless by good fortune they secured a scholarship, or attended in the menial roles given to 'sizar' students in Cambridge or 'servitor' students at Oxford.⁷⁷ Thomas Campbell, the initial mover in the foundation of London University, argued that even a father with an income of £1,000 a year (a wealthy man) could 'hardly send one son to an English University' and that to 'send three sons, would cost him at the least 750l'.⁷⁸ Calculating accurate

⁷⁴ *Edinburgh Review*, 15/29 (1809), pp. 41-7.

⁷⁵ C. Kelsall, *Phantasm of a University with Prolegomena* (London, 1814), p. 13. Kelsall's eccentric book is given over in large part to a bewildering travel story of a group of young men educated according to his plan as well as to numerous intricate drawings of his ideal university buildings. The review published in the *Augustan Review* provides an apposite summary: 'This work is not deficient in good sense; but its utility is chiefly confined to the first forty pages.' *Augustan Review*, 1/5 (1815), p. 467. William Whyte offers a more positive review. Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 1-7.

⁷⁶ Kelsall, *Phantasm of a University*, pp. 14, 118.

⁷⁷ Midgley, *Eighteenth-Century Oxford*, pp. 6-11; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 415-6; D.A. Winstanley, *Unreformed Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 201-3.

⁷⁸ *The Times*, 9 February 1825.

expenses was difficult in part because students were liable to pay a complex range of fees at both the older universities and the new institutions: tuition fees, caution money, admission charges, servant's fees, and professor's fees were all potential charges. However, what Rothblatt called the 'soaring social expenses of a university education' could be even more considerable. Wine parties, breakfasts, gambling and sports, outdoor pursuits, expensive clothes, all supported by debt, were a significant problem at the ancient English universities.⁷⁹ John Collis, the Headmaster of Bromsgrove School, claimed that his total expenditure as a student at Oxford in the 1830s was a staggering £725 2s 7d – by comparison the annual salary a clerk or coachman might expect was only £26.⁸⁰ As shocking as this figure was he described this as 'a low sum for Oxford. I should say the usual cost of a degree is 800l. at least; to very many it is as much as 1,000l.'⁸¹ Such figures were astounding, a considerable way beyond the reach of all but the richest few.

Collegiate living was considered by many to be the cause of much of this expense. James Yates, a Unitarian minister from Liverpool, who had studied at both Glasgow and Edinburgh universities, advocated domestic living to curb collegiate excesses.⁸² Universities should be in large towns, he advocated, where students may 'either board and lodge with a professor for £500 a year or with a poor widow for

⁷⁹ Midgley, *Eighteenth-Century Oxford*, pp. 3-6; S. Rothblatt, *The Modern University and Its Discontents: The Fate of Newman's Legacies in Britain and America* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 142-3; S. Rothblatt, 'The Student Sub-culture and the Examination System in Early 19th Century Oxbridge', in Stone (ed.), *The University in Society*, vol. 1, pp. 247-303, pp. 247-80.

⁸⁰ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 63.

⁸¹ *Copy of all Evidence taken by the Durham University Commissioners under the Durham University Act, 1861* (London, 1863), q. 609, p. 30. [The statement is an extract from evidence given to the Oxford University Commission.]

⁸² N.R. Tempest, 'An Early Scheme for an Undenominational University', *The Universities Review*, 32/2 (1960), pp. 45-9.

£50'.⁸³ The poet Thomas Campbell also argued for 'the cheapness of domestic residence, and all the moral influence that results from home' when he first publically advocated a London University.⁸⁴ Campbell and Yates were supporting the tradition of residence practised in Scotland and in Europe. Their arguments were nevertheless dismissed by Copleston who countered that 'from the necessary absence of a young man throughout the day among a crowd of fellow students, in the midst of a large city, the control of domestic authority must needs be weakened in all cases, if not altogether evaded by any one who may be so inclined'.⁸⁵

In June 1831 William Hamilton also wrote of abuses at the English universities in the *Edinburgh Review*.⁸⁶ Like Gibbon before him, Hamilton argued that there had been a deterioration of standards at both universities and blamed this on the colleges and their 'flagrant usurpation' of the original rights of their central universities.⁸⁷ This decline was manifested in educational inefficiency, poor scholarship, the abandonment of vitally important subjects, anachronistic curricula, and unjustified religious exclusiveness. Hamilton's contribution reinvigorated the criticisms of the universities that had been prevalent earlier in the century but he did so amidst the heightened political and social tensions of 1831. Although, like others before him, aspects of his critique were exaggerated, the substance of his criticisms were now widely accepted.⁸⁸

⁸³ J. Yates, *Thoughts on the Advancement of Academical Education in England*, 2nd edn (London, 1827), p. 175.

⁸⁴ *The Times*, 9 February 1825.

⁸⁵ *Quarterly Review*, 32 (1825), p. 270.

⁸⁶ Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 20-1; Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 19-22; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 93-4.

⁸⁷ *Edinburgh Review*, 53/106 (1831), p. 386.

⁸⁸ Briggs, 'Oxford and its Critics', pp. 141-5; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 91-2.

St Bees and St David's Colleges

A pressing need for well-trained clergy had become critical towards the end of the eighteenth century, especially in those regions furthest from the pleasure, comforts and influence of the ancient universities and London where graduates tended to cluster.⁸⁹ Yet even in the diocese of Canterbury 25% of clergy in the final quarter of the eighteenth century came from so-called 'plebeian' backgrounds.⁹⁰ To help cater to this need for clergy the Bishop of Chester, George Henry Law, founded a college at St Bees in Cumbria in 1816. St David's College was established at Lampeter by the Diocesan Bishop, Thomas Burgess, and it opened in 1827.

The college at St Bees, unlike the college at Lampeter, was founded exclusively to train clergy. Financed by the local Lowther family, the Earls of Lonsdale, the ruined chancel of the monastic church was restored to house the College, and land donated for a vicarage. This would be a pioneering institution: the first Anglican College for the training of Clergy outside the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The first Principal of the College, William Ainger, was appointed in October 1816 and by 1817 the repair work was completed and the College was ready to admit students.⁹¹

St David's College had strong connections with County Durham. Thomas Burgess was presented by Bishop Barrington to a prebendal stall in Durham and then,

⁸⁹ N. Yates, 'An Opportunity Missed? The Provision of Education and Training for a Non-Graduate Clergy: Comparative Case Studies of the Diocese of St David's and Sodor and Man in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in T. Clemens and W. Janse (eds.), *The pastor bonus: papers read at the British-Dutch colloquium at Utrecht, 18-21 September 2002* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 319-29; D. Dowland, *Nineteenth-Century Anglican Theological Training* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 1-8; T. Park, *St Bees College* (St Bees, 2008), pp. 1-17.

⁹⁰ J. Gregory, 'Standards for Admission to the Ministry of the Church of England in the Eighteenth Century', in Clemens and Janse (eds.), *The pastor bonus*, pp. 283-95, p. 288.

⁹¹ Park, *St Bees*, pp. 22-6, 37.

in 1795, the parish of Winston near Barnard Castle.⁹² When he was made Bishop of St David's in 1803 Burgess was permitted to keep his stall in Durham, due to the poor income attached to his new bishopric, and so was required to spend part of each year in Durham.⁹³ Burgess first raised the idea of founding a college in his new diocese to provide an economical training for the priesthood as early as his inaugural Charge of 1804, though the College did not open for another 23 years.⁹⁴ Difficulties in raising the necessary funds accounted in large part for the long gestation. The foundation stone for the building was eventually laid in 1822, with the college accepting its first students on St David's Day in 1827. Burgess, however, had already been translated to Salisbury in the spring of 1825 (giving up his Durham prebend at the same time).⁹⁵ Burgess was succeeded by John Banks Jenkinson who maintained the northern connection as he was simultaneously Dean of Durham from June 1827.

These two new institutions were successfully established, but several others were discussed and never realised. The Archbishop of York, Edward Harcourt, had, for example, contemplated the establishment of some form of college for the preparation of ordinands during the 1820s, emulating his counterparts at Chester and St David's. Writing in 1826 James Yates made reference to the Established Church opening colleges to train clergy in areas too remote from Oxford or Cambridge. In his list Yates included St Bees, St David's, and 'a third institution of a similar kind' which he noted was 'said to be projected at York'.⁹⁶ Although he had not established a

⁹² D.T.W. Price, *Bishop Burgess and Lampeter College* (Cardiff, 1987), p. 21.

⁹³ Price, *Bishop Burgess*, p. 27.

⁹⁴ F. Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 112.

⁹⁵ D.T.W. Price, *A History of Saint David's University College Lampeter, Volume One: to 1898* (Cardiff, 1977), pp. 3, 25-7.

⁹⁶ Yates, *Academical Education*, p. 52.

college, Harcourt had introduced new regulations for the training of Literates (non-graduates who passed a Diocesan bishop's examination for ordination) in his Diocese under 'tutors for orders'. Slinn recorded at least one mistaken reference to 'the Archbishop of York's Theological Institution' as early as 1821.⁹⁷ The scale of work of one of the approved tutors even gave rise to a reference to 'the Clerical Institution at Wilsden': it was clearly an active cleric that could be mistaken for an institution.⁹⁸

London University and King's College

Although in part established to address perceived deficiencies in the ancient English universities, St Bees and St David's did not depart very far from what had gone before. A more significant and radically different new institution, and the one which sent shock-waves throughout all branches of the English establishment, was London University.⁹⁹ William Whyte is right to describe it as 'the beginning of a new chapter in the history of British universities'.¹⁰⁰

The first formal move in the foundation occurred when the poet and journalist Thomas Campbell, a graduate of Glasgow University, addressed an open letter to Brougham in *The Times* on 9 February 1825. Campbell had been formulating his plan for a university in London since a visit in 1820 to the recently founded University of Bonn. He had discussed his plans with intimate literary friends ever since. There is

⁹⁷ S. Slinn, 'Archbishop Harcourt's Recruitment of Literate Clergymen. Part 1: Non-graduate Clergy in the Diocese of York, 1800-1849', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 80 (2008), pp. 167-187, p. 186.

⁹⁸ S. Slinn, 'Archbishop Harcourt's Recruitment of Literate Clergymen. Part 2: Clerical Seminaries for Literates in the Diocese of York, 1800-1849', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 81 (2009), pp. 279-309, p. 296.

⁹⁹ W.H.G. Armytage, *Four Hundred Years of English Education*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1970), p. 103; Rothblatt, *Modern University*, pp. 20-1; M. Vaughn and M.S. Archer, *Social Conflict and Educational Change in England and France 1798-1848* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 53; Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁰⁰ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 36.

some reason to believe he was spurred to move from discussion to action by the arrival of Francis Gilmer in 1824, who visited Britain to recruit staff for the University of Virginia. For the new institution in the metropolis Campbell looked to the examples of institutions in Scotland and Germany, with their professorial teaching and professional connections.¹⁰¹ Though the prime mover in the project was Campbell, it was Brougham who did much of the organizing (at the expense of a deteriorating relationship with Campbell) and it was Brougham who secured the co-operation of Dissenters who were considering setting up a university of their own.¹⁰²

London University was to open up higher education to those excluded from the ancient universities, to teach the subjects they neglected, and to offer a higher education at a much lower cost. It was to be non-residential, in part to help avoid the question of religious tests and affiliation. Whether or not the founders intended to offer degrees is a point of some debate.¹⁰³ Brougham declared to the House of Commons that there was no intention to offer degrees: 'gross misapprehensions had gone forth' he noted as he offered reassurance that 'it was not intended that degrees should be given, fellowships or scholarships conferred; or, in short, any of those exclusive privileges be required, of which the two universities were at present in possession'.¹⁰⁴ As it transpired the first entrants in October 1828 did not even progress to take the certificates which were on offer, as for the most part they elected to take

¹⁰¹ H.H. Bellot, *University College, London 1826-1926* (London, 1929), pp. 14-6; N. Harte and J. North, *The World of UCL 1828-2004* (London, 2004), p. 28.

¹⁰² Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 20-4, 30-2; J. Bennett, *The History of Dissenters During the Last Thirty Years (from 1808 to 1838)* (London, 1839), pp. 84-5; M. Lobban, 'Brougham, Henry Peter (1778-1868)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2008).

¹⁰³ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 47-9, 55-9.

¹⁰⁴ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 3 June 1825, vol. 13, c. 1033.

classes but not submit to examinations.¹⁰⁵ This may be connected to the youth of many of the first students of the general class: at least thirty of the first three hundred were under 15 and two were only 11.¹⁰⁶

London University, however, was heavily attacked by the Tory press.¹⁰⁷ Grounds for objection included the threat to vested interests, especially from the two ancient universities and the London medical schools, the misappropriation of the title of a university, and the lack of religious affiliation. Edward Copleston writing in the *Quarterly Review* in December 1825, noted that it was difficult 'to discuss any measure, that is likely to have a wide influence upon society, with feelings altogether unbiased, or with a tone perfectly sedate and impartial'.¹⁰⁸ Much of the hyperbolic attack on London University certainly helped prove his point.

Some of its more vitriolic opponents gave London University the nickname *Stinkomalee* due to the college erecting its new building, designed by William Wilkins, where once there had been a rubbish tip.¹⁰⁹

Then hasten, ye drapers, and tailors, and clerks,
Ye barbers and sweepers, and gay 'prentice sparks,
Think what honours await in a first class degree,
From Reason's bright temple, in Stinkamolee!¹¹⁰

For the controversial preacher Edward Irving, the new University was 'the Synagogue of Satan'.¹¹¹ Writing in the *Edinburgh Review*, the essayist Thomas Macaulay accurately lamented that 'in most of those publications which are distinguished by zeal for the

¹⁰⁵ Harte and North, *UCL*, pp. 66-7.

¹⁰⁶ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 180; Bender, *The University and the City*, pp. 125-6.

¹⁰⁷ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 71; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁸ *Quarterly Review*, 32 (1825), p. 257.

¹⁰⁹ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 35.

¹¹⁰ Verse from *Stinkomalee* first published in *John Bull*, 25 December 1825, cf Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 68.

¹¹¹ N. Harte, *The University of London 1836-1986* (London, 1986), p. 64.

Church and the Government, the scheme is never mentioned but with affected contempt, or unaffected fury'.¹¹²

Even before London University opened to students in 1828 a counter-movement from within the Established Church was underway.¹¹³ On 26 December 1827, *The Standard* recorded that 'a rumour is very prevalent among the clergy, that it is intended to make application to the legislature for the endowment of a college in the metropolis, which, like the other great universities, shall be under the control, and dedicated to the purposes of, the Established Church'. 'This establishment', it was clarified, was 'thought necessary in consequence of the determination of the planners and promoters of the Dissenters' University'.¹¹⁴ Or as it was put in the words of one satirical publication's more sardonic poetry:

But, above all, O, bless this Royal College!
Make it a hot-bed of such heavenly knowledge,
As will suffice to guard the Church from evil,
And frustrate Brougham, Bentham, and THE DEVIL!¹¹⁵

The institution that was to become King's College grew swiftly from rumour to reality. On 21 June 1828 the Duke of Wellington chaired the inaugural meeting to set about the college's foundation, ably supported and encouraged by no fewer than three archbishops and seven bishops.¹¹⁶ Van Mildert personally supported the new College with a donation of £500, and later commended the institution to Thorp as offering some hints for what might be done in Durham.¹¹⁷

¹¹² *Edinburgh Review*, 43/86 (1826), p. 315.

¹¹³ R. Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (London, 2012), pp. 86-7.

¹¹⁴ *The Standard*, 26 November 1827.

¹¹⁵ *Second Book: Lectures and Examinations for King's College Students, with Inaugural Address of the Duke of Wellington* (London, 1828), p. 8.

¹¹⁶ Webster, *Joshua Watson*, pp. 44-6.

¹¹⁷ [DUL] TC, 68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 December 1831; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 150.

From the start King's College was to be unlike the ancient universities in three important respects. First, it was established to offer practical instruction in the sciences as well as the arts and various branches of literature. The students were expected to take the certificates they obtained at the College and move forward into commercial or professional life (or on to either of the English universities to obtain their degrees). Second, no religious tests were to be imposed on students. Third, the college from the start had no intention of conferring degrees, which almost certainly facilitated the swift sealing of its charter on 14 August 1829.¹¹⁸ Although these three aspects of the proposed College marked it out as something entirely distinct from Oxford and Cambridge, like these two institutions it too would offer an Anglican education.

Greenhow's Proposal for an Academical Institution in Newcastle

The establishment of London University sparked imitators as well as critics: from Bath to Liverpool local advocates put forward plans for their own university colleges.¹¹⁹ One such scheme came from John Marshall, a Yorkshire flax spinner and Benthamite, who had been one of the founders of London University.¹²⁰ In 1826 Marshall argued that the benefits of an institution such as London University may apply equally to 'our large towns' and Leeds, 'which for its population, its intelligence, its public spirit, and its wealth, may justly be considered the capital of the North-eastern part of England', he felt, 'ought to take the lead in the introduction of every useful institution'.¹²¹ However, Leeds was not the only city developing ideas for the

¹¹⁸ F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London 1828-1928* (London, 1929), pp. 41-69.

¹¹⁹ Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 170-1.

¹²⁰ A.N. Shimmin, *The University of Leeds – The First Half Century* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 3.

¹²¹ *Leeds Mercury*, 21 January 1826.

establishment of a university or college.

On 5 April 1831, Thomas Greenhow, a prominent local surgeon who had trained at Edinburgh, delivered a lecture to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In his presentation he lamented that 'in no country in Europe are the means of obtaining a liberal and systematic course of academic instruction so sparingly supplied to youth as in England'. Oxford and Cambridge were 'purely *aristocratic* institutions' whose religious tests, expense, and general dissipation effectively barred from entry a great number of potential students. Greenhow conceded that London University was 'in active and useful operation' but it was also distant, expensive and, in any case, London was 'the last place where a prudent father would be induced to entrust a youth from 16 to 18 or 19' he warned. The Scottish universities benefited from being nearer and cheaper but were not national universities and so were not generally attended by English students except as schools of medicine: they best served as models for new foundations in England. Given that 'the increasing wealth, population, and intelligence of the country' would demand greater access to higher learning, and that none of the existing institutions (even London University) would be able to satisfy that demand, the only expedient remaining 'to supply this lamentable deficiency', argued Greenhow, was 'to establish for ourselves a College or University in every way fitted for our purpose'.¹²² Greenhow's ideas were popular, a second paper was demanded and read to the Society on 7 June, and both the first and second papers were printed and widely

¹²² T.M. Greenhow, *The Expediency of Establishing in Newcastle an Academical Institution of the Nature of a College or University for the Promotion of Literature and Science* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1831), pp. 4-7.

circulated locally.

Conclusion

Reform of the ancient universities had been promoted actively since 1800, and by the 1820s there were movements towards the establishment of new and reformed institutions of higher learning. It was this movement which created London University and King's College, London, and which inspired similar propositions in Leeds, Newcastle, and elsewhere. In some respects, given the quickly multiplying range of academic schemes that spanned the length of the country, Durham was therefore as likely to bring forward a proposal for a new university as Newcastle; or, indeed, York, Bath, or Liverpool. Few of these schemes moved beyond the dreams contained in their promoters' pamphlets, however. In the local context of the north-east it was Durham, and not neighbouring Newcastle, which had both historical connections to higher education and sufficient ease of access to the adequate funds that could support the foundation of a university. But these ingredients had been present in Durham for centuries: it was the national context of reform and fear for the Church's future ability to control its own affairs that made the crucial difference, and completed the accumulation of circumstances that made the foundation viable.

Chapter 2 – Founders and Foundation

Should it seem too ambitious we can soar lower, but I believe a boldish flight to be the safest & better.¹

Charles Thorp, August 1831

Introduction

In 1831 there was no convenient manual that explained how to found a university. While there was abundant creativity concerning new forms of higher education, there was confusion about how any of the ideas could be realised. Launching the Ark, to use Varley's memorable phrase for the establishment of Durham University as a place 'to preserve the true vision of a University as a place of godly learning', would therefore require confident steering through uncharted seas.² Although circumstances were propitious, indeed Durham in 1831 was a unique nexus of current events and historical antecedents, the University would not have happened without founders to realise the opportunity before them and then to undertake careful nurturing of the infant institution. Above all others, there are two individuals who stand out as responsible for the University's foundation: the Bishop of Durham, William Van Mildert, and the Archdeacon of Durham, Charles Thorp.

Charles Thorp

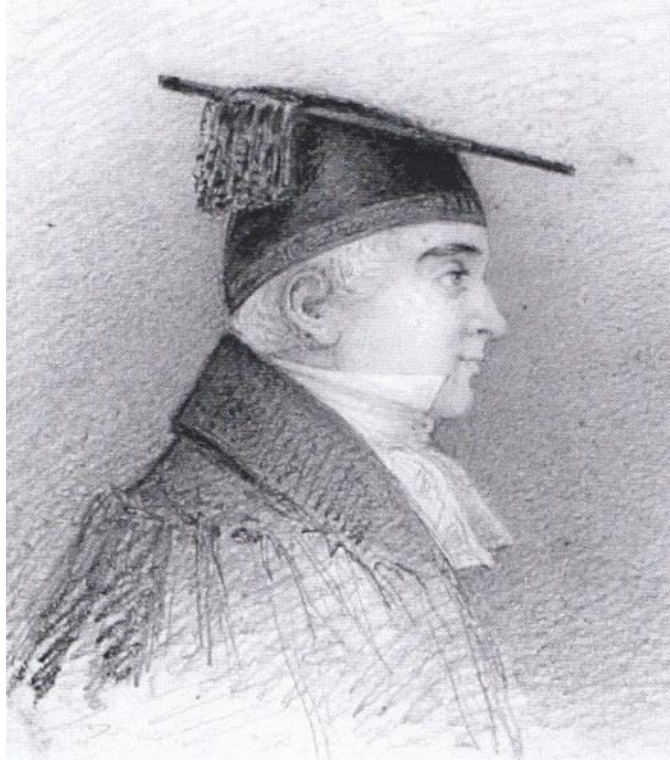
Born at Gateshead in County Durham, where his father was Rector, Thorp was educated at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle and then at the Cathedral's Grammar School in Durham. In December 1799 he matriculated at University College, Oxford, and graduated BA in 1803. That same year he was elected a Fellow and Tutor,

¹ [DUL] TC, 17: Thorp to Gaisford, 11 August 1831.

² Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 153.

a period at University College which Darwall-Smith described as ‘amiable and drowsy mediocrity’.³ Thorp was ordained deacon in Oxford three years later and he proceeded MA in 1806, BD in 1822, and DD in 1835.

Illustration 1: Charles Thorp, by Joseph Bouet⁴



Thorp was a clergyman of the old High Church tradition and succeeded his father to the living of Ryton in 1807. He lived there to the end of his life despite gaining numerous other positions and being offered more valuable preferments, including the famously wealthy livings of Stanhope and Easington. He founded a Sunday School at Ryton and created additional chapels for his large parish.⁵ Thorp was also an active Archdeacon of Durham, deputising for his predecessor, Richard Prosser, long before gaining the role officially. He held the 2nd stall in the Cathedral from 1829 to 1831,

³ R. Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College, Oxford* (Oxford, 2008), p. 301.

⁴ D. Cross, *Joseph Bouet's Durham: drawings from the age of reform* (Durham, 2005), pp. 26-7.

⁵ *A Short Sketch of the Life of the Venerable Charles Thorp, Archdeacon of Durham, Printed at the Daily Journal Office (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1862)*, pp. 7-8.

when he was presented to the richer 4th stall. Amongst the founders of the University Thorp stands out as he came from the north. He almost certainly understood the region better than any other member of the Chapter. In 1835, for example, he foresaw correctly that County Durham would 'take a new character, and increase in numbers and wealth' due to the 'the discovery of the richest veins of coal'.⁶

Thorp quickly developed a close bond with Van Mildert when he was translated to Durham in 1826, a friendship that proved crucial in the University's first years and was sustained until the Prelate's death.⁷ When, for example, in March 1832 *The Times* marked Thorp out as the biggest pluralist of all the Durham Chapter, Van Mildert helped to restore his reputation during a debate in the Lords: the 'enemy's attempt has recoiled upon himself, & has added a feather to your reputation' Van Mildert assured the Archdeacon.⁸ Yet Thorp also made powerful enemies, including the Commissioners by whom he was condemned in the early 1860s. Joseph Fowler, author of the University's first history, who was a student at Durham towards the end of Thorp's time as Warden, presented a warmer picture. Thorp was, he recalled, 'a bright, cheery, kindly, and dignified old gentleman, with more than a touch of the Northumbrian burr in his utterance'.⁹

Thorp was made the first Warden of the University – a title for Durham's senior officer appropriated from Durham Hall, Oxford – temporarily in 1831 but

⁶ [DUL] TC, 653: Church Commission: Minutes of Evidence, 10 April 1835, q. 326.

⁷ Orde, 'William Van Mildert, Charles Thorp, and the Diocese of Durham', p. 149.

⁸ [DCL] VML, 236-7: Van Mildert to Thorp, 3 April 1832; *The Times*, 30 March 1832.

⁹ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 112.

permanently in July 1833.¹⁰ He was not, however, the only man considered.¹¹ In December 1831, for example, Thomas Gaisford, former Prebend, Dean of Christ Church and close friend of the Bishop, encouraged Van Mildert to think of giving the role to Charles Webb Le Bas, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the East India College (a training school for the East India Company).¹² Nevertheless, from its first creation to his death in 1862, Durham was Thorp's University.

William Van Mildert

Thorp could not establish an institution on his own: he needed powerful support. Fortunately, few patrons were more influential than William Van Mildert, Durham's Prince Bishop. His father, however, had been an unsuccessful gin distiller in Southwark.¹³ Born on 6 November 1765, and educated at Merchant Taylors School, he failed to obtain one of the school's fellowships to St John's College, Oxford, and proceeded instead to Queen's College, Oxford, where he graduated BA in 1787, MA in 1790, and BD and DD in 1813. He was ordained on 18 May 1788, achieving a vocation he first expressed at the age of 13.¹⁴

¹⁰ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1835.

¹¹ [DUL] TC, 45: List of staff, September 1831. In this document, a suggested list of staff is given and the surnames Keble, Shepherd and Ogilvie are listed as options for the Principal. These are presumably John Keble (though could have been Thomas Keble, his brother) and Charles Atmore Ogilvie, Fellow of Balliol College, but the Shepherd referred to is unknown.

¹² [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 26 December 1831.

¹³ G.F.A. Best, 'The Mind and Times of William Van Mildert', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 14/2 (1963), pp. 355-370, p. 358; C. Ives, *Sermons on several occasions, and charges by William Van Mildert To which is prefixed a Memoir of the Author* (London, 1868), p. 3.

¹⁴ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 12-4.

Illustration 2: William Van Mildert, by Joseph Bouet¹⁵



G.F.A. Best concluded Van Mildert was far too dry, intellectual, and stubborn but still described him as being recognised as ‘in some sense, “the best of the bishops”’ during the 1820s. His rise to prominence ‘was a success story of the most respectable kind’ which had been sealed when he became Regius Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1813, a position he continued to hold briefly when elevated to the See of Llandaff in 1819. He was translated to Durham in 1826: a large step up the episcopal ladder that reflected the standing he had obtained.¹⁶

Van Mildert was a leading member of the Hackney Phalanx.¹⁷ This group of

¹⁵ Cross, *Bouet's Durham*, pp. 26-7.

¹⁶ Best, ‘Van Mildert’, pp. 356-60.

¹⁷ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 14-22, 245; Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, pp. 22-3; Webster, *Joshua Watson*, pp. 26, 29; J. Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829-1860* (Oxford, 1991), p. 24.

friends contained a number of prominent High Churchmen centred around Joshua Watson (who had shared a house with Van Mildert and was a close life-long friend) and the cleric Henry Handley Norris.¹⁸ Tory in political outlook, members of the group were staunch defenders of the Established Church-State relationship, which they considered to be a single entity of Church and State under the King, 'an organic union of two interrelated divinely-ordained powers', and so they opposed any measures which they perceived would undermine the purity of this arrangement.¹⁹

In 1814, Van Mildert was asked to preach the prestigious Bampton Lectures before the University of Oxford. These lectures provide a clear insight into his conviction that nowhere was sound doctrine better preserved than in the Church of England. 'Our trust in the continuance of this blessing', however, 'is still to be regarded as dependent upon our own earnest endeavours to preserve it unimpaired' he urged his audience.²⁰ Van Mildert therefore adopted an entrenched stance against liberal Church reform.²¹ And so, finding himself increasingly against the tide of events, Van Mildert's authority waned towards the end of his life.²² In January 1836, the year of his death, Van Mildert wrote to Gaisford that the 'Archbishop has communicated nothing to me for some time past, & I have no heart to write him'.²³

Who Thought of Durham University?

The immediate cause of the University's foundation was Greenhow's proposal

¹⁸ Webster, *Joshua Watson*, p. 26.

¹⁹ Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 63-7.

²⁰ W. Van Mildert, *An Inquiry into the General Principles of Scripture Interpretation*, 2nd edn (London, 1815), pp. 289-90.

²¹ Saunders, 'God and the Great Reform Act', pp. 382-3.

²² Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 19, 191.

²³ [ChCh] TGL, 29: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 22 January 1831.

for the college in Newcastle. If realised this institution would have embodied ideas and principles that Thorp and Van Mildert implacably opposed. While there is no list of those who attended Greenhow's lecture, as a Trustee of the Literary and Philosophical Society it is likely that Thorp would have received a copy of the proposal.²⁴ He was certainly aware of it. On the same day as an article was published in the *Newcastle Courant* about Greenhow's proposal, Thorp wrote to Van Mildert.

I would fain bring before you the project of a University to be attached to our College.²⁵ A slight extension of the establishment and a few Professorships founded by the body in the Cathedral would effect the object. It would give to the Dean and Chapter strength of character and usefulness, preserve the Revenue to the church and to the north, and prevent the establishment of a very doubtful academic institution which is now taking root in Newcastle. I trust you will not think me a projector beyond what the times require.²⁶

This bold idea came at the end of a brief letter which referred mostly to diocesan business and Church reform. Given the magnitude of what Thorp was proposing it is remarkable for its brevity.

Although it seems certain that it was Thorp who moved the University's foundation, this does not mean the idea was entirely novel. In 1982 Alan Heesom explored the question of who first thought of the idea of Durham University. While he concluded that it was Thorp, he noted a possibility that the idea could have originated earlier.²⁷ This refers to a remark made by the poet Robert Southey in the

²⁴ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 149; R.S. Watson, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1793-1896)* (London, 1897), p. 51. However, Van Mildert forwarded Thorp a copy of the pamphlet on 8 December 1831 and commented that 'probably you are already acquainted with' it; almost certainly he was, but that Van Mildert was uncertain is interesting. cf [DUL] TC, 68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 December 1831.

²⁵ The College is the name given to the Cathedral Close and by extension the residents thereof, i.e. the Dean and Chapter.

²⁶ [Bal] JP, IVA.6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 11 June 1831.

²⁷ Heesom, 'Who thought of the idea of the University of Durham?', p. 16.

April 1829 edition of the *Quarterly Review*, concerning the intention of an anonymous 'excellent lady' to found 'a northern university' which he implied would be located in Durham.²⁸

Hugh Norwood suggested that Southey's 'excellent lady' was Anne Colberg.²⁹ Colberg had been the housekeeper and companion of the late Bishop of Durham, Shute Barrington, and she had become wealthy through money left to her in his Will.³⁰ The Prebendary Stephen Gilly had married Anne's niece, Jane, and the three of them lived together in Durham. Norwood's idea is that Gilly was the University's projector, and he intended to use Colberg's money. However, Norwood failed to establish a connection between Southey and Gilly and hence any connection with Colberg's wealth is conjectural.

Van Mildert's modern biographer, Elizabeth Varley, offered the view that Southey might have been referring to the Church itself rather than an individual.³¹ This suggestion, however, does not take account of Southey's original mention of a northern university, which appeared in the January edition of the *Quarterly Review*. In this earlier aside, Southey clearly referred to people, i.e. a 'Noble Earl' as well as 'a munificent lady in Yorkshire' who had 'recently offered to subscribe 50,000*l* towards the endowment of an university *in that county*'.³² Varley's conclusion is that 'precisely who was the first to see the Durham possibility' remains unanswerable, but this

²⁸ *Quarterly Review*, 39 (1829), p. 389.

²⁹ H. Norwood, 'Founding Colleges in the 1830s – At Durham and in Piedmont', *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin*, 66 (2003), pp. 43-56.

³⁰ H. Norwood, 'The Curious Will of Bishop Barrington of Durham', *Northern History*, 39/2 (September 2002), pp. 284-290.

³¹ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 150.

³² *Quarterly Review*, 39 (1829), p. 127.

analysis unfairly robs Thorp of his status as the prime mover of the University given that the development was started by his letter of 11 June 1831.³³

Why Durham University?

That the new institution should be a university was something Thorp advocated from his first letter, though Van Mildert did not initially support the idea: 'so high-sounding a title as that of an University had doubtless better be avoided', he confided to Gaisford on 9 August 1831.³⁴ The Archbishop, William Howley, however, had been positive from the start about the 'noble and beneficent project'.³⁵ Even so, Van Mildert's concern had not waned come the new year, and on 5 January 1832 he warned Thorp that 'styling ourselves an University' would be 'of great difficulty, & I fear, full of dangers & perplexities', most likely because of the experience of London University and the danger of the claims of both institutions competing.³⁶ There was no suggestion at this stage that there might be opposition from Oxford or Cambridge. Van Mildert changed his view after a conversation with Howley, however, who had clearly been exceptionally persuasive.

Respecting our being constituted a University, with the power of conferring Degrees and Faculties, I am inclined to think with the Archbishop, not only that nothing short of this will answer the existing expectation of the public, and of the Northern Counties especially, but that some of our main object may fail without them.³⁷

From then on Van Mildert agreed with Thorp: the new institution would be a university.

³³ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 150-1.

³⁴ [ChCh] TGL, 62: Wellington to Gaisford, 3 June 1829.

³⁵ [DUL] TC, 21: Howley to Van Mildert, 16 August 1831.

³⁶ [DCL] VML, 211-213: Van Mildert to Thorp, 5 January 1832.

³⁷ [DUL] TC, 77: Van Mildert to Thorp, 14 January 1832.

In addition, only a university would bring fulfilment to the long-held desire for a northern counterpart to Oxford and Cambridge. The want of 'some Academical Institution for the completion of professional Education ... has, more or less, been a subject of complaint, from Cromwell's time to the present', Van Mildert reminded Gaisford.

It is even now murmured, (as Durell informs me) in Northumberland, as a matter expected from the College of Durham. [Lord] Grey is well known to have viewed this long ago as a thing that ought to take place. The notion is evidently afloat that some sort of College or University must be set on foot in the North of England, & I have little doubt that the present year will not pass away without the attempt being made in some other Northern County, if not anticipated here, & probably under auspices & patronage of a powerful kind, & most adverse to those views & principles which we entertain.³⁸

And yet other institutions could have been useful too; so why a university and not, say, a grand college? Examples later in the century, including Owens College in Manchester and Queen's College in Birmingham, showed the impact that a college could have in meeting the modern, commercial and industrial interests of its home region.³⁹ In early August 1831 Gaisford wrote to Thorp and urged him to take a less adventurous route and create 'a superior school, and place whence the poorer candidates for orders might acquire instruction'.⁴⁰ Gaisford had the Athenaeum Illustre in Amsterdam in mind. He assured Van Mildert, it was 'abundantly furnished with pupils, and has had some of the most eminent men which Holland has produced as professors ever since the time of its foundation – and yet it has not the power of conferring any degrees'.⁴¹ It would eventually become the University of Amsterdam

³⁸ [ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

³⁹ Anderson, *Universities and Elites*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁰ [DUL] TC, 10: Gaisford to Thorp, 4 August 1831.

⁴¹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 26 December 1831.

in 1877.⁴²

Nevertheless, this model would not satisfy Thorp or Van Mildert. After so long, a body as wealthy and powerful as the Chapter of Durham could not have established a grand school or something like the new colleges in Wales or Cumbria. This was not because Van Mildert disapproved of such institutions: he in fact gave £500 to St David's, and founded an open scholarship there of £16 a year which he had named after himself.⁴³ St Bees, too, had its right and proper place serving the Church. When, for example, Van Mildert tightened up clerical entry standards in the mid-1820s he announced that he would only accept as ordinands (with as few exceptions as possible) men from Oxford, Cambridge or St Bees, where examinations were rigorous.⁴⁴

Rather than seeing the University as the fulfilment of centuries of waiting, however, historians have tended to emphasise its foundation as a means of preserving the Church's wealth in the face of imminent and radical reform.⁴⁵ True enough, both Van Mildert and Thorp understood that their view of the Established Church was under attack, and that such times required a swift, decisive and bold response. Simply protecting income, however, was insufficient motivation for such grand a scheme as a university. Both men absolutely intended their new institution to be of genuine value to the north and the Church. Not all the Prebends were of this view. David Durell,

⁴² D.K.W. Van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science: The Amsterdam Athenaeum in the Golden Age, 1632-1704* (Leiden, 2009), p. 3.

⁴³ *British Magazine*, vol. 6, 1834, p. 445; Price, *Saint David's*, p. 60.

⁴⁴ [DCL] VML, 1-2: Van Mildert to Thorp, 5 May 1826; Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', pp. 67-8; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 119.

⁴⁵ Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 32; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 101; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 33.

who held the 8th Stall, had written to the Bishop accepting that the University would require ‘sacrifices’ but that he regarded ‘these as a premium to be paid to insure the remainder’.⁴⁶ Although Van Mildert was pleased Durell showed ‘the best disposition to effect the object’, he was disappointed that it was ‘rather as a peace-offering to the public than for it’s own sake’. ‘I incline to view it in both lights’, the Bishop assured Thorp.⁴⁷

A Northern University

The legitimate use of the Cathedral’s endowment was a central issue in the University’s foundation. To Thorp and Van Mildert endowments were local funds, linked as much to their geographical as to their political or religious origins.⁴⁸ So the potential redistribution of Church funds concerned them, in part because it might mean that the Chapter’s endowment would be diverted ‘to purposes foreign to our northern interests’. To be of practical value to the north meant that the new institution would need to cater for the professional, commercial and industrial needs of a rapidly industrialising and expanding population. It was by doing so that Thorp hoped to make the Chapter ‘useful to our generation’.⁴⁹

The practical outcome of this vision meant the development of professional disciplines such as medicine and engineering. Thorp felt Greenhow’s proposed institution was ‘very doubtful’, for example, not because of the subjects that would be taught there (apart from a concern about the exclusion of theology) but because its

⁴⁶ [DUL] TC, 2: Durell to Thorp, 20 July 1831.

⁴⁷ [DUL] TC, 5: Van Mildert to Thorp, 27 July 1831.

⁴⁸ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 340; Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 139-40; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 187-8.

⁴⁹ [DUL] TC, 19: Thorp to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

instruction would be outside the effective influence of the Church. To Thorp and Van Mildert a university was a moral and ecclesiastical community as much as an academic one.

In response to the concerns about the expense of an education at the older English universities, outlined in chapter 1, Thorp was determined that an education at Durham would be less financially demanding than at Oxford or Cambridge. With its greater economy and more practical studies the University was intended for a new audience. 'I do not expect or wish that our nobility or richer clergy should be content with a Durham education', thought Thorp, 'but I look to a large field of usefulness among the rising families of our towns, mines and manufactures – at that class of young men who fly to Edinburgh, to Geneva, to France, to the instruction of the county town, & who might be advantageously educated there'.⁵⁰ This was very similar to the middling rich that Thomas Campbell had described as the intended audience for London University: all those 'between mechanics and the enormously rich'.⁵¹ In this respect, London and Durham were not so far apart.

Speed was now an essential part of Thorp's proposal, as the number of university schemes seemed to be increasing month by month. It was generally felt that once a new university had been established there could not be another. Newcastle was not the only competitor close to home. The Archbishop of York, Edward Harcourt, was known to be interested in a similar scheme for York. This concerned Van Mildert sufficiently for him to warn Thorp 'that there shd. be no similar project

⁵⁰ [DUL] TC, 17: Thorp to Gaisford, 11 August 1831.

⁵¹ *The Times*, 9 February 1825: Proposal of a Metropolitan University; Bender, *The University and the City*, pp. 121-2.

started as from Bishopthorpe, likely to compete with us for public favour'.⁵² Van Mildert reiterated his concerns in a letter to Gaisford a few days later.

A plan for a thing like the London University is now actually proposed at Newcastle, & something similar is likely to be brought forward next month at York. The minds of the northern people have long been bent upon this: & when King's College, London, was first set on foot, the [Archbishop] of York intimated to me that we must contemplate a similar design for his Province. ... I fear too, that our Northern Liberals reckon much upon the countenance of the present [Government] (of Earl Grey & [Lord] Brougham especially) in patronizing their plans at Newcastle & elsewhere, to the neglect & detriment of the Church.⁵³

Thorp likewise continued to press the need for swiftness and ambition in his letters to Gaisford.

I think it right to say that a school, however desirable, will neither answer the conservative purpose we have in view, nor satisfy the just claims of the north upon our large revenues. Neither do I think that a Northern Collegiate or Academical establishment can be long delayed seeing the great want there is of such an institution, and the ardent desire which manifests itself in several places, York, [Newcastle], & as we hear Liverpool, to obtain it.⁵⁴

To Thorp and Van Mildert the choice was clear: either they would be first with their own institution or someone else would found an establishment of dubious merit, probably outside of the control of the Established Church. 'We may have such an institution upon good or bad principles;' wrote Thorp, 'in our hands or those of our adversaries. The choice is with us to mould it as we please, - or leave the work to other men'.⁵⁵

⁵² [DUL] TC, 12: Van Mildert to Thorp, 6 August 1831. Bishopthorpe Palace was the residence of the Archbishop of York.

⁵³ [ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 9 August 1831.

⁵⁴ [DUL] TC, 19: Thorp to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

An Anglican University

In the same way as the source of the University's funds meant that in Thorp's mind it would be compelled to address the needs of the north, it also meant that it had to be an Anglican university. The staunch Anglicanism of the University made the admission of Dissenters one of the main issues during its foundation.⁵⁶ It was in Van Mildert's phrase 'the grand question'.⁵⁷ Practice at the old universities was well-established. Oxford had effectively barred Roman Catholics from entering the University in 1581 and Dissenters in 1661, while Cambridge was slightly more permissive in allowing such students to matriculate but not graduate.⁵⁸ At King's College, London, while regular students had to make no profession of faith they were still required 'to attend the prescribed course of religious instruction, and to be present at divine service performed within the walls of the College'.⁵⁹ Only regular students, as members of the College, could obtain certificates though occasional students were otherwise allowed to attend courses. In Ireland, Trinity College, Dublin, had permitted the entry and graduation of Catholic students since 1794. Nevertheless, it remained an intensely Anglican institution, and imposed religious tests for scholarships and teaching posts until 1873.⁶⁰

Van Mildert conceded access to the University on the Cambridge pattern, and

⁵⁶ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 163.

⁵⁷ [DUL] TC, 84: Van Mildert to Thorp, 6 June 1832.

⁵⁸ C. Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism: University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy 1860-86* (London, 1976), pp. 257-8; Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 41-2; Simon, *Two Nations*, p. 85; L. Stone, 'The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body 1580-1909', in Stone (ed.), *The University in Society*, vol. 1, pp. 3-110, p. 7; Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 4-5; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 83-96.

⁵⁹ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ Anderson, *British Universities*, pp. 95-98; T.W. Moody, 'The Irish University Question of the Nineteenth Century', *History*, 43/148 (June 1958), pp. 90-109, p. 93.

made it clear that there was no possibility of discussion on the issue. 'This conformity to the Church of England', he laid down, 'appeared no more than what ought to be expected, in an institution founded and supported by such a body as the Dean and Chapter'. There could be no compromise: he 'would rather withdraw from the concern, and decline being constituted visitor of the institution' than concede to granting degrees to anyone other than Anglicans.⁶¹ Nevertheless, groups of Dissenters continued to lobby for full and unfettered access to all the University's privileges.⁶²

Van Mildert wanted to ensure that the Chapter's endowments were only used for the purposes of the Established Church, but there was an even more fundamental issue. The new University had to be Anglican because Thorp and Van Mildert considered an English Bachelor of Arts degree to be as much an ecclesiastical as an academic award. Van Mildert told Thorp that 'the self-styled London University' should 'be opposed on that strong ground of its expressly disclaiming religious instruction in Church of England principles, which I should contend ought to be considered as an absolute disqualification for such privileges [as being styled a university and granting degrees] as actually carry with them certain ecclesiastical as well as academical rights'.⁶³ Just as in Van Mildert's conception the State was fundamentally entwined with and reflected the Established Church, so too were the English universities. In Van Mildert's view an English University, and English degrees, were fundamentally Anglican concepts; it was simply a category error to propose a non-Anglican university in England. Oxford and Cambridge were the

⁶¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HL Deb, 22 May 1832, vol. 12, c. 1215.

⁶² Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 39-42.

⁶³ [DUL] TC, 77: Van Mildert to Thorp, 14 January 1832.

peculiar preserve of the Church of England and so academic degrees in England had become the peculiar preserve of the Church of England too.⁶⁴ As Bellot observed in his history of University College, London, when London University attempted to obtain degree-awarding powers, it became a matter of serious concern that 'a Christian state should authorise an avowedly irreligious body to distribute titles hitherto recognised as badges of a Christian Education'.⁶⁵ In 1834 Sir Charles Wetherell, the legal representative of the University of Oxford in their petition against the proposal to grant a Charter to London University, argued that the Crown simply could not grant a Charter to a body in England to make it a university and to grant degrees without it being also required to come under the direct authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury as Visitor.⁶⁶

Van Mildert and Thorp were acutely aware of the need to connect the Chapter and the new University 'as to make one inseparable from the other' if they were to be successful in using the creation of the latter to preserve the existence of the former.⁶⁷ Van Mildert, however, went even further: for him the creation of the new institution was not simply a means of defending the foundation at Durham, it was a means of defending the entire Established Church.

There can be no doubt that the Chapter of Durham [would] be the very first object of attack; & as upon the issue of that attack [would] probably depend the existence of all other similar bodies, it does certainly

⁶⁴ F.W.B Bullock, *A History of the Training for the Ministry of the Church of England in England and Wales from 1800 to 1874* (St Leonards-on-Sea, 1955), p. 27.

⁶⁵ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 240.

⁶⁶ C. Wetherell, *Substance of the Speech of Sir Charles Wetherell before the Lords of the Privy Council, on the Subject of Incorporating the London University* (London, 1834).

⁶⁷ [ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 2 September 1831.

become a matter of general as well as individual interest, to consider how the evil may be warded off.⁶⁸

As vanguard, Durham would be a test case for other attempts to appropriate the funds of similar bodies: as went Durham, so would go the Church.

How to Establish a University

How could a university be founded? How did an institution gain the right to grant degrees? Did something called a university have the automatic right to confer degrees? In the early 1830s there were no clear answers.⁶⁹ The foundation of London University had fuelled a debate about the concept of a university which spread across the pages of journals, newspapers and books. It went beyond questions of sovereignty (who had the right to establish a university), to questions of admission (who should have the right to attend a university), questions of academic awards (who should be entitled to earn a degree) and curriculum (which subjects should be taught in a university for an institution to hold that title). The members of the Chapter were familiar with these debates and cautious too of how their initiative might be viewed by those individuals who were hostile to them. London University was attacked because many of the values and principles it embodied were abhorrent to a conservative world-view. But it was also attacked for the more prosaic matter of having not obtained proper authority to use the title 'university'.⁷⁰ Although London was the most famous example of such unauthorised use of the designation, it was not unique. Anderson's Institution, founded in 1796 through the will of John Anderson, professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, was renamed

⁶⁸ [ChCh] TGL, 70: Van Mildert to Gaisford, 16 August 1831.

⁶⁹ Rothblatt, *Modern University*, pp. 249-50.

⁷⁰ Rothblatt, *Modern University*, p. 250; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 41.

Anderson's University in September 1828 but without any legal right to the title and without granting degrees. The name was changed some 50 years later, in 1877, to Anderson's College, Glasgow after persistent opposition by Glasgow University. This institution (following numerous mergers) eventually became the University of Strathclyde in 1964.⁷¹

Although examples of the unauthorised (and strongly contested) use of the university title existed, there was recognition that formal use of the title should be sanctioned in some way by the state.⁷² The call James Yates made in 1826, for example, was for 'a national University to be instituted under the patronage of the Government with a Royal Charter and with the usual privilege of conferring Degrees'.⁷³ Southey, one of London University's detractors, remarked that 'there was a curious and threefold impropriety in assuming the title of University for a *single* college, which the *crown* had not created, and from which the science of *divinity* was specially excluded!' 'Mr. O'Connell', he continued, 'has just as much right to institute an Order of Knighthood, as this Council to erect a University'.⁷⁴

Southey's argument for a 'threefold impropriety' was not beyond objection. As Henry Malden, an early professor at London University, noted: for 'many persons who have taken their notion of the word merely from the English universities, it is commonly supposed that a university necessarily means a collection and union of

⁷¹ J. Butt, *John Anderson's Legacy: the University of Strathclyde and its antecedents 1796-1996* (East Linton, 1996), pp. 41, 74, 77-9, 167.

⁷² J.W. Adamson, *English Education 1789-1902* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 90-1.

⁷³ Yates, *Academical Education*, p. vi.

⁷⁴ *Quarterly Review*, 39 (1829), p. 128. The reference is to Daniel O'Connell, the Irish MP who lobbied vigorously for Catholic Emancipation.

colleges'.⁷⁵ Such an argument is clearly shown up to be wrong, argued Malden, by citing not only the continental universities but those in Scotland.

Throughout Europe the foundation of universities had been a Papal prerogative and some institutions, including St Andrew's, Glasgow, and Aberdeen Universities, had explicitly sought papal authority to legitimise their activities.⁷⁶ In 1824 the Cambridge classical scholar, George Dyer, recorded that 'the Pope, who could do so many other things, certainly talked in his Bulls of giving the power of erecting Universities'.⁷⁷ In England, after the Reformation, this privilege became a Royal prerogative instead of a Papal one. Dyer, however, did not attempt to veil his anti-Catholic bias: 'it must be more agreeable to an English University', he wrote, 'to receive privileges through the medium of its own civil government than of a foreign ecclesiastical despotism'.⁷⁸ Yet the granting of such privileges was an incredibly rare event in England.⁷⁹

The Act of Parliament of 1832

Quite separately from the issue of how a university could be founded and recognised, the Dean and Chapter had to secure the use of their large endowments for the purposes of their new university. Unlike the murk that surrounded the granting of degree-awarding powers, it was clear that this would require an Act of Parliament. This was necessary because, unlike the new colleges in London, for example, which

⁷⁵ H. Malden, *On the Origin of Universities and Academical Degrees* (London, 1835), p. 11.

⁷⁶ Armytage, *Civic Universities*, pp. 53-4; G.D. Henderson, *The Founding of Marischal College Aberdeen* (Aberdeen, 1947), pp. 25-9; Malden, *Origin of Universities*, p. 147.

⁷⁷ G. Dyer, *The Privileges of the University of Cambridge; Together with Additional Observations on its History, Antiquities, Literature and Biography* (2 vols., London, 1824), vol. 1, p. 387.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 395.

⁷⁹ Malden, *Origin of Universities*, p. 1. The creation of a new university was apparently not so novel, however, that Malden felt any need to mention Durham's foundation in his book.

used donations, subscriptions, and fee income, Durham University would be established through the use of an existing endowment.

There had been a Whig ministry under Earl Grey in power since November 1830. Under such inauspicious circumstances the Act would not have been sought were it not the only means by which the Chapter's land could be appropriated. However, there was no alternative. Just before Christmas 1831, therefore, the Chapter agreed that Thorp should 'communicate with Mr Walters of Newcastle, respecting the proposed Bill for the Enfranchisement of property at South Shields, for the Endowment of the University'.⁸⁰ The Bill's object was not to found the University but to secure the use of the Chapter's property for that purpose. Van Mildert introduced the Bill to the House of Lords in May 1832 and emphasised this point: it would, he said, empower 'the Dean and Chapter of Durham to appropriate a portion of their revenues, by the sale of certain leasehold property, to the endowment of a University at Durham'.⁸¹

The Bishop's great anxiety was that the Bill might be used as a precedent for external meddling in the Chapter's property, and for the redistribution of Church endowments more generally. As early as 27 July 1831, Van Mildert expressed his fears to Thorp: perhaps an Act of Parliament would be necessary, he wrote, 'but I [should] rather it were not'. 'If it once gets into the [House] of Commons, Messers Hume and Co. will be for cutting up root & branch, instead of lopping off a sufficiency for the supplies', he prophesied.⁸² Like a dark cloud hanging over his every action, the

⁸⁰ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 12 December 1831. William Clayton Walters was a prominent local barrister.

⁸¹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HL Deb, 22 May 1832, vol. 12, c. 1210.

⁸² [DUL] TC, 5: Van Mildert to Thorp, 27 July 1831.

treatment of their Bill preyed on the Bishop's mind. What may be the Bill's 'fate in the Commons, it is difficult to conjecture in such times as these', he wrote in May 1832, '[Lord] Durham's evil surmises & grumblings may just furnish a text for Mr Hume & other radicals to descant upon, & we must not be surprised at any uncourteous treatment at their hands'.⁸³ The Bishop told Thorp that he did 'still tremble for the whole undertaking, when the [Government] & [Parliament] are to sit in judgement upon us',⁸⁴ and shortly before the Bill was first presented to the Lords, where he felt there would be 'little or no opposition', he again told Thorp that he dreaded the 'fiery furnace of the House of Commons' and the 'incendiaries' that would be found there. Still, Van Mildert recognised an Act of Parliament was the only way 'to bind my successors' to the plan, and so he persevered.⁸⁵

Indeed, the Bill did not go unnoticed by those incendiaries Van Mildert wished to avoid. Speaking in the Commons on 24 July 1832, in a debate on the Tithes Composition (Ireland) Bill, Richard Shiel, MP for Co. Louth in Ireland and co-founder with Daniel O'Connell in May 1823 of the original Catholic Association,⁸⁶ used the example of the University to demonstrate that the property of the Established Church was owned by the State and could therefore be re-distributed by the State. Gleefully, he noted that 'on the abstract question of Church property ... it was not necessary to resort to abstract speculations'. Instead he could refer to 'the Bill for the Establishment of an University at Durham, out of the estates of the Dean and Chapter'. This he declared was nothing 'but an interference with Church property, and a diversion of it

⁸³ [DUL] SC, A/1: Van Mildert to Smith, 24 May 1832.

⁸⁴ [DCL] VML, 225-6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 10 January 1832.

⁸⁵ [DUL] TC, 7: Van Mildert to Thorp, 29 July 1831.

⁸⁶ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, p. 384.

from the purposes to which it was now devoted'. To employ the endowment of the Dean and Chapter for 'the institution of professorships of mathematics, and of chemistry, and natural philosophy, and of Latin and Greek, and of the Oriental languages' was surely beyond the power of the existing Prebends, he argued, as 'they had but life interests' and according 'to churchmen' could not 'rob their successors' by binding the endowment to the University.⁸⁷

Edward George Stanley, at the time Chief Secretary for Ireland, but later the 14th Earl of Derby and Prime Minister, replied to these accusations by stating that the 'appropriation had been made for ecclesiastical purposes', specifically 'a university for the purpose of bringing up the youth in the north of England to the service of the Church of England'.⁸⁸ Thorp orchestrated a more detailed defence outside of Parliament. The August 1832 edition of the new *British Magazine*, founded and edited by Hugh James Rose, who would the following year become the first Professor of Divinity at Durham, defended the University from 'Mr Shiel's detestable attack'.

If the Church keeps its property, it is to be denounced as over rich. If it *gives* any thing of its own free will to a public purpose, then they argue that such gifts shews that Church property is public property, and may be plundered.⁸⁹

A letter from Walters appeared in the next edition: using the Chapter's property for the University would, he declared, withdraw 'no part of the founder's bounty out of the circle in which he placed it'.⁹⁰ 'The substance of the petition', he argued in a separate printed pamphlet, was 'that one estate might be exchanged for another, which

⁸⁷ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, HC, 24 July 1832, vol. 14, c. 696.

⁸⁸ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, HC, 24 July 1832, vol. 14, c. 717.

⁸⁹ *British Magazine*, vol. 1, August 1832, p. 598.

⁹⁰ *British Magazine*, vol. 2, September 1832, p. 51.

could not be effected without the authority of Parliament'.⁹¹ The nature of the foundation and constitution of the Cathedral Church of Durham did include the provision of education, and for centuries the Cathedral had maintained a school, he continued. Henry VIII's foundation of the Chapter which had incorporated the lands, revenues, and the educational purpose of Durham College, Oxford, gave them not simply the right but even the duty to engage in higher learning. Through their Estate Bill, all the Chapter were proposing to do was increase their contribution towards education and divert it towards a new project. 'I should not have written this', added Walter, 'had Mr Shiel been the only person who had erred in this matter, but I find many well-disposed laymen have made the same observation, as well as some of the clergy'.⁹²

This is where the existence of Durham College, Oxford was crucial: the connection between that thirteenth-century foundation and the nineteenth-century University became more than an historical footnote. The assumption by the newly-founded Chapter in the sixteenth century of the aims of Durham College became both the defence and rationale for the use of the Chapter's funds to establish the University. Thorp felt sufficiently strongly about the connection to launch a search amongst the Cathedral muniments for material relating to the College. The work was undertaken by a theology student named Joseph Stevenson who produced (anonymously) *Some Account of Durham College, Oxford* in 1840.⁹³ So, while the College's existence was a part of the background to the University's conception, its greater importance became its

⁹¹ [DUL] TC, 651: Statement from William Clayton Walters, July 1832.

⁹² *British Magazine*, vol. 2, September 1832, p. 51.

⁹³ *Forerunners of the University*, p. 5.

strategic use to legitimise the use of the Chapter's funds. As Thorp explained: since they were 'the legitimate successor of Durham College' the Chapter were simply applying funds that had been 'temporarily merged ... to their original uses'.⁹⁴

The Bishop's management of the debate was exemplary, the arguments deployed secure, and so the Bill was passed and received Royal assent on 4 July. The Act went into detail on the officers and governance of the University, permitting the appointment of a 'Warden or Principal' and 'Professors and Readers in such Branches of Learning and Sciences, of such Tutors, Students, and other Officers and Persons' under 'such Scheme and Regulations as the said Dean and Chapter of *Durham* ... shall ... order and prescribe'. The 'Government ... shall be ... vested in the said Dean and Chapter' and the Bishop would be Visitor.⁹⁵

Despite the presence of these details, the Act did not establish the University. Instead, it gave authority to the Chapter to found and govern the new institution and allowed their land in South Shields, valued at around £80,000 and producing in the region of £3,000 per year, to be used for the purpose.⁹⁶ It was on 4 April 1834 that the Chapter recorded their use of the authority given them in the Act: 'the Academical Institution or College or University, established by an Act of Chapter of the 21st September 1831, be constituted a University', they agreed in a mesmerising act of retrospective enforcement.⁹⁷ For, by April 1834, staff had been appointed and students admitted. Indeed, the University (operating under that title) had opened on Monday

⁹⁴ [DUL] TC, 593: Thorp to Earl Grey[?], 1 December 183[1?].

⁹⁵ 2 & 3 William 4, cap. 19, known as the Durham University Act 1832.

⁹⁶ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 37.

⁹⁷ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 4 April 1834.

28 October 1833.⁹⁸

The Royal Charter of 1837

It might have been possible for the Chapter's decision in April 1834 to remove all doubt about the University's status. It did not. In November 1834 the Junior Tutor, William Palmer, previously Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, recorded the confusion which abounded within the University.

The Warden [Thorp] is regularly at bay for he can find nobody to speak of the University as founded and the Chapter are all beginning to find that something must be done – but nobody knows what – it is impossible to say what the Warden's thoughts are upon the subject – his mind seems to be something like a quicksand.⁹⁹

This was not simply a bureaucratic matter, for the ambiguity had been damaging recruitment. In April 1835 Thorp admitted that there had 'been some check lately' on new entrants which he attributed 'to an apprehension about the intention of the chapter as to degrees, and the situation of the university'.¹⁰⁰

Durham did not face uncertainty about its status alone. Though both St David's College, Lampeter, and King's College, London, had already been granted Charters in 1828 and 1829 respectively, neither body had sought to obtain degree-awarding powers.¹⁰¹ London University was the nearer parallel. As the authorities at Durham had quibbled over the same point, so the original executors at London University had at first been undecided about whether to call their new institution a university. Though the title was adopted at a meeting of proprietors on 1 July 1825, Campbell insisted it meant only a 'place for getting instruction as universally as

⁹⁸ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 27.

⁹⁹ R.S. Wheeler, *Palmer's Pilgrimage: The Life of William Palmer of Magdalen* (Oxford, 2006), p. 39.

¹⁰⁰ [DUL] TC, 653: Church Commission: Minutes of Evidence, 10 April 1835, q. 320.

¹⁰¹ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 67-9; Price, *Saint David's*, p. 38, 53-5.

possible' and did not imply the power of conferring degrees. The question whether to seek such authority was left open, and both Campbell and Brougham stated publicly that they had no such intention. On this basis, in May 1825 Brougham moved a Bill for incorporation of a college but he was powerfully opposed by Peel and the endeavour withered.¹⁰²

Five years later a second attempt was made by London University to re-assert its claims under a friendly Whig Ministry led by Earl Grey. A petition for a Charter was brought forward in early 1831 seeking 'Incorporation as an University, with all the privileges incident to that title' but without explicit reference to granting degrees.¹⁰³ Whether the title university inherently conferred the right to award degrees therefore became a critical question. Although London University disclaimed the desire to award degrees, this petition spurred opposition from Oxford and Cambridge, the great London teaching hospitals, and, through the Bishop of London, King's College. Despite continuing negotiations into 1835 the situation was effectively stalemate, and so the petition for a Charter remained in abeyance.¹⁰⁴

The eventual resolution to the sparring of these different bodies came in the proposal for the new, comprehensive, metropolitan University of London which was granted a Charter in November 1836. It was empowered to award degrees to students who had completed a course at University College, London (the new name for the old London University), King's College, London, and any other institution approved in the future by the issue of a Royal Warrant. After completing the course of instruction

¹⁰² Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 48-9, 216-8; Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 67.

¹⁰³ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 219.

¹⁰⁴ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 215-46; Harte, *University of London*, pp. 22-3.

these students were awarded certificates by their College, which enabled them to proceed to examinations and hence degrees of the University of London. This compromise effectively settled the distinction between a university and a college: the former was a degree-conferring body, while the latter was not. The independent university thus formed was a pragmatic resolution, which not only created a new university but ensured the way was open for University College, London to receive official recognition through a Charter, which was sealed in November 1836.¹⁰⁵

Durham's petition for a Charter was entwined with this debate about higher education in London. Unlike London University's attempt to secure a Charter, however, when Durham raised its petition it had already been granted an Act of Parliament, and in that Act it had been named a university. Was that sufficient to assume degree-awarding powers? There was no clear answer. For his part, Thorp had wanted a Charter from the outset but had been persuaded that it was not an immediate priority nor politically expedient. As early as 1 October 1831, the Chapter minuted that 'the Bishop of Durham be consulted ... as to the expediency of obtaining a Charter'.¹⁰⁶ Van Mildert counselled caution. On 10 January 1832, he wrote in frustration to Thorp that he did 'still harp upon Degrees but do not remove any of the difficulties & perplexities we have to encounter'.¹⁰⁷ Van Mildert's fear was that a Charter granted to Durham would ease the passage of one for London University.

A Charter, I am informed, is actually proposed for the London University, & only waits the Great Seal, which it is not to be suffered

¹⁰⁵ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 227-48; Harte and North, *UCL*, pp. 80-1; F.M.G. Willson, *Our Minerva: The Men and Politics of the University of London* (London, 1995), pp. 6-17.

¹⁰⁶ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 1 October 1831.

¹⁰⁷ [DCL] VML, 225-6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 10 January 1832.

the Keeper of the Royal Conscience¹⁰⁸ will have any scruple in affixing. Whether this fresh movement by favour of the [London] [University] may have been quickened by the expectation of a similar grant being applied for by the Durham Body, is matter for conjecture. It certainly bodes us no good. Unless Oxford & Cambridge interpose some remonstrance the thing is virtually done - & probably no interposition on their part [would] prevent it. It will not be wise in us, however, to step forward in expressing any disapproval, nor is it likely the opportunity will be offered of our doing so.¹⁰⁹

As has been seen, Oxford, Cambridge, and others too, did remonstrate about the Charter but Van Mildert's comments demonstrate the extent to which the approach that Durham took to incorporation and formal recognition was influenced by developments in London.

Like the Bishop, Walters urged caution: 'at present I see nothing you want from the Crown by a Charter except the power to grant degrees', he told the Warden, 'and surely it is premature to ask for this'. The priority should be 'the private statutes by which the University is to be governed', he advised.¹¹⁰

In December 1833 Thorp, on behalf of the Chapter, expressed his continuing disquiet to Van Mildert. 'The University being now open for the reception of students', he noted, 'the Dean and Chapter are anxious to ascertain the place and value of the Degrees in due time to be conferred by virtue of the Act of Parliament which constitutes Durham a University'.¹¹¹ Little more seems to have happened, however, as the debate about London obscured Durham's own and independent claim, and an unsympathetic Whig government remained in power. This situation changed in

¹⁰⁸ The identity of this person is not explicit, but it may be Lord Melbourne, then Home Secretary, who took a leading role in handling negotiations over the Charter. cf Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 220-1.

¹⁰⁹ [DCL] VML, 247: Van Mildert to Thorp, 26 April 1832.

¹¹⁰ [DUL] TC, 649: Walters to Thorp, 6 June 1832.

¹¹¹ [DUL] TC, 137: Thorp to Van Mildert, 5 December 1833.

December 1834 when Peel became Prime Minister. In March 1835 Van Mildert held discussions with Peel after which he wrote positively about the prospects of the University and the Chapter to Joshua Watson, declaring he had 'laid a foundation ... for obtaining a royal charter for our University'.¹¹² Van Mildert gave Thorp a similarly up-beat assessment: Peel 'seems quite disposed to favour our views' concerning a Charter, he assured the Warden.¹¹³ Sir Charles Wetherell, the former Attorney-General, High Tory, and vehement anti-reformist, whose appearance to open the assizes at Bristol was the immediate cause of the riots there in October 1831,¹¹⁴ and who had acted for Oxford University in their opposition to the Charter for London University, was called upon to assist with the preparation of a Charter for Durham.¹¹⁵ Accordingly Walters drew up a draft statute for the University for comment by Wetherell.¹¹⁶

Yet this period of optimism was all too brief. In April 1835 Peel resigned. His premiership was the last to be put in place by the Monarch against the wishes of Parliament. In November 1834, William IV asked him to form a government due to the King's hostility towards the policies of his existing ministers in religious and Irish affairs. Although Peel had attempted to lead a minority government, and had done so not entirely without success, including passing the Dissenters' Marriage Bill and the English Tithe Bill, in the face of strong opposition from Whig, Radical and Irish MPs, his first tenure as Prime Minister inevitably ended only a few short months after it

¹¹² E. Churton, (ed.), *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1863), p. 213.

¹¹³ [DUL] TC, 187: Thorp to Van Mildert, 7 March 1835.

¹¹⁴ J. Eagles, *The Bristol riots: their causes, progress, and consequences by a citizen* (Bristol, 1832).

¹¹⁵ [DUL] TC, 187: Thorp to Van Mildert, 7 March 1835.

¹¹⁶ [DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3e: draft statute for the University of Durham for the opinion of Charles Wetherell, 18 May 1835.

began. The Whig Lord Melbourne returned to government and this ended the brief period during which Van Mildert saw hope for the Chapter and University, and indeed for the entire Established Church.

With the Charter still not settled, the Chapter approved statutes for the University in July 1835, including clear regulations for the award of degrees and the establishment of a Senate and Convocation. The Senate would consist of the Warden, the three Professors, the two Proctors, and one member of convocation nominated annually by the Dean and Chapter. The Convocation would consist of the original members of the University who were at least MA of Oxford, Cambridge, or Dublin, plus future graduates of the University who were at least MA. The Senate would transact the ordinary business of the University and propose new regulations to the Convocation which could confirm or reject them but not amend them or originate their own proposals. Over both bodies sat the Dean and Chapter as governors and the Bishop as Visitor.

Durham's constitution was unique and peculiar, which reflected the fact that it was essentially a private enterprise rather than a public one. The concepts of private and public are of course complex, but the status of Durham as a university under the governorship of the Dean and Chapter contrasted clearly with the character of Oxford and Cambridge as national and public institutions and the University of London which was, in effect, a department of government.¹¹⁷ In Scotland too, the Crown and public interests held significant sway over the internal operation of the universities,

¹¹⁷ Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 46-7.

including the appointment of professors.¹¹⁸ In all these other instances the public university had a status distinct from the private colleges which were connected with them, and which through personal patronage and endowment, it was argued, were not subject to the same legitimate public intervention as the universities.

In the matter of the Charter, with a Whig ministry returned to power and uncertainty about what the Ecclesiastical Commission might recommend for the future of cathedral chapters, the Bishop's counsel now tended towards reserve and general forbearance. 'I should have had great pleasure in forwarding the views of the Chapter & of the University of Durham, with regard to an application to Government for a Charter enabling them to confer Degrees,' Van Mildert told Jenkinson in December 1835, 'if I thought this a favourable juncture for making the attempt'. 'It will be more prudent to wait even some months longer ... than to risk a defeat, (or perhaps something worse than a defeat,) by putting ourselves forward prematurely.'¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, Van Mildert suggested that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Charles Wetherell might again be consulted.

In January 1836 the Chapter submitted their request for advice to Wetherell, and emphasised their desire to obtain a Charter for the University to 'be placed beyond all cavil or suspicion'. Two issues made the need pressing: not only 'the nearer approach of the students to the period for claiming their degrees, but also by the publication of a design for establishing by Charter a new University in the Metropolis'. The Chapter were concerned that if the new University of London were founded with

¹¹⁸ R.D. Anderson, 'Scottish University Professors, 1800-1939: Profile of an Elite', *Scottish Economic & Social History*, 7 (1987), pp. 27-54, pp. 29-33.

¹¹⁹ [DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3c: Van Mildert to Jenkinson, 30 December 1835.

the power to grant degrees to students from the colleges in London, then they too would be required to send their 'students to examination for degrees at that establishment'.¹²⁰

Wetherell concurred that the plan for 'constituting a Metropolitan Board' was a potential hindrance for Durham's petition. It would be 'a great inconvenience', Wetherell wrote, if 'the Students of Durham, should in any event be embraced in the Metropolitan Plan'. More optimistically he advised that 'Durham University is clearly founded as such, and is so termed in the Act' and hence they had good grounds to press their case to be formally recognised by a Charter as 'a substantive Individual University'. 'And I think the Petition [should] allege' Wetherell continued 'that it was the true intent and meaning of the Act, that the Power of granting degrees [should] be conceded to the Body, and that the endowment [granted by the Act] was in truth made in the faith of the Body obtaining that Privilege'.¹²¹ Thorp concurred: it was their 'duty to petition the Crown for the Charter in the expectation of which this work was undertaken and has been carried on'.¹²²

With these questions unresolved, the University suffered the loss of its greatest ever patron when Van Mildert died on 21 February 1836. The mood in the University was dark indeed: the brief bright period of Peel's ministry had given way to Lord Melbourne's Whig premiership, London University was poised to obtain the benefit of degrees under the authority of a Charter for a new metropolitan university, their

¹²⁰ [DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3f: Application to Charles Wetherell for an opinion respecting a Charter for the University of Durham, 9 January 1836.

¹²¹ [DUL] TC, 198: Advice from Charles Wetherell, 24 January 1836.

¹²² [DUL] TC, 201a: Thorp to Unknown (possibly Sir Thomas Spring Rice as Chancellor of the Exchequer), 27 February 1836.

own claims remained unrecognised, and now their great champion was lost. Temple Chevallier, the University's first Registrar, Professor of Mathematics and Reader in Hebrew, summed up the mood.

It is a severe visitation to many here both in a public & in a private point of view. For myself I feel the loss much; as in all transactions in which I was engaged with him, his liberality was quite beyond what could have been expected. That fountain is dried up.¹²³

It was Thorp who kept alight the University's hope and pushed on with their plans. Grief could not be allowed to get in the way of pressing the University's case for recognition.

Before the end of February, Thorp had written to Lord Melbourne: 'the right of degrees is perhaps inherent in a University instituted by the highest authority of the nation – but in order to quiet doubts it is desirable to have a Charter or a declaration on the part of the Crown Lawyers that a Charter is unnecessary'.¹²⁴ In March 1836 Wetherell added his 'personal opinion (which is the orthodox one) ... that "the word University" carries degrees'.¹²⁵

The Charter was held up again. This time it was delayed because members of the government supported the old claims of Dissenters to take degrees at the University. Earl Grey wrote to Thorp and pressed him to admit Dissenters 'not only to education but to honours'.¹²⁶ Thorp was deeply concerned. His view matched exactly that which Van Mildert had held: that not only would opening the University to Dissenters be a misappropriation of Church funds, but that such a radical departure

¹²³ [DUL] CC, 11: Chevallier to Corrie, 24 February 1836.

¹²⁴ [DUL] TC, 214: Thorp to Lord Melbourne, 27 February 1836.

¹²⁵ [DUL] TC, 226: Interview with Sir Charles Wetherell, 17 March 1836.

¹²⁶ [DUL] TC, 229: Earl Grey to Thorp, 22 March 1836.

from the perceived status quo would bring about 'very serious and perplexing questions' in relation to the government of the University by the Dean and Chapter, and its relations with the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin.¹²⁷

Thorp wrote to the Home Secretary, Lord John Russell, in March 1836 and advised him that the petition for a charter would be presented soon and, following Wetherell's advice, assured him that it would simply pray for the University's incorporation and the power to hold property.¹²⁸ The petition was submitted on 23 April but after good initial progress, including a request for payment of the fee for the Charter to be sealed, the process was halted by Russell.¹²⁹ The University's Registrar, Chevallier, suggested that this delay had been caused by a motion from Hedworth Lambton, the local MP for Durham Northern and Lord Durham's brother, 'to the effect that no further endowment should be granted to the University unless all degrees were thrown open to Dissenters'.¹³⁰

Russell had long supported the repeal of all restrictions which barred those outside of the Church of England from any secular privileges. In 1827, during the debate on the repeal of the Test Act, he stated that he was 'guided by the principle that the subjects of these kingdoms ought not to suffer civil penalty, hardship, or inconvenience on account of their religious belief'. Only Lord Melbourne had prevented him from bringing forward a Bill to allow Dissenters access to the older English universities in December 1836.¹³¹ It was clear he would not willingly accede

¹²⁷ [DUL] TC, 232: Thorp to Earl Grey, 25 March 1836.

¹²⁸ [DUL] TC, 236: Thorp to Lord John Russell, 30 March 1836.

¹²⁹ [DUL] DCO, 5: Chaytor to Russell, 1 June 1836.

¹³⁰ [DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3w: Chevallier to Jenkinson, 30 April 1837.

¹³¹ *Early Correspondence of Lord John Russell 1805-40*, ed. Russell, R., (London, 1913), pp. 42, 72.

to a Charter for Durham that entirely excluded from degrees anyone who was unwilling to subscribe to the Articles of the Church of England. With the Whig Government unwilling to move in the matter of the Charter, and as the University would not give way on the admission of Dissenters, an impasse had been reached.

The new Bishop appointed to succeed Van Mildert could have not been a greater contrast. Edward Maltby was translated from Chichester to become the first reformed Bishop of Durham. It is hard to imagine an appointment that Thorp would have found more terrifying. Maltby had been heavily influenced during his time at Norwich Grammar School by the Headmaster, Samuel Parr, who although he was himself an Anglican clergyman was both a Whig and a friend of Dissenters.¹³² This influence meant Maltby was almost unique in being a Whig Bishop, and who had been one of only two Bishops to vote in favour of the Reform Bill in October 1831.¹³³ He was also a founding and active member of the Senate of the University of London, and had laid the foundation stone of the new building on Gower Street for London University in April 1827.¹³⁴ He had been dogged by scandals due to his openness to Dissenters and Roman Catholics, and he counted Russell and Brougham among his friends – he even shocked his new diocese by not wearing the traditional full-bottomed wig.¹³⁵ Chevallier reacted with acquiescence in a letter to his friend Corrie: ‘Maltby is to be elected on Saturday week – quantum mutatus!’¹³⁶

All hope for the infant University now lay with the new Bishop. Thorp wrote

¹³² E.A. Varley, ‘Maltby, Edward (1770-1859)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2008).

¹³³ Briggs, *Age of Improvement*, p. 218; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 145.

¹³⁴ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 36; Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 29, 47, 54.

¹³⁵ C.J. Stranks, *This Sumptuous Church: The Story of Durham Cathedral* (London, 1993), p. 86.

¹³⁶ [DUL] CC, 12: Chevallier to Corrie, 11 March 1836.

to Maltby in December 1836 and complained bitterly that while a Charter had just been granted to London University their own Charter was still refused them. 'We owe nothing to His Majesty's Ministers,' Thorp brooded, 'seeing they have not only joined in intercepting our promised endowment but have now granted a Charter to London [University] whilst they withhold or suspend our own. Digest the matter as we may it is impossible not to feel this as a great and undeserved hardship.'¹³⁷

As 1837 dawned Thorp and the other members of Senate were becoming increasingly anxious. No longer acting through the Bishop, perhaps as they were unclear whether Maltby could be trusted to take their side, and increasingly forthright, an exasperated memorial was sent by the Senate to Russell on 29 April. This memorial laid out their manifold disappointments: 'since the Dean and Chapter have faithfully on their part, established and endowed the University, as fully as they were enabled to do by that Act [of Parliament of 1832], it devolves on the Crown to complete the undertaking by grant of a Charter' they demanded.¹³⁸ The admission of Dissenters was not raised in the memorial. There was increasing desperation for the Charter to be granted as the time was 'fast approaching when degrees must be conferred', Chevallier warned the Dean: 'it is essential that ambiguity [should] be removed as to the power of the Univ. to grant degrees before such a step is taken: & for that purpose a charter is of the greatest importance'. While the Chapter maintained that they possessed the right to confer degrees 'under the Act of Parliament' it was to avoid objections being raised that 'a charter [would] be indisputable, & [would] at once be

¹³⁷ [DUL] TC, 270: Thorp to Maltby, 15 December 1836.

¹³⁸ [DUL] TC, 605: Memorial of the Senate to Lord John Russell.

acquiesced in by all who are interested'.¹³⁹ Thorp explained to Maltby that the University would 'proceed to confer' degrees 'whether the Charter be granted or not', but that the perception of those degrees would 'be materially altered' if not 'confirmed by the authority of a Royal Charter'.¹⁴⁰

In the end, far from making 'glorious havoc' of all the 'well digested constitutional principles' of the University, it was Maltby's influence, through his connections to the Whig government, that finally persuaded Russell to put aside his objection to the Charter. Supported by Earl Grey, Maltby persuaded his friend Russell that, while he agreed with him that the University should be open to all students without religious tests, nevertheless the existence of these tests had been the basis upon which the Act of Parliament was passed. It was therefore wrong to withhold the Charter now: what had been written, had been written. At long last Russell conceded. 'Upon considering the reasons contained in your Lordship's letter of the 11th inst. & your Lordship's earnest solicitations on this subject,' Russell wrote to Maltby, 'I have come to the conclusion that the Charter may now be completed.' The Home Secretary would not let the moment pass, however, without restating his opposition to religious tests and providing the Senate, through the Bishop, with a clear warning.

I have always understood from Lord Grey that he had expressed most strongly to the late Bishop Van Mildert his opinion, that the proposed exclusive regulations were inexpedient. ... And I shall always consider myself at liberty to endeavour by every means in my power to effect the abolition of restrictions, which in my view impair the efficacy & narrow the scope of the new University in the North of England.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ [DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3w: Chevallier to Jenkinson, 30 April 1837.

¹⁴⁰ [DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3x: Thorp to Maltby, 2 May 1837. The Chapter had agreed it would go ahead to grant degrees on the basis of the Act of Parliament alone on 13 June 1835.

¹⁴¹ [DUL] TC, 292b: Russell to Maltby, 13 May 1837.

No matter how ungraciously Russell conceded the Charter, it was Maltby's influence, supported by Earl Grey, that had finally persuaded him. Durham's new Whig bishop had played his part to the full. It is clearly important that Maltby opted to honour the undertakings of his predecessor, when he may have easily decided to side with his friends in the Whig government. This decision means Maltby too should be counted as a founder of the University, alien though many of his views may have been to the Chapter.

The other members of Senate reacted with pleasure and relief. Henry Jenkyns, the first Professor of Greek and Classical Literature, recorded his joy at the news, and urged Thorp to pay 'all due civilities to the [Bishop], & [Lord] Grey, &' he added reluctantly, 'I suppose [Lord] John [Russell] must be included in the list, though he little deserves it.'¹⁴² Chevallier wrote to his friend Corrie that while he welcomed 'this tardy sacrifice to justice', it was not 'such as to conciliate much gratitude' especially as the concession was 'accompanied with an intimation that he will use all his efforts to remove here & elsewhere the obstacles which oppose his disputing friends being made gentlemen'. Nevertheless, the change in Russell's 'counsels comes very opportunely to relieve us from the dilemma, which, as I told you, we seemed likely to be placed' about whether to proceed to grant degrees without a Charter.¹⁴³ 'Glad as we shall be to see you again,' Jenkyns told Thorp, 'we do not press for [your] return, unless the Charter is in [your] portmanteau'.¹⁴⁴

There was little further delay and the long-awaited Charter was at last granted

¹⁴² [DUL] TC, 293: Jenkyns to Thorp, 25 May 1837.

¹⁴³ [DUL] CC, 21: Chevallier to Corrie, 27 May 1837.

¹⁴⁴ [DUL] TC, 293: Jenkyns to Thorp, 25 May 1837.

by William IV on 1 June 1837. Travelling swiftly back to the north, the first 14 BA degrees were conferred under the Charter's authority a week later. The text enumerates the University's creation, starting with the foundation of the Cathedral Church at Durham by Henry VIII on 12 May 1541 (noting that this foundation had included an educational provision), proceeding through the Act of Parliament of July 1832 (but making no mention of the Act of Chapter of September 1831), the Act of Chapter of April 1834, and ending with the Act of Chapter of July 1835. The Chapter Act of July 1835 is described in the Charter as the event which did 'establish the College or University then existing in the City of Durham' by confirming the Act of Chapter from April 1834 and 'further exercising the trusts and powers reposed in them by' the Act of Parliament of 1832. The Charter draws to its conclusion by stating that although 'many students have resorted to the said University, and have become members thereof, and are diligently instructed in the several branches of science and literature', and that staff had been appointed, including Thorp as 'the present Warden': 'but that they are advised that the said University would be better established, and its character and design more clearly and appropriately determined, if its members were incorporated by our Royal Charter'. The purpose of the Charter, therefore, was not to establish a new institution but to recognise an existing one and confirm its University status.

The Royal Warrant of 1837

Russell did not wait long before attempting the abolition of restrictions at Durham, just as he had said he would. On 1 January 1838 he forwarded to Maltby a

Warrant which had been signed by Queen Victoria on Boxing Day 1837.¹⁴⁵ This Warrant gave the authorities at Durham the right 'to issue certificates ... for degrees in the University of London'. It was the first such Warrant issued, and would have made Durham the third institution, after King's College and University College, able to send students forward for London degrees.¹⁴⁶ Russell's intention was to ensure that any student who completed his studies at Durham, but who felt unable to take the religious oath, and so could not graduate, could nevertheless gain a degree from London where no such restrictions existed. 'Having at Your Lordships earnest request advised His late Majesty to grant a Charter', he reminded the Bishop, 'I now ask your Lordship to use your influence with the University to promote the issue of certificates' for London degrees.¹⁴⁷ Whether Maltby was simply being naïve and genuinely did not anticipate any issues, or hoped to downplay the new regulation and thereby lessen the chance of a negative response, he forwarded the Warrant to Thorp stating that he was 'not aware that any objection is likely to be made' to it and so assumed the University would 'be desirous of giving it full effect'.¹⁴⁸ One other interpretation may be possible: Russell's letter conceding the Charter clearly indicated his intention to find some way of admitting Dissenters to Durham degrees. Might Maltby have made a deal with Russell: that in return for allowing the Charter to be sealed, he would use his influence as Bishop to secure access for non-Anglican Durham students to London degrees? This is speculation, but it would help explain both how Russell's seemingly implacable

¹⁴⁵ *Documents Relating to the Establishment of Durham University and of University College Therein* (Durham, 1902): Warrant of Queen Victoria, p. 42.

¹⁴⁶ Harte, *University of London*, p. 96.

¹⁴⁷ *Documents Relating to the Establishment of Durham*: Russell to Maltby, 1 January 1838, p. 43.

¹⁴⁸ [DUL] TC, 308: Maltby to Thorp, 5 January 1838.

opposition was turned and the speed with which the Warrant was produced.

Thorp was furious. To his mind the Warrant was an attempt to bring Durham under the authority of the University of London. Indeed, it 'appeared so objectionable' to him that he 'abstained from submitting it to Senate hoping that it might not become a public document' and instead pressed the Bishop unsuccessfully for it to be withdrawn.¹⁴⁹ The Senate eventually received the Warrant on 30 January, over a month before it was received by the Senate of the University of London.¹⁵⁰ At first Durham's Senate postponed discussion of the matter, presumably for the same reason as had made Thorp reluctant to submit it to them at all. On 22 March the Senate agreed it was willing to permit students 'to present themselves for' London degrees, but that this would only be 'provided that the privileges of this University, as an independent body, are not violated'.¹⁵¹

The Senate had two main concerns. First, in order to obtain a London degree the Warrant required the Durham authorities to issue students with a certificate that confirmed they had 'completed the Course of Instruction which the ... University of London ... shall have determined'.¹⁵² To issue the certificate, therefore, the course at Durham would have to follow that of the University of London: not only would this be a fatal blow to their independence, and make them the subordinate body, but it would also exclude theology as a necessary component of the Arts course.¹⁵³ Durham had actually advanced further than London, too. Students had already graduated

¹⁴⁹ [DUL] TC, 324: Thorp to Maltby, 23 November 1838.

¹⁵⁰ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 30 January 1838; [SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 7 March 1838.

¹⁵¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 March 1838.

¹⁵² *Documents Relating to the Establishment of Durham: Warrant of Queen Victoria*, p. 42.

¹⁵³ Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 75, 96-111.

from Durham while at London the curriculum was still being formed and the first examinations had not yet been held. As a member of London's Senate, in July 1838 Maltby expressed his concern that London was 'likely to become the laughing-stock ... to other learned bodies in the country' if they did not conclude their plans with haste.¹⁵⁴ The first students for the London BA would not graduate until 1839, when 17 men sat and passed the examinations (two years later than the first graduates from Durham, and with only 3 more graduates).¹⁵⁵

Subordination to any other institution would have been bad enough, but the second main concern was that the Senate viewed the University of London as nothing more than an irreligious wing of Government. This opinion was widely held, and with justification.¹⁵⁶ From its formation in 1836 until its Charter was revised in 1858, for example, the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and all 36 Fellows of the Senate of the University of London were appointed by the Crown and therefore the Government.¹⁵⁷ *The Times* condemned the fact that 'this "University," as it is most absurdly miscalled, is as completely under the thumb of the Government as any of the clerks in the Treasury are'. 'None but a despot to the backbone' should acquiesce in such meddling from Government in higher education, the paper concluded.¹⁵⁸

Durham's Senate proposed an alternative scheme, that London should simply

¹⁵⁴ [SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 11 July 1838.

¹⁵⁵ Willson, *Our Minerva*, p. 179.

¹⁵⁶ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 24; Harte, *University of London*, p. 98; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, pp. 60, 62, 69; Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 51-2; Willson, *Our Minerva*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁷ F.M.G. Willson, *The University of London, 1858-1900: The Politics of Senate and Convocation* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 13. The Vice-Chancellor was not a Crown appointment per se, but was elected annually by the Fellows from amongst their number all of whom were Crown appointments.

¹⁵⁸ *The Times*, 16 December 1836.

accept 'the certificate of examinations for degrees having been passed' at Durham as sufficient to confer a degree.¹⁵⁹ This, they argued, would 'secure the privileges of this University from infringement'.¹⁶⁰ Far from improving, however, the situation deteriorated when the London Senate insisted it would only accept certificates where a student had also passed the London matriculation examination at the start of their course. Even Maltby found this requirement unhelpful. On 20 June he gave notice to London's Senate, in his capacity as a member of that body, of his intention to bring forward a motion stating that 'Candidates for a Degree, who shall be Students of the University of Durham, need not pass the Matriculation Examination'.¹⁶¹ While this view accorded with that of Durham's Senate, it appears that Maltby had acted independently.¹⁶²

The London authorities carried on regardless and proceeded to draft regulations that treated Durham in the same way as King's College and University College.¹⁶³ Durham's Senate received the regulations on 12 September, along with a letter from Maltby attempting to offer re-assurance. Maltby seems to have been caught between his desire to secure the right of progression to London degrees, and his wish to retain Durham's independence. He had tried to impress on London's Senate that to require Durham students to pass the London matriculation exam was 'contrary to the practice of independent Universities in receiving students from one another'. This did little to placate the Senate, which instructed Chevallier to write to the Senate of the

¹⁵⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 March 1838.

¹⁶⁰ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 May 1838.

¹⁶¹ [SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 20 June 1838.

¹⁶² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 4 July 1838.

¹⁶³ [SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 1 August 1838, 15 August 1838.

University of London to express 'their surprise at the manner in [which] the name of the Univ. of Durham' had been 'introduced into the Regulations not only without any formal concurrence ... but when the Warden & Senate ... had expressly objected to' it.¹⁶⁴

The continuing argument brought tensions between the Warden and the Bishop to new heights, as each accused the other of dishonesty (in thinly veiled terms). As requested by Durham's Senate, Maltby wrote to London's Vice-Chancellor, John Lubbock, relaying their concerns. Nevertheless, the Bishop added that he did 'frankly confess' that he did 'not clearly see the force of these objections'. While Maltby admitted that he had been 'in error in supposing there was no other objection to the acceptance of the Queen's letter' he contradicted Thorp's account by claiming he had 'consulted the Warden on the subject', after being asked to do so by Russell, and that Thorp had indicated that there would be no significant issues. 'This conversation passed in the time of vacation; and it either slipped his memory, or he did not consider it sufficiently formal to communicate to the Senate' Maltby concluded.¹⁶⁵

Still Thorp maintained that the Warrant had been 'issued without application on our part, and without previous notice' and added 'that the very terms of Lord J. R. accompanying letter, intimating the exercise of your Lordship's good offices with the University in order to facilitate its acceptance', indicated that there had been no prior conversation. The most Thorp allowed was that 'it may have happened that your Lordship in conversation mentioned the degrees of London before the Warrant came forth' and, if the Bishop had done so, Thorp admitted he may have said this would be

¹⁶⁴ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 12 September 1838.

¹⁶⁵ [DUL] TC, 322: Maltby to Lubbock, 20 November 1838.

beneficial for those students who could not take Durham's religious oath yet he could not recall such a conversation and 'the expression of any opinion in my official capacity, or of any formal opinion at all, I am bound in justice to myself with the utmost deference distinctly to distain'. 'Your Lordship, I venture to think,' Thorp continued, 'assigns in your recollection to an earlier period those communications which took place after the arrival of the Warrant, and before it came under our view'.¹⁶⁶ Maltby's reaction has been lost, but Thorp was clearly agitated and wrote again to the Bishop concerning the Warrant in quick succession on 26, 27 and 28 November. In these letters he continued his remonstrance with the Bishop and remarked that he did not 'suppose that a Queen's Warrant would be founded upon a conversation'.¹⁶⁷

Maltby's recollection of events would explain the casual nature of his original letter to Thorp, yet overall the Warden's position seems more persuasive. Although Maltby maintained that the Warrant was only issued after he had spoken with Thorp during the vacation, he made no mention of this supposed prior agreement when he forwarded the Warrant to the Warden. Again: there is nothing conclusive to prove the point, but Thorp's version of events would sit comfortably with the conjecture that Maltby was carrying through on a deal with Russell to secure the Warrant in return for the Charter.

On 16 January 1839, London's Senate relented and agreed to remove the name of the University of Durham from their regulations.¹⁶⁸ On 28 January 1839, Durham's Senate agreed that their objections had been 'sufficiently obviated by the proposed

¹⁶⁶ [DUL] TC, 324: Thorp to Maltby, 23 November 1838.

¹⁶⁷ [DUL] TC, 326: Thorp to Maltby, 27 November 1838.

¹⁶⁸ [SHL] University of London Minutes of Senate: 16 January 1839.

alterations'.¹⁶⁹ On 13 February 1839, London's Senate received confirmation from Russell that he approved the changes too – and with that the name of the University of Durham was removed and the matter was not discussed again in London's Senate.

Whiting provides only a brief commentary on this episode, and Fowler does not record it at all. Yet it is both the necessary final chapter in the story of the University's official creation, and demonstration of the extent to which the University's first few years were a struggle against the desires of unsympathetic government ministers. Durham's brief appearance as an institution able to send students forward for London degrees gave rise to a persistent misunderstanding that this actually happened. The eminent historian of higher education, Sheldon Rothblatt, made multiple errors when he wrote that 'for a brief moment in the 1830s [Durham] students read for the new London degree while Durham awaited degree conferring authority from the Privy Council'.¹⁷⁰ More recently, Whyte likewise falls into the same trap by mistakenly assuming Durham prepared candidates for London degrees.¹⁷¹

In 1941, Hughes applauded Van Mildert: 'to have founded a university after the manner of a great medieval churchman would have been no mean achievement in any age', he noted, 'to have done so in 1831-3 when the radical wolves "Hume and Co." were howling at the door of the ecclesiastical sheepfold was something of a miracle'.¹⁷² What should be added is that to obtain a Charter from Lord John Russell for an avowedly Anglican institution that imposed religious tests, and then to

¹⁶⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 January 1839.

¹⁷⁰ Rothblatt, *Modern University*, p. 244.

¹⁷¹ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 50.

¹⁷² E. Hughes, 'The Bishops and Reform; Some Fresh Correspondence 1831-333', *English Historical Review*, LVI/CCXXIII (1941), pp. 459-490, p. 460.

successfully defend the University from a Warrant that would have subordinated the University to London's Senate, and effectively brought it under government control too, was a feat of equal measure.

Conclusion

Whatever the status of the body they were admitted to, the first students entered the University in October 1833 with the intention of obtaining degrees. The students who graduated on 8 June 1837 were the first to be granted a degree by a university in England outside Oxford and Cambridge. Thorp's idea for a university fitted several needs entirely: there was an ever-growing demand for a useful northern university and the Chapter were in a position to supply one;¹⁷³ they had the wealth available; and historical precedent not only helped generate the idea but was the defence for the redeployment of their endowment. The plan then relied on ambition, speed, and vision. It is for these reasons that Thorp was unequivocal: 'should it seem too ambitious we can soar lower, but I believe a boldish flight to be the safest & better'.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 30-3; Yates, *Academical Education*, pp. 183-4.

¹⁷⁴ [DUL] TC, 17: Thorp to Gaisford, 11 August 1831.

It is a great relief to my mind, to have now placed the three chief officers at my disposal in the hands of persons on whom I can so entirely rely; & I feel assured that, with the Divine blessing, the undertaking will go on & prosper.¹

William Van Mildert, 29 October 1833

Introduction

The University came into practical existence quietly when, on Monday 28 October 1833, the entrance examination was held for the first students.² The *Durham Advertiser* marked the occasion.

Next Monday, the examination for students for the Durham University will take place, and we may consider that as the official and real commencement of an institution which promises to be fraught with the highest advantages to society ... To the city of Durham the institution will be highly advantageous. It will bring a greater number of visitants, as well increase the permanent residents; and add not a little to the interest which our city already possesses for strangers. For these benefits the citizens will be indebted to the much-vilified clergy of the establishment; and, we have no doubt, they will have the good feeling and good sense to evince that gratitude to their benefactors which is justly their due. Looking forward with much interest to the new era which is dawning upon us we most heartily wish success and perpetuity to the University of Durham.³

In many important respects everything seemed favourable for the University's future.

'Everything seems propitious', said the poet Robert Surtees.⁴

Van Mildert and Thorp were also trying to build a University populated by staff of the highest academic calibre; though the concept of an academic profession

¹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[C]: Van Mildert to Jenkyns, 29 October 1833.

² Although they were examined on Monday 28 October 1833 the students signed the University Admissions Register on Friday 25 October 1833.

³ *Durham Advertiser*, 25 October 1833.

⁴ G. Taylor, *A Memoir of Robert Surtees* (London, 1852), p. 440.

was still ill-defined and contested.⁵ Yet excellence alone was not enough. For the staff of the University were recruited from those already known to the Bishop, Warden, or their network of friends; Gaisford in particular was Van Mildert's especially trusted confidant. This ensured the University became a clearly Hackney Phalanx institution, as well a home for local talent, realising the ambition to make Durham both a true reformed and northern university as well as a home of High Church Anglicanism.

However, despite exerting considerable time and effort to find trusted and able men, not all the initial appointments were successful. In addition, such was the desire to realise a particular idea of a university, that using networks and patronage alone became exclusionary. As Tamson Pietsch observed respecting the recruitment of staff to universities in the British Empire towards the end of the nineteenth century, but which applied equally to the way in which staff were recruited to Durham in the 1830s, this meant that the 'contours' of Durham's world were mapped 'by the density and reach of personal connections'.⁶

The Durham Professorial Model

At first the only staff member in the University was Thorp. He had been made Warden formally in July 1833, but had served in that capacity since being appointed by Van Mildert in November 1831 'pro tempore, at least'.⁷ After the Warden the most high-ranking positions, in order of their seniority, were the Professors in Divinity and Ecclesiastical History, Greek and Classical Literature, and Mathematics. The

⁵ Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 14-16.

⁶ T. Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850-1939* (Manchester, 2013), p. 61.

⁷ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1835; [Bal] JP, IVA.6: Jenkinson to Van Mildert, 29 November 1831.

appointment of the two Professors in Divinity and Greek were the most complex not simply because of their status, and hence the particular importance of securing the services of the most able men possible, but also because it was the intention to attach these two Professorships to Stalls in the Cathedral, much along the lines of Christ Church, Oxford.⁸ This arrangement meant that the appointments had to be made by the Bishop rather than the Chapter. As Van Mildert grew older and his health deteriorated, however, his ability to engage with his duties suffered. These troubles in part explain why the appointment of the Professors of Divinity and Greek were still being discussed less than a week before the first students took up residence.⁹

In addition to the three Professors a broad academic body was appointed, including a series of Readers in Law, Medicine, Hebrew and Oriental Languages, History and Polite Literature, Moral Philosophy, and Natural Philosophy. Although these would not be full-time appointments, they ranked just beneath the Professors in the institutional hierarchy. Below the Readers, two Lecturers were appointed in Chemistry and Mineralogy, and Modern Languages.¹⁰ Finally, with the addition of two Tutors who taught the students in Arts, the first edition of the Calendar listed 12 members of academic staff and 42 students; an impressive – though expensive – ratio of three-and-a-half students to each member of staff.

Durham did not follow the professorial model of the older English universities, which was the subject of calls for reform to make the professors central to the teaching and academic activities of the universities rather than peripheral to private tutors.¹¹

⁸ Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 36-7, 57.

⁹ [DCL] VML, 328-9: Van Mildert to Thorp, 22 October 1833.

¹⁰ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1833.

¹¹ Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 35-6.

Both Oxford and Cambridge each had about 20 professors but their contribution to the formal examined curriculum was strictly limited. The impact of each Professor was dependent largely on the industry of the current incumbent, as their main work was to provide additional lectures, which were sometimes simply not delivered, on subjects that would not be examined.¹² Some Professors did very little at all, especially those in less well-endowed Chairs, but even the Cambridge Lady Margaret Professors on £1,000 a year failed to deliver any lectures for almost a century.¹³ This contrasted strongly with the Scottish system. In 1800 there were 72 professors across the five Scottish universities, who taught just under 3,000 students as ‘virtually’ the ‘sole constituents’ of the academic profession. These professors delivered content integral to the curriculum and responded to the changing needs of their students, in part because they were largely dependent on student fees for their income and not endowments as at Oxford and Cambridge. Reliance on student fees meant Scottish professors incomes varied enormously: the 1826 royal commission estimated the gross income of the highest paid professor, Thomas Hope, the Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh, was a staggering £2,213, while 10 other professors earned in excess of £1,000. Nevertheless, despite the rich earnings of a few, the median income was £335 and 2 professors at the colleges in Aberdeen received less than £100 – the sort of salary even a curate might expect.¹⁴

A pattern based on the Scottish model was instituted at both King’s College,

¹² A.J. Engel, ‘Emerging Concepts of the Academic Profession at Oxford 1800-1854’, in Stone (ed.), *The University in Society*, vol. 1, pp. 305-51, pp. 305-6; Slee, ‘Liberal Education’, pp. 68-9; Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 108.

¹³ Anderson, *British Universities*, pp. 17-9; Anderson, ‘Scottish University Professors’, p. 27; Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 108; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, p. 155.

¹⁴ Anderson, ‘Scottish University Professors’, pp. 27, 34-5.

London and London University. In King's College the Professors were not paid a stipend, but instead received three quarters of the fees from students attending their lectures.¹⁵ At London University, although for the first two years of operation the Professors were guaranteed an income of £300 per annum, they were afterwards likewise reliant on income from student fees.¹⁶ Even despite this limited initial guarantee, however, the earliest appointments were made to men who were both younger and generally less prestigious than had been hoped. A high staff turnover was the result too.¹⁷ This situation was blamed on insufficient remuneration; it was fateful, for example, that Thomas Arnold withdrew from consideration for the Chair in Modern History at London University in favour of the better paid appointment as Headmaster of Rugby School.¹⁸ Despite recruiting men of unproven records for the Professorships, still numerous holders of the Chairs resigned their appointments so dissatisfied were they by their low income and lack of assured remuneration.¹⁹

The professorial model at Durham followed the Scottish pattern too, a development which has received little attention from historians. Thorp always intended that the Professors would work, but Van Mildert was confused: 'what, after all, are to be the duties of the Professor[s]? ... and wherein will they differ ... from those of the Tutors and Censors?'²⁰ Van Mildert had by all accounts undertaken his duties as Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford with care and diligence.²¹ Even so, given

¹⁵ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 89.

¹⁶ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 99.

¹⁷ Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 65-6.

¹⁸ A.J.H. Reeve, 'Arnold, Thomas (1795–1842)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2014).

¹⁹ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 37-47.

²⁰ [DUL] TC, 68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 December 1831.

²¹ Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 52.

that, 'neither in Oxford or Cambridge are any specific duties laid upon' the professors, the Bishop struggled to understand what they would do in Durham.²² Thorp explained that they would 'have the charge of the studies in their respective departments and work as at Glasgow and the foreign Universities, and as they did at Oxford in old times'.²³ Thorp had also been influenced by the experience at St David's College where Jenkinson told him 'the Principal, Vice Principal, & Tutors, are all called Professors', but despite this, the Dean assured him, 'they are in fact all working, & hard working, Tutors, more so than either Oxford or Cambridge'. The Professors at Durham 'must not therefore be a sleeping, nor even a superintendent, Partner' with the tutors acting as their 'assistants & subject to his direction'.²⁴ The Durham model was also much like that which William Hamilton had advocated for Oxford in the *Edinburgh Review* in June 1831. He called for 'a tutorial system in subordination to a professorial' model which he regarded 'as affording the condition of an absolutely perfect University'.²⁵

'The Divinity & Greek Professors should on all accounts, for the credit, as well as the effectiveness of the Institution, be persons of first rate qualifications', Jenkinson urged Van Mildert.²⁶ The Bishop agreed absolutely. Yet, given the University's recent creation, uncertain future, and remote northern location, there were many reasons why this might be hard to achieve – just as London University had discovered. Fortunately, for as many as were dissuaded others were attracted by the High Church

²² [DUL] TC, 68: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 December 1831.

²³ [Bal] JP, IVA.6: Thorp to Van Mildert, 10 December 1831.

²⁴ [Bal] JP, IVA.6: Jenkinson to Thorp, 9 November 1831.

²⁵ *Edinburgh Review*, 53/106 (1831), p. 398.

²⁶ [Bal] JP, IVA.6: Jenkinson to Van Mildert, 29 November 1831.

ethos, and the prospect of rich remuneration which included the possibility of one of Durham's Golden Prebends.

The formal and constitutional position of the Professors was agreed when the Chapter approved initial statutes on 4 April 1834, which they affirmed on 20 July 1835. By these statutes a Senate was established that consisted of the Warden, the three Professors, the two Proctors (an additional post held by staff in another substantive position), and one member of Convocation nominated annually by the Dean and Chapter. The earliest minutes of Senate date from 19 January 1836, though the minutes of University College Council note that their meeting held on 20 January 1835 was a meeting of Senate instead of the Council. It is therefore possible that the Senate started meeting after its initial foundation in April 1834 but that it did not formalise its business until January 1836.

Tutors, Readers, Lecturers, and Fellows

Next in seniority after the Professors were the two Tutors, and both came with excellent academic credentials. The Senior Tutor, Thomas Peile, had even been in contention for a Professorship. He had been 'powerfully recommended by Mr King, the President of Queen's, and Wordsworth, Master of Trinity' to Van Mildert for the Greek Chair.²⁷ Peile was a Cambridge man and this perhaps explains why the Bishop was unfamiliar with him. He had matriculated at Trinity College in 1824 and was awarded the Davies Scholarship in 1825, the Members' Prize for Latin prose in 1827, and the second Chancellor's Medal for classics in 1828. He graduated BA in 1828 as 18th wrangler (out of 33) in the Mathematical Tripos and bracketed second in the first

²⁷ [DUL] TC, 118: Van Mildert to Thorp, 30 March 1833.

class of the Classical Tripos. He was elected to a Fellowship at Trinity College in 1829, and proceeded to his MA in 1831. He was the Headmaster of Liverpool Collegiate School from 1829 to 1833. In June 1833 Peile visited Van Mildert at his London residence, to discuss 'Durham Tutorships or Professorships'. Van Mildert found him 'a very prepossessing young man', who came 'well and highly recommended'.²⁸ Nevertheless, Peile was not offered the Professorship, probably because of his youth and relative inexperience, but perhaps also because he was less well-known in Van Mildert's network.

While it seemed the Junior Tutor, William Palmer, was not considered for a higher role he was no less able than Peile. He matriculated from Magdalen College, Oxford in 1826, and was elected to a demyship (scholarship) and obtained the Chancellor's prize in 1830. He graduated BA in 1831, achieving first-class honours in classics, was elected to a Fellowship in 1832, won the University essay prize in 1833, and proceeded MA in 1836. Though Palmer remained in Durham, after the first academic year he was succeeded as Tutor by Charles Whitley. Whitley's standing will be adverted to later as he was a candidate for the Mathematical Chair and was appointed as the Reader in Natural Philosophy as well as Junior Tutor.

The Readers and Lecturers were part-time appointments or, as Whitley described them "'allied powers" rather than actual members of staff'.²⁹ Given their status, few of these original staff impacted much upon the University but one significant exception is relevant: James Finlay Weir Johnston. Johnston was the

²⁸ [DUL] TC, 135: Thorp to Van Mildert, 25 June 1833.

²⁹ C. Darwin, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, eds. F. Burkhardt and S. Smith, (21+ vols., Cambridge, 1985-), vol. 1, pp. 426-8: Whitley to Darwin, 5 February 1835.

University's first lecturer in Chemistry and Mineralogy, being listed in the Prospectus of July 1833.³⁰ Born in Paisley in 1796, Johnston was the eldest son of a local merchant. He went up to Glasgow University at 21 and graduated MA in 1826. Despite supporting himself at university by tutoring, he featured in the prize lists eleven times.³¹ After graduating, he moved to Durham where he opened a private school and through marriage, in 1829, gained a sufficient income to abandon his teaching and concentrate on his chemical studies and research. Johnston first enquired about a 'chair of Chemistry' at the University in January 1832,³² and later submitted a bundle of glowing testimonials for consideration.³³ At the time he had been working with the great Swedish chemist, Jöns Jacob Berzelius. He had also been heavily involved in the formation of the British Association and was one of its leading figures, having been appointed to the local committee of the Association in Edinburgh, as well as to the Chemistry and Mineralogy Sub-Committees.³⁴ Hence he was already well-known when the University first admitted students: it was to Johnston, for example, that a correspondent to the *Lancet* made their appeal in December 1833 for the establishment of an English Journal of Chemistry.³⁵

Unlike most of the rest of the staff of the University Johnston was a Presbyterian; but his excellent scientific attainments outweighed this disadvantage

³⁰ [DUL] TC, 652: Prospectus, 20 July 1833.

³¹ R.A. Baker, 'The Art of the Soluble: Science and Scientists at Durham', *History of Universities*, XIV (1995/6), pp. 201-224, p. 204.

³² [DUL] DCI: Johnston to Thorp, 27 January 1832.

³³ Baker, 'Art of the Soluble', p. 205.

³⁴ *Report of the First and Second Meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London, 1833), pp. 46-7; J. Morrell and A. Thackray, *Gentlemen of Science: Early Years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 23, 142-4.

³⁵ *The Lancet*, 21/537 (14 December 1833), pp. 444-5.

and as he was a well-known local figure Thorp would have judged him trustworthy and diligent. 'The Lecturer in Chemistry, a man of 100 Testimonials, is a Presbyterian;' Gilly wrote to Brougham, 'pretty well this for electors, who according to the Times Newspaper are "Brutes & Bigots".'³⁶ The general academic staff were not in fact required to subscribe any religious oath, as was required of students wishing to proceed to a degree, though in practice most were firmly Anglican. Rather than religion, the clear link uniting all the early appointments was a desire to recruit the most talented staff available from either High Church Anglicans or local and trusted men.

The first Calendar also listed six 'Junior Fellows' and three 'Senior Fellows', though these original designations were only used briefly.³⁷ In 1839/40 the Dean and Chapter revised the scheme and established six Fellows as positions for undergraduates to aspire to, much like the Oxford model.³⁸ Without such inducements beyond the BA, it was felt that the University would struggle to attract talented students. By an Order of Council in June 1841, following a recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, this was increased to 24. The standard Fellowship was worth £120 per year but 10 of the awards were termed Senior Clerical Fellows, and augmented by an additional £30 per year. The Fellowships could be held for a maximum of ten years. Entry to a Fellowship was by election in the Michaelmas Term, and any individual seeking a Fellowship would have to be successful in one of the three elections following his admission to the degree of BA. The electoral body was

³⁶ [UCL] Brougham Papers, 45,965: Gilly to Brougham, 22 July 1833.

³⁷ *Durham University Calendar 1833*, p. 6.

³⁸ Engel, 'Emerging Concept of the Academic Profession', p. 308; Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, p. 36.

the Warden, the members of Senate, and up to four existing Fellows. Once elected, the Fellows were expected to proceed to the degree of MA.

The first three Fellows were elected in 1839, all of whom obtained excellent results in the final examinations for their BA degrees. John Cundill was placed in the First Class for Mathematical & Physical Science and in the Second Class for Classical & General Literature. Thomas Garnett was also placed in the Second Class for Classical & General Literature, as was Brereton Dwarris. The first Fellows were then of a respectable academic standard.

John Carr

The first Professor of Mathematics, and the only local man to be appointed to a Chair in the new University, was the Headmaster of Durham School, John Carr. Entering Trinity College, Cambridge, as a Scholar in 1803 he graduated BA in 1807 as Second Wrangler, MA in 1810 and was made a Fellow in 1808. Adam Sedgwick, who was also a Fellow of Trinity, recorded in 1811 when Carr left to become Headmaster of Durham School that he was 'too valuable a man to be easily replaced'.³⁹ To his position at Durham School, which carried only a small salary, Carr added in 1818 the living of Brantingham in the East Riding of Yorkshire.⁴⁰ Both positions were in the patronage of the Dean and Chapter, and the Headmaster was one of those local worthies who received a regular invitation to the Prebends' hospitality residence dinners.⁴¹ Carr was therefore very well-connected with the Cathedral clergy. He put himself forward for the Professorship in December 1831, very soon after the Chapter's

³⁹ J.W. Clark, *The life and letters of the Reverend Adam Sedgwick* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1890), vol. 1, p. 115.

⁴⁰ Clark, *Adam Sedgwick*, p. 115.

⁴¹ Fowler, 'Residence Dinners', p. 1.

decision to found the new institution was made public.⁴² 'Although during the twenty years I have been in your service my time and attention have been principally directed to other subjects', he admitted, 'yet I can assure the Chapter that during the whole of that period I have not failed ... to give up a considerable portion of my leisure hours to Mathematical Science'.⁴³

Illustration 3: John Carr, by Joseph Bouet⁴⁴



Despite his connections, however, Carr was not appointed without at least some consideration of other candidates. In fact there was a tide of applications, and Van Mildert remarked there would 'be no lack of offers for the Mathematical Chair'.⁴⁵ In January 1832, for example, the Chapter received an approach from Henry Moseley.⁴⁶ Moseley had been appointed to the Professorship of Natural and Experimental Philosophy at King's College, London, a year earlier and he had subsequently added

⁴² [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 24 December 1831.

⁴³ [DUL] DCI: Carr to Chaytor, 24 December 1831.

⁴⁴ Cross, *Bouet's Durham*, pp. 56-7.

⁴⁵ [DCL] VML, 218-20: Van Mildert to Thorp, 7 January 1832.

⁴⁶ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 7 January 1832.

the role of Chaplain, which came with a small salary of £105 per year.⁴⁷ It is not clear why he was interested in moving away from London, but it is quite plausible he was seeking a more secure income.

Another such application, also received in January 1832, came from Miles Bland, formerly Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge.⁴⁸ Bland was powerfully supported by all the Heads and most of the Professors in Cambridge, as well as Bishops and others.⁴⁹ Van Mildert seemed persuaded: 'I begin to think there cannot be a better candidate', he confided to Thorp.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Carr's application prevailed: he had solid academic credentials, was known to the Chapter, and was well-respected locally. He therefore became the University's first Professorial appointment and was the only one of the three Professors to be listed in the preliminary arrangements agreed by Chapter on 20 July 1833.⁵¹ It was agreed that he would receive £300 as Professor, plus £100 as a Senior Fellow.⁵²

Before his work could begin, Carr died unexpectedly on Wednesday 30 October 1833, only two days after the start of the first term. His passing was marked by two weeks of official mourning in the University.⁵³ The *Durham Advertiser* carried a poem written in his honour.⁵⁴ The poet Robert Surtees wrote of the 'honoured end of my poor friend John Carr', whose death he said had 'thrown a gloom on the general

⁴⁷ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 90, 112.

⁴⁸ [DUL] DCI: Bland to Chaytor, 4 January 1832.

⁴⁹ [DUL] DCI: Bland to Thorp, 26 January 1832.

⁵⁰ [DCL] VML, 225-6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 10 January 1832.

⁵¹ [DUL] TC, 652: Prospectus, 20 July 1833.

⁵² [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1833.

⁵³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1833, p. 472.

⁵⁴ *The Durham Advertiser*, 15 November 1833

feeling' of the new University.⁵⁵ But, as James Raine, the Cathedral Librarian, remarked rhetorically: although Carr's death was a sad loss, 'who will take upon him to arraign the dealings of the almighty?'.⁵⁶ The Almighty must have some plan in mind; but it certainly made for an inauspicious start.

Henry Jenkyns

The remaining two Professorships were appointed by the personal nomination of the Bishop, because of the intention of connecting those positions to Stalls in the Cathedral. Gaisford thought the idea of annexing Stalls was perilous: as early as August 1831 he warned Van Mildert that 'the whole scheme would be ruined by endowing working offices so amply'.⁵⁷ The Bishop tended to agree, and was alarmed when Thorp suggested that each Professor should fund their own Reader out of the proceeds of their Stall fearing that this might 'tempt an idle man to accept the office ... knowing that he can well afford to remunerate the Reader handsomely, and then pocket the remainder of the proceeds of his Prebend, to enjoy almost a sinecure'.⁵⁸ The question of annexation would have to wait, however, while the Bishop set about filling the Professorships with men of the highest academic ability, appropriate religious inclinations, and wherever possible by those who were recommended to him by his extended network of friends.

Finding the right men took time: in fact, it lasted almost two years. A list of potential staff was first drawn up around September 1831. It included four candidates

⁵⁵ Taylor, *Robert Surtees*, p. 440.

⁵⁶ J. Raine, *A Brief account of Durham cathedral with notices of the castle, university, city churches, &c* (Newcastle, 1833), p. 143.

⁵⁷ [DUL] TC, 24: Van Mildert to Thorp, 18 August 1831.

⁵⁸ [DUL] TC, 30: Van Mildert to Thorp, 26 August 1831.

for the Divinity Chair and six for the Greek.⁵⁹ Many other names were discussed in correspondence. One candidate that the Bishop favoured early on was Edward Churton, someone who was well-known in Van Mildert's circle of friends. In 1830 Churton was appointed Curate to the Rector of Hackney, John James Watson, the brother of Joshua Watson, and a core member of the Hackney Phalanx. Churton's position within the inner circle of the Hackney Phalanx was reinforced in 1832 when he married John Watson's eldest daughter, Caroline. Academically, however, Churton was successful rather than remarkable. He had entered Christ Church, Oxford, as a commoner in 1818 and gained his BA in 1821 (being placed in the second class for classics) and then his MA in 1824. After Oxford he was an assistant master at Charterhouse, and was ordained priest in 1827. In November 1831, Gaisford advised Van Mildert that though Churton had 'enough of natural talent, and of acquired learning' he lacked 'that discretion without which talent ... may be mischievous'.⁶⁰ Van Mildert heeded Gaisford's warning and Churton was not approached about the Professorship, though in 1835 the Bishop appointed him the Rector of Crayke in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

Gaisford first mentioned William Mills as a potential candidate in November 1831, but it was not until June 1833 that Van Mildert renewed his enquiries.⁶¹ Mills

⁵⁹ [DUL] TC, 45: List of staff, September 1831. In most cases, only surnames were included, which has left the identity of some of the candidates uncertain. Likely identities are: John Davison of Oriel College, Oxford; Edward Parr Greswell of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; John Keble; and a fourth name that is unclear for Divinity; and Thomas Gaisford of Christ Church, Oxford; Renn Dickson Hampden of Oriel College, Oxford; John Ottley of Oriel College, Oxford; C J Plumer, Van Mildert's Chaplain; and Henry Arthur Woodgate of St John's College, Oxford for the Greek Chair.

⁶⁰ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 166.

⁶¹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 27 November 1831; [DUL] TC, 584: Thorp to Van Mildert, 14 June 1833.

was Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Dr White's Professor of Moral Philosophy. This particular Professorship included the Dean of Christ Church amongst its electors.⁶² The Bishop was about to offer Mills the role when Thorp passed on some concerns about his suitability from the current Sub-Dean, Samuel Smith. Smith was Gaisford's predecessor in the Deanery at Christ Church and he would therefore have been one of the electors who appointed Mills.⁶³ Van Mildert wavered and waited anxiously for further comment from Thorp.⁶⁴ Eventually, however, the Bishop was satisfied as to Mr Mills' suitability and on 2 July he wrote offering him the Professorship,⁶⁵ for '£400 at least'.⁶⁶ Mills, however, declined by return of post: 'another University disappointment' grumbled Van Mildert.⁶⁷

The Bishop next turned his attention to Henry Jenkyns, and again asked Gaisford for his opinion. Gaisford had married Jenkyns' sister, Jane Catherine, in May the previous year but still the Bishop trusted he would give 'an honest opinion, notwithstanding any personal bias'.⁶⁸ Jenkyns had been educated at Eton College before proceeding as a Scholar to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1813. In 1816 he was placed in the first class for his final examinations for both Classics and Mathematics – an outstanding result – and graduated BA in 1817 and MA in 1819. He was elected to one of the highly prestigious Fellowships at Oriel College in 1818, under Copleston as Provost, and although he was never a tutor he did help with the running

⁶² *Oxford University Calendar 1833*, p. 41.

⁶³ [DUL] TC, 135: Thorp to Van Mildert, 25 June 1833.

⁶⁴ [DUL] TC, 136: Thorp to Van Mildert, 28 June 1833.

⁶⁵ [DCL] VML, 299: Van Mildert to Thorp, 3 July 1833.

⁶⁶ [DUL] TC, 135: Thorp to Van Mildert, 25 June 1833.

⁶⁷ [DCL] VML, 300-1: Van Mildert to Thorp, 8 July 1833.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

of the College, being Treasurer in 1831.⁶⁹ He was well-respected outside Oxford, and shortly before he was offered the Chair at Durham he was also a potential candidate for Principal of King's College, London, (a post he was not attracted to) and for Principal of St Mary's Hall, Oxford.⁷⁰

Jenkyns' appointment was confirmed only shortly before the start of the first term. Yet when he wrote to Van Mildert on 19 October 1833, little more than a week before the first students arrived, he still asked for more time to consider his position. Jenkyns was concerned that 'succession to a predendal stall' remained uncertain, and he wanted to 'be more thoroughly acquainted ... with the services required' too. He therefore proposed coming to Durham to undertake further inquiries, and would then finally decide whether or not to accept.⁷¹ Jenkyns duly travelled north and on 28 October 1833 he wrote to Van Mildert to confirm his acceptance. By this point his enthusiasm had taken over and even before his formal appointment, he entered into his new duties by examining students for admission that very morning.⁷²

Hugh James Rose

Van Mildert spent the greatest amount of time considering the most senior position. 'I am still balancing between Mr Le Bas & Mr Rose for the Divinity Professorship', Van Mildert told the Warden in January 1832, 'or (in case of their declining it) Mr Greswell'.⁷³ All three men were respected and well-known scholars

⁶⁹ R. Brent, 'The Oriel Noetics', in Brock and Curthoys (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Volume 6*, pp. 72-6; Evans, *University of Oxford*, pp. 246-7; K.C. Turpin, 'The Ascendancy of Oriel', in Brock and Curthoys (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Volume 6*, pp. 183-92.

⁷⁰ A.S. Havens, 'Henry Jenkyns on the thirty-nine articles a study in nineteenth-century Anglican confessionalism' (Durham University MA thesis, 1982), pp. 34-36.

⁷¹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Jenkyns to Van Mildert, 19 October 1833.

⁷² [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Jenkyns to Van Mildert, 28 October 1833.

⁷³ [DCL] VML, 218-20: Van Mildert to Thorp, 7 January 1832.

and were also, most importantly, known to Van Mildert and his inner circle. Elected Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1801, by January 1832 Charles Webb Le Bas was the Dean and Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the East India College, Haileybury. He was associated with the Hackney Phalanx and contributed to the *British Critic* and *British Magazine*; both titles were staunchly High Church and the *British Critic* had briefly, in 1811, been edited by Van Mildert after it had been purchased by Joshua Watson and Henry Handley Norris.⁷⁴ With the right sort of ecclesiological principles, he was a strong candidate.

Edward Parr Greswell had been made Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1823, and was younger than Le Bas by almost 20 years. In 1832 the majority of his successful theological career lay in front of him. Although over a year later he was still under consideration by Van Mildert, the Bishop was disinclined to approach him: 'though there can be no doubt of his high scholarship', he wrote, 'I am not equally assured of his theological attainments, nor of his aptitude for lecturing, and I have been told that he is much of a recluse in his habits'.⁷⁵ This latter comment echoed Gaisford, who had told the Bishop that in his view Greswell was 'a very learned man and in industry indefatigable – but his habits are retiring'.⁷⁶

On 21 June 1833 Van Mildert offered the Divinity Chair not to Le Bas, Rose or Greswell but to John James Blunt, Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge.⁷⁷ He too was High Church and the Bishop had been impressed by his Hulsean Lectures; in 1831 he had spoken on the veracity of the historical books of the Old Testament while in

⁷⁴ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 48.

⁷⁵ [DUL] TC, 132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833.

⁷⁶ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 26 December 1831.

⁷⁷ [DUL] TC, 135: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 June 1833.

1832 he addressed the principles for the proper understanding of the Mosaic writings.⁷⁸ Van Mildert also regarded several of his articles in the *Quarterly Review* highly, and his *Sketch of the Reformation in England* (1832) had given the Bishop ‘a most favourable opinion of his talents for popular writing, as well as his solid acquirements, his judgement, temper, and taste’.⁷⁹ Christopher Wordsworth, the Master of Trinity College, and another elder of the Hackney Phalanx, assured the Bishop that Blunt was ‘much esteemed’ in Cambridge. Blunt declined the offer, much to the Bishop’s surprise, explaining to Van Mildert that he had ‘formed ... plans of life’ which meant he could not take on the role; this rejection threw Van Mildert ‘into sad perplexity’.⁸⁰

Soon after this disappointment the Bishop offered Hugh James Rose the position through their mutual friend, Joshua Watson.⁸¹ The Bishop had already used Watson in June to solicit Rose’s view on a move north.⁸² Rose was not, however, favoured by all those close to the Bishop and crucially Gaisford did not support his candidature. ‘Learning’, he told Van Mildert in January 1832 respecting both Rose and Greswell, ‘probably they both possess enough & to share – but that is not the only qualification necessary to enable persons to fill the office with advantage’.⁸³ Gaisford did not elaborate on what he felt they lacked, but his disinclination to support Rose for the Professorship would have carried great weight with Van Mildert and no doubt contributed to Rose initially being overlooked in favour of Blunt.

⁷⁸ [DUL] TC, 132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833.

⁷⁹ [DUL] TC, 135: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 June 1833; vol. 1, f132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833.

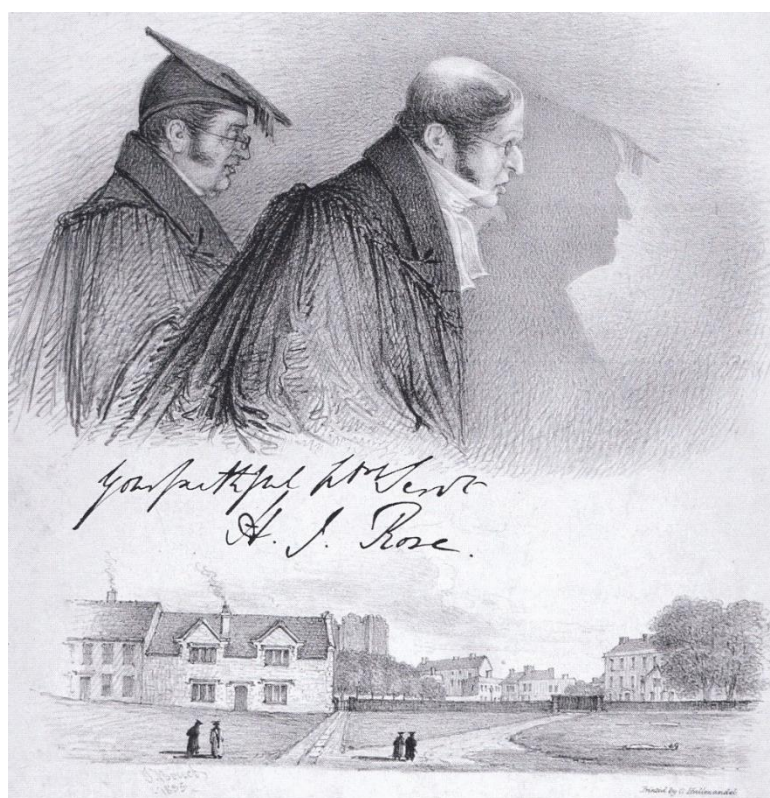
⁸⁰ [DUL] TC, 132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833; [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Blunt to Van Mildert, 1 July 1833; [DCL] VML, 299: Van Mildert to Thorp, 3 July 1833.

⁸¹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Rose to Van Mildert, 16 July 1833.

⁸² J.W. Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men* (London, 1888), p. 182.

⁸³ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 5 January 1832.

Illustration 4: William Cooke (left) Hugh James Rose (right), by Joseph Bouet⁸⁴



Although in 1818 he had failed to secure a Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge, Rose had otherwise enjoyed a glittering academic career.⁸⁵ Admitted as a pensioner to Trinity College, he matriculated in 1813 and graduated BA in 1817, being first Chancellor's medallist and fourteenth wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos. He graduated MA in 1820. After failing to gain a Fellowship he was ordained and entered parochial duties and his reputation as a scholarly writer flourished during the 1820s. In 1824 Rose travelled through Germany and the following year he published his *Discourses on the State of the Protestant Religion in Germany*, in which he criticised the rationalism he felt dominated the Lutheran and Calvinist churches. His work was

⁸⁴ Cross, *Bouet's Durham*, pp. 32-3.

⁸⁵ D.A. Valone, 'Hugh James Rose's Anglican Critique of Cambridge: Science, Antirationalism, and Coleridgean Idealism in Late Georgian England', *Albion*, 33/2 (2001), pp. 218-42, p. 222.

criticised by Edward Pusey, who contended that rationalism had helped save the German church from a dead scholastic orthodoxy (though he later changed his opinion). Rose responded in further publications, as did Pusey, creating what Pusey called the 'German war'.⁸⁶

Richard Church called Rose 'the most accomplished divine and teacher in the English Church', for he was renowned as a preacher and was genuinely influential.⁸⁷ It has been suggested that his sermon on Commencement Sunday in October 1826 at the University Church in Cambridge prompted the development of King's College, London, as he denounced secularism in education and stressed the importance of divine revelation, and the study of theology, in the formation of cultured minds and souls.⁸⁸ The *British Critic* carried a lengthy article which picked up on these themes in an attack on London University, then in formation.⁸⁹

From 1829 to 1833 Rose served as Christian Advocate at Cambridge, with some of the fruits of his preaching being published in 1831 as *Eight Sermons Preached Before the University of Cambridge*. This work was dedicated to Joshua Watson. Alongside his Hackney Phalanx affiliations, Rose was also an early supporter of the Tractarians; indeed, it was Rose who convened the Hadleigh Conference when he hosted Hurrell Froude, William Palmer and Arthur Percival at his vicarage in Suffolk in July 1833.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ D.M. Thompson, *Cambridge Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 56-7; A.B. Webster, *Joshua Watson: The story of a layman 1771-1855* (London, 1954), pp. 95-6.

⁸⁷ Church, *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 85-7.

⁸⁸ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 33.

⁸⁹ *British Critic*, 1 (January 1827), pp. 175-211; Valone, 'Hugh James Rose'.

⁹⁰ This is William Patrick Palmer (1803-85) of Worcester College, Oxford, and not William Palmer (1811-79) of Magdalen College, Oxford, who was the first Senior Tutor of the University.

This is widely regarded as the start of the Oxford Movement.⁹¹ Rose had founded the *British Magazine* in 1832, which would become a significant voice for the Tractarians, though he would later distance himself from the Movement.⁹²

Rose was uncertain but the Archbishop urged him to accept. 'It would in my opinion', Howley told Rose, 'be of the greatest advantage to the infant institution to have the credit of your name in that office'.⁹³ A fortunate coincidence then intervened as, in the late summer of 1833, Rose was moving away from Hadleigh and so found himself with no obligations for up to six months.⁹⁴ He therefore offered Van Mildert his services on a temporary basis and, contrary to Rose's expectations, the Bishop accepted.⁹⁵

In fact, Van Mildert's principal concern was Rose's health: 'the only impediment to Mr Rose for the Divinity Chair', he told Thorp in May 1833, 'is the state of his health, which makes me almost afraid of the experiment'.⁹⁶ Rose was not at all convinced he could cope with the more severe Durham weather either, and was also anxious about his financial position should he find himself forced to quit.⁹⁷ As late as 14 October 1833, Van Mildert expressed his concern about the appointment, fearing that as there had been 'so many lets & impediments in our negotiations' with Rose, he would 'never feel assured till he is actually in harness'.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Rose's services

⁹¹ Chadwick, *Victorian Church: Part 1*, pp. 70-1; Church, *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 84-9; Webster, *Joshua Watson*, pp. 101-2.

⁹² Nockles, *Oxford Movement in Context*, pp. 290-2.

⁹³ Howley to Rose, 17 September 1833, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, p. 182.

⁹⁴ Rose to Watson, 27 September 1833, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, p. 183; [DUL] SC, A/4: Rose to Dean & Chapter, 16 July 1834.

⁹⁵ Rose to Watson, 27 September 1833, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, p. 183.

⁹⁶ [DUL] TC, 132: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 May 1833.

⁹⁷ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Rose to Van Mildert, 16 July 1833.

⁹⁸ [DCL] VML, 327: Van Mildert to Thorp, 14 October 1833.

were finally secured just in time for the opening of the University.

Annexation of Stalls for the Professors

Jenkyns and Rose accepted their new duties on the understanding that in due time their positions would in some form be annexed to Stalls in the cathedral, but both men also harboured fears that the promised endowment might never be made. On these grounds they were at first anxious only to agree to the conditional acceptance of their roles, leaving some room for their departure should the promised endowment fail. In the interim period, the Chapter agreed that both Professors would receive an annual salary of £500, plus a portion of the tuition fees paid by students.⁹⁹ The first Principal of King's College, London, William Otter, for comparison, was paid £800 so these salaries were reasonable if not luxurious.¹⁰⁰

It was always intended that the revenues of the Dean and Chapter would be used for the University, but on the important question of how Stalls would be annexed to the two senior Professorships there was much less unanimity. Van Mildert felt the urgency of concluding the discussion in order to facilitate his negotiations with potential Professors, but as the University prepared to admit the first students there was still no agreement.¹⁰¹ Settling initial salaries for the Professors bought some time for further discussion, but by February 1834 a conclusion seemed just as elusive as ever. The Bishop put forward two possibilities: either to nominate three specific Stalls to be annexed to the Warden and the two senior Professors and then assign them as they became vacant, or to simply assign the first three stalls that became vacant

⁹⁹ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 28 October 1833.

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, *British Universities*, p. 18; Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 83-4, 89.

¹⁰¹ [DCL] VML, 308: Van Mildert to Thorp, 5 September 1833.

whichever three Stalls those may be. The Bishop's preference was for the former course and he suggested that the 11th Stall should be attached to the Warden, the 1st Stall to the Professor of Divinity, and the 3rd Stall to the Professor of Greek. As the 11th Stall was well-known to be the richest, Van Mildert added that this would clearly mark the Warden out as standing 'very next ... to the Deanery itself'.¹⁰² Thorp felt that it 'would be quite unfair' if the Bishop bound himself to give over the first three Stalls that fell vacant, as this would leave him with no possibility of offering personal preferment until a fourth Stall was vacated. On these grounds he also favoured the Bishop's proposal and agreed that 'if the eleventh stall is to belong to the University' then 'it should go to the Warden'.¹⁰³

The Chapter concurred with the Bishop's proposal too. To bind Van Mildert's successors' to it, however, Parliamentary approval was once again required. This raised all the same concerns as with the first University Bill in 1832. Although their new Bill was again a Private one the Sub-Dean, Smith, who then held the 11th Stall, was concerned that their enemies in Parliament may attempt 'declaring it to relate so much to a Publick Establishment that they will change its character and treat is as a Publick Act'. While Smith greatly feared 'the temper of both Houses, especially of the H. of Commons' he was also concerned about the Lords and especially Brougham, the Lord Chancellor: 'look at the Woolsack as well as to many others' he cautioned.¹⁰⁴ Still, the Bill could not be avoided and so a petition was presented to the House of Lords on 21 March 1834 though (much to Van Mildert's annoyance) the Chapter's seal could not

¹⁰² [DUL] TC, 166b: Van Mildert to Thorp, 18 February 1834.

¹⁰³ [DUL] TC, 168b: Thorp to Van Mildert, 19 February 1834.

¹⁰⁴ [DUL] SC, A/3: Smith to Van Mildert, 28 April 1834.

be added until 4 April.¹⁰⁵

Having brought the Bill before Parliament, tensions grew between Van Mildert and the Chapter. The Bishop told Thorp that he perceived Smith 'acquiesces rather than approves', and that Durell (who held the 8th Stall) 'evidently considers it an ill-advised scheme'. Even Thorp, he observed, seemed to be 'far from well satisfied that we are taking a safe and prudent course'. All the time Rose was pressing the Bishop to be given the first Stall that became vacant, rather than wait for an assigned Stall, but for Van Mildert it would not do 'to give the Divinity Professor a Stall of inferior value to that of the Greek Professor'. Van Mildert began to regret introducing the Bill: 'the mere constrained assent of the Chapter ... is no satisfaction to me whatever: and if there be any honourable way of retreating, I would do so without a moment's hesitation', he told Thorp.¹⁰⁶

Rose also identified a potential issue.¹⁰⁷ In Durham, as in other Cathedral Chapters, the Stalls were ordinarily filled by the Bishop but this did not apply where a vacancy was created by the holder receiving a royal appointment, for example, should one of the Prebends be elevated to a bishopric. In such circumstances the Royal Prerogative took precedence and the vacated Stall was filled by the Crown, not the Bishop. In practice the Royal Prerogative was held by the Government of the day, which meant that if the three senior officers of the University were attached to Stalls then the Government could in theory replace them by the expedient of elevating the current incumbents to a See (or other royal appointment). This might appear as little

¹⁰⁵ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 4 April 1834.

¹⁰⁶ [DUL] TC, 172: Van Mildert to Thorp, 7 April 1834.

¹⁰⁷ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, pp. 169-70.

more than paranoia, but the political situation in 1834 remained tense and Rose feared the possible actions of a reforming Whig government. To counter any concern about the potential meddling of unfriendly politicians in the University's business, the Bishop became convinced that 'the patronage of the University offices' had to be retained 'exclusively in the hands of the Bishop', though he hoped this could be achieved without 'barring the prerogative of the crown'.¹⁰⁸

Thorp did not share the Bishop's concerns. He argued that 'if there be danger of an occasional misuse of patronage, there is a countervailing advantage in leaving to the Crown that interest in the University which in the natural course of things it will possess'.¹⁰⁹ This response shocked an already agitated Van Mildert. Unless the Crown prerogative was barred, he told Thorp, he was entirely convinced 'that future evil, and at no distant time, may be contemplated; and of a very formidable kind'. The Bishop continued to accuse the Warden of vacillating. 'I cannot but think that your opinions in this respect have undergone some considerable change', he remarked angrily, and he reminded Thorp that it was his 'observation that the present Ministry would assuredly avail themselves, with eagerness, of any opportunity to get hold upon any of the University Offices'. Van Mildert could see only potential conspiracy and disaster: 'What if Dr Arnold were to replace yourself, or Sidney Smith our Professor Rose?'¹¹⁰ he asked Thorp rhetorically, echoing fears he had been fed by Rose earlier

¹⁰⁸ [DUL] TC, 173: Van Mildert to Thorp, 16 April 1834.

¹⁰⁹ [DUL] TC, 174: Thorp to Van Mildert, 18 April 1834.

¹¹⁰ [DUL] TC, 175: Van Mildert to Thorp, 21 April 1834. Both men were champions of reform. Sydney Smith was Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's Cathedral. Thomas Arnold strongly advocated Catholic emancipation and wider religious inclusion as a means of shoring up the Established Church; views Van Mildert found 'exquisitely absurd and mischievous'. [DUL] TC, 102: Van Mildert to Thorp, 31 January 1833.

when he told the Bishop that he trembled 'to think what a person like Dr Arnold, thrust into the Chapter on advancement of any member ... might do, to liberalize' the University.¹¹¹ Thorp responded sharply: he 'did not attach any weight to an apprehension in my view altogether visionary'. Besides, the Warden argued, 'if the Government desire the command of the University, they will best secure it through the Deanery', as the Deanery had remained a Crown appointment long after the right to collate to the Stalls had passed to the Bishop.¹¹² Their disagreement over the barring of the Crown Prerogative strained relations between Van Mildert and Thorp, though Varley's view that it meant Van Mildert 'could no longer be confident that Thorp's vision of the University chimed with his own' is exaggerated.¹¹³

Time, patience, and willingness to compromise all ran dry. Van Mildert, who was now 68, was exhausted by the effort and in early May he withdrew the Bill. He had failed to reach an agreement with the Chapter, and Earl Grey who had been advising him had no more time to discuss the matter. For his own part, Van Mildert knew he could never 'consent to the Bill without the restriction of the prerogative'.¹¹⁴ On 19 July 1834, Van Mildert wrote to the Chapter, and asked them 'to reconsider the matter, with a view to determining some definitive course ... before it is again brought into Parliament' but such an opportunity would not present itself to the Bishop.¹¹⁵ Van Mildert died in February 1836, more than three years before the matter was eventually concluded.

¹¹¹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Rose to Van Mildert, 20 January 1834.

¹¹² [DUL] TC, 176: Thorp to Van Mildert, 23 April 1834.

¹¹³ Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, p. 173.

¹¹⁴ [DUL] TC, 181: Van Mildert to Thorp, 15 May 1834.

¹¹⁵ [DUL] SC, A/8(i): Van Mildert to Smith, 19 July 1834.

Rose's Departure

Meanwhile, Rose was becoming increasingly dissatisfied. In addition to his worries about the failure of the Chapter and Bishop to agree how to annex the Stalls, there was also a rapidly growing friction between him and the Chapter, and especially Thorp, over his working arrangements. The avoidance of such tensions had, of course, been one of the reasons why Van Mildert spent so long seeking and receiving opinions on potential staff. While these growing frictions perhaps justify the importance of those efforts, they also testify to the fact that no matter how much attention was paid to a candidate's temperament difficulties could still arise.

Rose's principal concern was the period he was expected to be resident. At Rose's insistence, the course for Divinity students (those students who were studying towards the Licence in Theology) was to last eight months rather than six months as was required for the Arts course.¹¹⁶ Although this was Rose's own plan, he also maintained that due to his poor health he could not personally be resident throughout the year: he argued it would necessary for him to quit Durham during the winter.

Rose also insisted that two lecturers or Professors, and in due time a third, would be necessary to cover the work. 'I am quite sure that no justice can be done to Clerical Education by one man' he told Jenkyns. He therefore pressed for an assistant to 'be appointed immediately', and it seems Van Mildert consented. Rose also sought to enlist Jenkyns' assistance, and asked him to deliver 'one course for one term only (the Epiphany Term) on the Criticism & Interpretation of the Greek Text'.¹¹⁷ 'They overwork me here', Rose complained to Watson in February 1834, 'for while my

¹¹⁶ [DUL] TC, 184: Thorp to Van Mildert, 5 July 1834.

¹¹⁷ [Bal] JP, IVB.[C]: Rose to Jenkyns, 31 December 1833; Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, p. 188.

brother Professor has two Lectures a week, I have seven days' lectures, and the Sunday evening lecture is a very distressing one'.¹¹⁸ Such a workload was certainly unusual compared to the expectations on professors at Oxford and Cambridge but in the Scottish universities, as well as the new London colleges, professors could lecture for five days a week, in some instances for three or four hours a day.¹¹⁹

In January 1834 Rose's anxiety about the annexation reached a crisis point. 'If you have any means of urging the Bishop to get us the Bill for the Stalls quickly on, I [would] advise you to use them' he urged Jenkyns. Van Mildert's age and infirmity weighed especially heavily on his mind: time was being 'frittered away' over the 'delicacies about what Stalls [should] be taken' Rose argued and, while he felt that 'the [Government] is in a certain way pledged to this Bishop, yet if he dies, they are not pledged to another'.¹²⁰ Rose blamed the Warden for these issues: 'in good truth', he told Jenkyns, Thorp was 'at the bottom of all this'.¹²¹ Jenkyns tried to placate Rose, but to no avail. 'I do not wish to be too ready in foreseeing evils', Rose pleaded, 'but I really think that in case of the [Bishop's] death, both we & the [University] stand in a most awkward position'.¹²²

Rose quit Durham after the Epiphany Term, which ended on 19 March: 'I leave this beautiful place with great regret; uncertain as it is whether I shall ever return' he wrote to Newman.¹²³ His lectures in the Easter Term were taken by his brother, Henry

¹¹⁸ Rose to Watson, February 1834, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, pp. 187-8.

¹¹⁹ Anderson, 'Scottish University Professors', p. 36.

¹²⁰ [Bal] JP, IVB.[C]: Rose to Jenkyns, 8 January 1834.

¹²¹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[C]: Rose to Jenkyns, 27 May 1834.

¹²² [Bal] JP, IVB.[C]: Rose to Jenkyns, 2 June 1834.

¹²³ *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman*, ed. Mozley, A., (2 vols., London, 1891), vol. 4: Rose to Newman, 10 March 1834, p. 208.

John Rose. While Thorp at least claimed that he wished to retain Rose, he was also concerned that they had already 'gone too far in the endeavour to secure' his services.¹²⁴ For his part, Van Mildert advised the Chapter that he would 'refrain purposely from offering any opinion of my own on the measures to be adopted' to secure Rose's services but that it would give him 'great satisfaction to find that regulations can be framed, which may ensure to the University the continued services of Mr Rose, consistently with a due regard to the future as well as the present welfare of our Institution'.¹²⁵

In July, Rose offered one last chance at reconciliation: 'I am ready to persevere ... but at my time of life, I cannot, &, I think, I ought not to put myself back into a situation of difficulty & dependence'.¹²⁶ The Chapter could not move on the issue of the Stalls as the Bill had already been withdrawn. They were also unwilling to make the personal arrangements for Rose a matter of statute rather than an individual allowance: they could only be 'indulgences and exceptions, not rules', Thorp insisted.¹²⁷ As a consequence of a failure to agree terms, Rose resigned. Van Mildert was reluctant to accept the resignation, though he wished not to discuss the matter directly, and so asked Smith to negotiate.¹²⁸

The permanent separation was put beyond doubt when Rose wrote to Van Mildert on 4 October 1834: 'my connexion with the University of Durham is now closed', he confirmed. While 'no situation either in my own University, or in the world

¹²⁴ [DUL] TC, 184: Thorp to Van Mildert, 5 July 1834.

¹²⁵ [DUL] SC, A/6a: Van Mildert to Smith, 18 July 1834.

¹²⁶ [DUL] SC, A/4: Rose to Dean & Chapter of Durham, 16 July 1834.

¹²⁷ [DUL] TC, 185: Thorp to Van Mildert, 18 August 1834.

¹²⁸ [DCL] VML, 429: Van Mildert to Thorp, 10 September 1834.

at large, would have had the same attraction for me as the Professorship at Durham', Rose continued, he regretted that this had 'been made impossible ... by the arrangements now made'.¹²⁹ Such a claim is clearly preposterous: Rose was reluctant to take up the role, unhappy while in residence, and quit almost as soon as he could.

Van Mildert became concerned that 'the unexpected loss of Mr Rose's services', might damage the University's reputation: the 'Public will hardly understand what has occasioned his secession; & his high reputation & extraordinary popularity in his department may be felt greatly to our disadvantage', he feared.¹³⁰ Although Rose had left Durham before the end of the first year, it was clear he had invested considerably in his short-lived role. 'Mr Rose evidently considers [the Bishops] as having been led to favour our Institution in consequence of the ... plan drawn out by him respecting our Theological arrangements', Van Mildert noted. 'Great care must be taken, not to involve ourselves in misapprehensions of this kind with the Archbishops & the rest of the Bench' he warned.¹³¹

Van Mildert's concern proved unwarranted. After his departure from Durham, in October 1836, Rose became the second Principal of King's College, London. It has been suggested that Howley orchestrated the elevation of the first Principal, William Otter, to the See of Chichester in order to move Rose into the position.¹³² But his ill health again intervened, and in October 1838 Rose travelled to Florence hoping to recover his strength but he died there on 22 December and was buried in the protestant cemetery.

¹²⁹ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Rose to Van Mildert, 4 October 1834.

¹³⁰ [DCL] VML, 439: Van Mildert to Smith, 11 October 1834.

¹³¹ [DCL] VML, 430-431: Van Mildert to Thorp, 24 September 1834.

¹³² Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 130.

Temple Chevallier

While the disputes with Rose played out it should not be forgotten that, following Carr's unexpected death, the University remained without a Professor of Mathematics. A replacement for Carr did not come quickly, and from 1833 to 1835 the Professor's duties were undertaken by Charles Whitley, the Reader in Natural Philosophy and Junior Tutor. Whitley had entered St John's College, Cambridge, as a Scholar in 1826 and graduated BA in 1830 as Senior Wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos and in the Second Class of the Classical Tripos. He became a Fellow of his College in 1831 and obtained his MA in 1833. In 1831 he had briefly acted as Mathematical Tutor at Jesus College.¹³³ No less a luminary as the astronomer and mathematician George Airy attested that Whitley was an 'excellent mathematician'.¹³⁴ Whitley had expressed an interest in Professorships at Durham as early as January 1832, before taking the Readership in Natural Philosophy.¹³⁵ When Carr died he once again declared himself a candidate for the vacant Professorship.¹³⁶

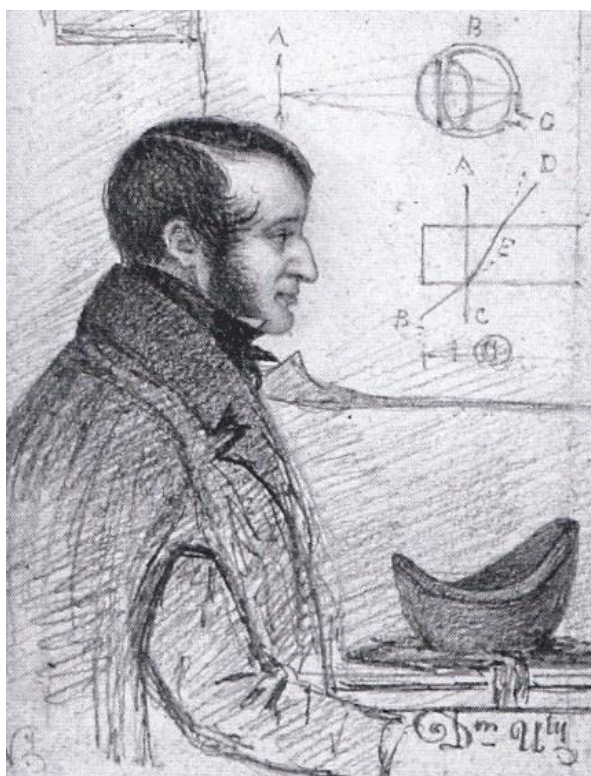
¹³³ [DUL] DCI: William French (Master of Jesus College, Cambridge) to Whitley, 28 January 1832.

¹³⁴ [DUL] DCI: George Biddell Airy (Plumian Professor) to Dean & Chapter, 7 February 1832.

¹³⁵ [DUL] WC, 1: Thomas Gisborne to James Gisborne, 21 January 1832.

¹³⁶ [DUL] WC, 2: Gilly to Whitley, 7 November 1833.

Illustration 5: Charles Whitley, by Joseph Bouet¹³⁷



Although Whitley stayed at the University for the remainder of his life, and played a prominent role in its development, he was again overlooked, this time by a different Cambridge scholar: Temple Chevallier. Like Rose and Jenkyns, Chevallier's academic record was impeccable and he ranked amongst the most able of his generation. In October 1834, when he moved to Durham, Chevallier was a Tutor at Catharine Hall, Cambridge.¹³⁸ He had first entered the University in 1813 when he matriculated at Pembroke Hall, from the Grammar School at Ipswich.¹³⁹ Chevallier enjoyed a glittering academic career at the University as a student and then Fellow. He won the Bell Scholarship in 1814, coincidentally second alongside Hugh James Rose, and graduated BA in 1817 as the second Wrangler and second Smith's prizeman.

¹³⁷ Cross, *Bouet's Durham*, pp. 34-5.

¹³⁸ St Catharine's College from 1860.

¹³⁹ Pembroke College from 1856.

Elected quickly to a Fellowship at Pembroke Hall in 1819, the following year he graduated MA and moved to Catharine Hall as Fellow and Tutor. In his work as Tutor at Catharine Hall, he taught across mathematical and classical subjects, and proved equally adept at both disciplines. Catharine Hall was a small college, but it maintained high academic standards and the prestige of its Fellowships had grown throughout the first part of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁰ In 1821, 1822, and 1825 Chevallier served as one of the two moderators (examiners) in the Mathematical Tripos, and was the Hulsean Lecturer for 1826 and 1827. He took the historical types contained in the Old Testament, and the proofs of divine power and wisdom as derived from the study of astronomy, as his subjects. It has been argued that his Hulsean Lectures inspired William Whewell's more famous work on the study of astronomy and physics as evidence for the existence of 'a creating and presiding Intelligence', in the Bridgewater Treatises.¹⁴¹ Chevallier, like Whewell, was part of that body of nineteenth-century science that (suitably for a Cambridge man) took Newton as their role model in uniting 'an ardent love for the promotion of science with feelings of piety and reverence to God'.¹⁴² William Whewell was briefly considered by Van Mildert for the Divinity Chair, but he stood 'so very high in Science', thought the Bishop, that he could 'hardly suppose he can much have turned his mind to any regular course of Theological

¹⁴⁰ E.E. Rich, 'The Nineteenth Century', in E.E. Rich (ed.), *St Catharine's College Cambridge 1473 – 1973: A Volume of Essays to Commemorate the Quincentenary of the Foundation of the College* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 164-247, p. 202; O. MacDonagh, 'The Nineteenth-Century College; Rise, Decline and Resurgence', in *ibid.*, pp. 248-65, pp. 252-5.

¹⁴¹ G.F. Browne, *St. Catharine's College* (London, 1902), p. 219; W. Whewell, *Astronomy and General Physics Considered with Reference to Natural Theology* (London, 1833), p. 1.

¹⁴² T. Chevallier, *On the Proofs of Divine Power and Wisdom Derived from the Study of Astronomy* (Cambridge, 1827), p. 83.

Study'.¹⁴³

This appointment marked a change in direction, as there were no substantial existing connections between Chevallier and Durham or between Chevallier and Van Mildert's circle of trusted friends. The tensions with Rose might have tended towards greater inwardness in future appointments, and Van Mildert certainly seemed inclined to do so. 'I confess, after what has passed respecting Mr Rose,' the Bishop told Thorp in October 1834, 'I incline to think that it may be almost better at once to fill up the vacant office with one already known to the Chapter, (not only as to talents & attainments, but also as to disposition & temper)'.¹⁴⁴ But such an approach would not match Thorp's expectation. The Chapter, not the Bishop, was responsible for the appointment of the Professor of Mathematics, which in practice meant Thorp. The Warden still had high ambitions, and so he sought out a highly regarded and eminent individual for the role.

Chevallier's move north happened suddenly. On 31 October 1834, he sent a letter to his intimate friend, George Elwes Corrie:¹⁴⁵ 'unless some little bird of the air shall have told you the secret', he wrote, 'you will be surprised to receive a letter from me with the present date'. He continued:

A few weeks ago, I had a communication from the Warden of the University here, offering me the Mathematical Professorship, which will be filled up this time next year; and wishing me to see the place & plans before I made up my mind. While I was debating the point, I had another letter from him, requesting me to take the lectures of the

¹⁴³ [DCL] VML, 444-6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 October 1834.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ They met at Catharine Hall, where Corrie was also a Fellow and Tutor. In 1838 Corrie was appointed Norrisian Professor of Divinity, and Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1849. Corrie graduated the last Wrangler in the same year in which Chevallier was second Wrangler.

Divinity students for this time, Rose having resigned the Professorship.¹⁴⁶

It was the Divinity Chair which interested Chevallier, not the Mathematical one, and it was only because he felt that lecturing the Divinity students 'offered a prospect of the theological department' that he had 'determined to undertake the charge'.¹⁴⁷ He assured Corrie that the only circumstances in which he might consider the Mathematical Professorship was if he saw 'a fair prospect of obtaining at the same time some parochial duty: for after having been so long engaged in a parish, I do not mean to secularize myself so completely as I should do in that case'. Although remembered more for his scientific work, Chevallier described the study 'of the sacred writings' as affording 'the highest pleasure to every mind':

It satisfies the understanding: it delights the imagination: it engages the affections. It speaks of subjects of vital interest to every soul of man; by which every one is required to regulate his life, and by which he will be judged at the great day.¹⁴⁸

If he were offered the Divinity Professorship, however, he would willingly forgo the parish connection 'as the studies themselves will be more professional, & there is also a Sunday lecture to the young men, [which] is equivalent to a sermon'.¹⁴⁹ This being the same Sunday lecture that Rose had found 'very distressing'.¹⁵⁰

After moving to Durham Chevallier pressed his case for the Divinity Chair. This persistence irritated Van Mildert. 'It is quite impossible for me yet to determine, or even to think upon a Successor to the Divinity Chair', he told Thorp in early

¹⁴⁶ [DUL] CC, 2: Chevallier to Corrie, 31 October 1834.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Chevallier, *Proofs of Divine Power*, p. 176.

¹⁴⁹ [DUL] CC, 2: Chevallier to Corrie, 31 October 1834.

¹⁵⁰ Rose to Watson, February 1834, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, pp. 187-8.

December 1834, ‘& unless some relief can be afforded me, my present state of suffering will make it impossible for me to set about it’ he added.¹⁵¹ Later that month the Bishop’s despair had only worsened: ‘most willingly [would] I at once transfer the patronage of the Office to the Chapter’, he told Thorp, ‘so as to rid myself of the plague & responsibility, for which I find myself now growing wholly unfit’.¹⁵² Chevallier’s patience was wearing thin too, and in February 1835 he told Corrie that he had ‘declined the Mathematical Professorship; & know no more about the Divinity Professorship than the man in the moon’.¹⁵³

Just as it seemed that Durham was about to lose the services of another Professor, in May 1835 Chevallier was given the charge of the parish of Esh. Evidently untroubled by concerns over pluralism, this satisfied his desire for a parochial charge and eased his move into the Mathematical Chair. He embraced his new role at Esh, even though it was a challenging parish which included the Roman Catholic seminary at Ushaw and a large population of Roman Catholics with it. He later rejected a parish in Durham City, and remained at Esh until his death in 1873.¹⁵⁴

Having settled the parish appointment, Chevallier was officially made the Professor of Mathematics in July 1835 and granted a stipend of £400 per year.¹⁵⁵ ‘The Readership in Hebrew with the Stipend of £50’ and ‘the Office of Registrar of the University with a Stipend of £10’ were added in November 1835.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ [DCL] VML, 453-4: Van Mildert to Thorp, 1 December 1834.

¹⁵² [DCL] VML, 457-9: Van Mildert to Thorp, 23 December 1834.

¹⁵³ [DUL] CC, 5: Chevallier to Corrie, 12 February 1835.

¹⁵⁴ [DUL] CC, 34: Chevallier to Corrie, 17 October 1838.

¹⁵⁵ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1835.

¹⁵⁶ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 20 November 1835.

Settlement of the Professorial Positions

As already noted, the Bishop was inclined to be cautious in finding Rose's replacement. Therefore, rather than admit 'any entire stranger', Van Mildert thought of asking Jenkyns to move from the Greek to the Divinity Chair, and then filling the Greek Chair with Thomas Piele, one of the Senior Fellows.¹⁵⁷ The Bishop had in fact originally considered Piele for the role, before appointing Jenkyns instead.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless he told Thorp he could 'give no pledge yet, but only throw out hints for cogitation'. The Chapter urged the Bishop to make an appointment to replace Rose, but Van Mildert found himself 'utterly unable to do' so and begged Thorp: 'Pray, help me, if you can'.¹⁵⁹ Van Mildert therefore asked the Chapter to put in place temporary arrangements for the Divinity students.¹⁶⁰ The situation rested there for almost a year as Jenkyns and Chevallier shared the duties of the Divinity Professor.

Jenkyns was not immune to concerns about the annexation of Stalls, but unlike Rose he remained comparatively sanguine over the lack of progress. Jenkyns would eventually obtain a Stall but this preferment did not occur until October 1839. Part of the explanation for his determination to remain at the University in the short term seems to lay simply with Jenkyns' temperament: he was much less inclined to dispute than Rose. Unlike Rose, he was always one step away from the centre of controversy, acting as an arbitrator not an agitator.¹⁶¹ A more Machiavellian explanation is also possible. With Carr's death and Rose's resignation, Jenkyns appreciated his

¹⁵⁷ [DCL] VML, 444-6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 October 1834.

¹⁵⁸ [DUL] TC, 118: Van Mildert to Thorp, 30 March 1833.

¹⁵⁹ [DCL] VML, 440-1: Van Mildert to Thorp, 15 October 1834.

¹⁶⁰ [DCL] VML, 438: Van Mildert to Thorp, 11 October 1834.

¹⁶¹ Havens, 'Henry Jenkyns', p. 43.

importance to the University. 'I do trust that the present Chapter will not separate, without sealing some code of statutes for me however short', he told Thorp in early November 1834. He added ominously that if no such statutes were passed then 'shaken as we are already, I am sure we shall fall to pieces'.¹⁶² Was this an innocent observation or a threat of resignation? Whether encouraged by Jenkyns or not, the Chapter agreed to guarantee the 'Stipends of the Professors of Greek and Divinity ... from the Funds appropriated to the maintenance of the University, as well as the Stipends of the other Professors and Tutors',¹⁶³ and the University's statutes were then passed on 21 November.¹⁶⁴

In September 1835 Van Mildert finally offered the Divinity Chair to Jenkyns.¹⁶⁵ Jenkyns, however, was concerned that this move would disadvantage him in relation to the annexation of Stalls. By the time the Bishop made this proposal, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were actively reviewing cathedral dignities, and significant but unknown changes were expected. Van Mildert warned Jenkyns that the annexation of the Stalls had been 'so far taken out of [his] hands' that he was not able to 'answer for its eventual result'.¹⁶⁶ There was a second problem too: as Greek Professor Jenkyns had been promised the 3rd Stall, which was then held by Richard Prosser, while the Divinity Professor was promised the richer 1st Stall, then held by Thomas Gisborne. As Jenkyns had to wait until a Stall was vacated by preferment or death, it was material that Prosser was 88 while Gisborne was merely 77 years old. In

¹⁶² [Bal] JP, IVA.2: Jenkyns to Thorp, 11? November 1834.

¹⁶³ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 15 November 1834.

¹⁶⁴ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 21 November 1834.

¹⁶⁵ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Van Mildert to Jenkyns, 28 September 1835.

¹⁶⁶ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Van Mildert to Jenkyns, 28 September 1835.

the natural order of things this meant he was more likely to gain the Stall intended for the Greek Professor before that intended for the Divinity Professor.¹⁶⁷ Jenkyns therefore felt it safer to continue to retain the Greek Chair formally, even while undertaking the duties of the Divinity Professor.

Nevertheless, although the formal appointment had not been made, Jenkyns was now the de facto Divinity Professor. This left Chevallier with what he called 'the incongruous offices of Mathematician & Hebrew lecturer' and a sense of frustration: 'an able man', Chevallier said of Jenkyns, 'but wants unction: has never had the charge of a parish'.¹⁶⁸ Corrie concurred: 'too much of your [Bishop]'s school to possess much "unction"' he fancied.¹⁶⁹

Meanwhile, the Ecclesiastical Commission continued to cause great uncertainty for Chapters. Anxious cases were put forward to retain dignities, to understand local arrangements, and to recognise existing commitments. The Chapter at Durham were more anxious than most, concerned not only with the future state of the Chapter itself but with the University too. In January 1836, the Warden and Senate appealed to the Commissioners concerning the proposed annexation of Stalls. While noting that the attempted Bill in 1834 had been withdrawn they fully believed it would 'have been again brought forward last year but for the appointment of the Ecclesiastical Commission'. The delay 'thus occasioned' they complained was 'obviously most prejudicial to the well-being of the University' especially, they emphasised, as the 'state of uncertainty', which 'would be felt seriously even by an old

¹⁶⁷ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Jenkyns to Van Mildert, 5 October 1835.

¹⁶⁸ [DUL] CC, 9: Chevallier to Corrie, 21 November 1835.

¹⁶⁹ [DUL] CC, 10: Corrie to Chevallier, 28 November 1835.

establishment', pressed 'far more seriously on one which is still in its infancy'.¹⁷⁰

Van Mildert died the following month but the new Bishop, Maltby, intended to honour the agreements entered into by his predecessor respecting the Stalls as he had honoured the intention to secure a Charter. In June 1836 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners recognised the undertaking entered into by Van Mildert and agreed a specific exemption to the suppression of the Stalls for Jenkyns, so that he would be appointed to the 3rd Stall when it was vacated by Prosser. Nevertheless, the Commissioners recommended that Durham should be left with only four Stalls. With the continuing uncertainty about the funds available to the University, there was little choice but to maintain the temporary arrangement by which Jenkyns covered Divinity while formally retaining the Greek Chair. In March 1839 it was noted that the Divinity Chair was left vacant 'for want of endowment'.¹⁷¹

Nothing could now happen until Prosser or Gisborne died. It was Prosser who obliged on 8 October 1839, thus releasing the 3rd Stall which he had held since 1804. Maltby installed Jenkyns into the Stall allocated for the Greek Professor in October 1839. Jenkyns was now a member of Chapter, though he continued to formally retain his position as Professor of Greek. As late as March 1840, the Senate re-affirmed the plan that the 1st Stall should be annexed to the Divinity Professor and the 3rd Stall to the Greek Professor. Though now the intention for the 11th Stall was that it should be used for the general funds of the University, not be given to the Warden.

Instead of holding the 11th Stall, the Dean was now to be Warden.¹⁷² A petition

¹⁷⁰ [DUL] OSHDB, CA4/3h: Communication to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 9 January 1836.

¹⁷¹ [DUL] TC, 336: Thorp to Maltby, 9 March 1839.

¹⁷² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 March 1840.

was drafted for the Wardenship to be annexed to the Deanery, and hence for Thorp to become Dean upon the next vacancy.¹⁷³ Not long after this resolution, in July 1840, Jenkinson died. Maltby no doubt influenced the decision to appoint George Waddington as his successor, as in 1833 he had preferred Waddington to a prebendal stall in his Diocesan Cathedral as the Bishop of Chichester. Waddington was installed in the Deanery at Durham on 26 September 1840.

The matter of future annexation and the endowment of Stalls was finally settled in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act, which gained Royal assent on 11 August 1840, and by an Order in Council dated 4 June 1841 which brought in, with some modifications, the recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners contained in their Fourth Report from June 1836.¹⁷⁴ By this settlement the Wardenship would be annexed to the Deanery upon Thorp standing down, but that until then he would receive an annual salary of £500. This was the first salary Thorp had drawn as Warden, having previously undertaken the role gratuitously benefiting as he did from his other positions including the 4th Stall. As Thorp had been expecting the 11th Stall, promised him by Van Mildert, he felt aggrieved that his just expectations had been ignored while Jenkyns' had been honoured.

As Jenkyns was in the 3rd Stall, at its full value, the Order in Council annexed this Stall to the Divinity Professor when was appointed to the role permanently in January 1841. At the next vacancy, however, the alterations to regulate the income of the Stalls would be made and the 3rd Stall would be worth £1,000 like the other

¹⁷³ [Bal] JP, IVB.[B]: draft petition, date uncertain but between March and July 1840.

¹⁷⁴ 3 & 4 Victoria, cap. 113, known as the Cathedrals, Dean and Chapters, or Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act 1840.

remaining Stalls. Thus the permanent endowment to the Professorship of Divinity was the 3rd Stall, at the reduced income of £1,000 a year, and a proportion of fees from the students.

By the same Order it was agreed that Chevallier's Chair should be expanded and re-titled Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, with an annual salary of £700. It was also agreed that the Professorship of Greek and Classical Literature should be annexed to the 11th Stall, which was vacant following Smith's death in January 1841, but at the reduced standard rate of £1,000.

The Greek Professorship and 11th Stall were eventually by John Edwards, who was installed in June 1841. There is a startling contrast between the initial appointments under Van Mildert and this appointment made under Maltby. Whereas Van Mildert had endeavoured to recruit men of the very highest calibre, the appointment of John Edwards indicated his successor held much lower ambitions. John Mitchinson, a school boy in Durham and later Bishop of Barbados, recalled that Edwards was 'academically ... undistinguished' in comparison with Jenkyns who he held in high esteem 'as a relic of a more magnificent past' who had survived 'far on into a parsimonious and utilitarian present'.¹⁷⁵ The possibility of rich remuneration that had tempted Rose and Jenkyns north had been taken away by the reforms of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the initial optimism which pervaded the University had quickly evaporated too. Edwards was not of the same calibre as men like Rose, Jenkyns, or Chevallier – or, indeed, Maltby who was himself a highly regarded Greek scholar. After being educated at the grammar school in Huntingdon, where his father

¹⁷⁵ [Pem] Mitchinson Paper, 85: Memoirs of John Mitchinson.

was Headmaster, Edwards was admitted scholar to St John's College, Cambridge in 1806. He migrated to Jesus College and graduated BA in 1810 and MA in 1813: his university career was unremarkable. He was ordained deacon in 1811 and served as curate of Brampton, Hunts until 1814 when he became Rector of South Ferriby, Lincs, though he never resided there. In 1821 he moved to become Curate-in-Charge of Warboys, Hunts, and Assistant Master at Harrow School. He was appointed Headmaster of Bury St Edmunds School in 1828. In 1825 Edwards dedicated his one published work to Maltby. He died 1 April 1862, during the heat of the Royal Commission on the University.

Conclusion

Probably above all other things, the success of a university depends on the ability and energy of its staff. This is crucial to understand the 'relief' Van Mildert expressed in having 'placed the three chief officers at my disposal in the hands of persons on whom I can so entirely rely'.¹⁷⁶ Yet his relief was short-lived. The very next day Carr died, and in less than a year he would receive Rose's acrimonious resignation. But although some of the early appointments were not successful the initial round of recruitment still brought to Durham not only a series of eminent individuals, but a talented group that would shape the University over the next three decades.

Despite his initial misgivings, Chevallier, for example, would never leave Durham though he had opportunities to do so. He was even considered for the Professorship of Divinity at Cambridge in 1842.¹⁷⁷ As Professor of Mathematics (to

¹⁷⁶ [Bal] JP, IVB.[C]: Van Mildert to Jenkyns, 29 October 1833.

¹⁷⁷ [DUL] CC, 63: Chevallier to Corrie, 15 November 1842.

which Astronomy was added in 1841), Registrar, and in most other capacities possible (he was even suggested by Jenkyns as head of the college) he shaped Durham more than anyone else besides Thorp and Van Mildert.¹⁷⁸ Jenkyns, despite his eminence as a scholar, was largely an introvert who served through hard work and diligence more than creativity and flair as did Chevallier.

So, despite all the manifest disappointments of the University's first decade, by the middle of 1841 when its operations and endowment had been settled the institution had a Warden who could not have been more dedicated to his charge, and two Professors of genuinely outstanding ability. There was also considerable stability amongst the senior staff from the second academic year onwards: Jenkyns served from 1833 to 1864, Chevallier from 1834 to 1872, and Edwards from 1841 to 1862. They were in turn supported by men of similarly high attainment such as Whitley and Peile. The recruitment methods used also ensured the University was populated largely by High Church clerics, or local men of ability known to members of the Chapter. This was a northern university, an Anglican university and, despite Maltby's moderating but still respectful influence, it was also a High Church university. It was also a reformed university, for despite the difficulties that had and would ensue the ground was still laid for the development of academic and professional courses of the highest quality under the guidance of men of the first rank of their day.

¹⁷⁸ [DUL] TC, 238: Jenkyns to Thorp, 31 March 1836.

The original scheme which was mine, shows that the Founders contemplated a liberal & enlarged system of education ... The object was, - not merely the instruction of youth, but the elevation of science & literature in the minds of a population then undergoing a great social change.¹

Charles Thorp, March 1862

Introduction

The breadth and nature of the subjects to be taught at Durham in formal courses indicated a significant departure from the liberal education in Arts that dominated academic life at Oxford and Cambridge – indeed, the concept of discrete ‘courses’ was itself an innovation. Insulated by their endowments and intimate establishment links, the older universities had not needed to follow student demand in the subjects they taught, and so the preliminary Arts faculty had subordinated the higher professional faculties of Law, Medicine, and Theology.² Meanwhile, the Dissenting Academies had embraced emerging subjects, including commercial disciplines, and new methods of teaching.³ London University and King’s College, London had both adopted a professionally-orientated curriculum more like that of the Scottish, American, and continental European universities. What made the attempt at Durham novel was the intention to deliver the old and well-understood, if frequently

¹ [DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 22 March 1862.

² Ashby, *Universities*, p. 20; A. Engel, ‘The English Universities and Professional Education’, in K.H. Jarausch (ed.), *The Transformation of Higher Learning 1860-1930* (Chicago, 1983), pp. 293-305; O. Pedersen, *The First Universities: Studium Generale and the Origins of University Education in Europe* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 271-3.

³ H. McLachlan, *English Education Under the Test Acts: being the history of the Nonconformist academies, 1662-1820* (Manchester, 1931), pp. 209-11; I. Parker, *Dissenting Academies in England* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 132-6.

criticised, English liberal education Bachelor of Arts degree in a residential setting alongside separate and radical innovations in professional education through discrete courses leading to specific awards.

The senior staff of Durham, led by Thorp himself, sensed the changing needs of a rapidly industrialising and expanding society for advanced professional studies.⁴ They were also fully aware of the criticisms made of the narrow curriculum at Oxford and Cambridge. Nevertheless, so imbedded was the traditional university curriculum in English thinking, that attempts to address these issues were highly controversial. In 1827 the *British Critic*, a conservative High Church journal, scorned London University for 'another ingenious device for eking out an University'. 'A College of Medicine is to be added' it recorded 'are there then no hospitals, and is there no medical education already in London? – or do the projectors conceive that in England a day-school and a hospital will make an University?'⁵

Advocates in the older universities urged an expansion of the subjects taught for the Bachelor of Arts, rather than new courses. Charles Daubeny promoted chemistry at Oxford, with some success, though he had to cancel his lectures in 1839 due to lack of attendance.⁶ At Cambridge Adam Sedgwick, William Whewell, and Robert Willis argued for the better integration of the arts and sciences.⁷ Sedgwick asked Cambridge men 'to think more justly on any of the subjects of academic

⁴ R. Lowe, 'The Expansion of Higher Education in England', in Jarausch (ed.), *Transformation of Higher Learning*, pp. 37-56; H. Perkin, 'The Pattern of Social Transformation in England', in *ibid.*, pp. 207-18.

⁵ *British Critic*, 1 (January 1827), pp. 175-211, p. 203.

⁶ G.L.E. Turner, 'Experimental Science in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxford', *History of Universities*, VIII (1989), pp. 117-35; pp. 122-5.

⁷ A. Buchanan, *Robert Willis (1800-1875) and the Foundation of Architectural History* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 38-43.

learning, and to combine moral and religious habits of thought with those severe physical studies'.⁸ Whewell argued that science was 'an essential part of a liberal education' because scientific knowledge was 'as requisite to connect the educated man with the future, as a thorough acquaintance with ancient literature is to connect him with the past'.⁹ Nevertheless, they faced a considerable opposition to the inclusion of studies from the evolving scientific disciplines in the traditional Arts curriculum.¹⁰ There was little consensus on how additional subjects should be incorporated and concerns about outmoded curricula were mingled inconsistently with demands for the inclusion of professional studies.¹¹ By 1867, in an address to the University of St Andrews, John Stuart Mill could still advocate a much broader curriculum for the Bachelor of Arts beyond 'the limits of ... the classical languages and mathematics' while, on the separate and more contentious issue of specifically professional studies, declare that a university should not attempt 'to make skillful lawyers, or physicians, or engineers'.¹²

Thorp emphasised the original ambition for the University was 'not merely the instruction of youth, but the elevation of science & literature in the minds of a population then undergoing a great social change'.¹³ This was the same desire he had expressed from mid-1831 onwards to found a great northern university, such as would meet the long-held ambition of the north. The practical result of this ambition was that at its opening the University offered two courses, leading to a Bachelor of Arts, and a

⁸ A. Sedgwick, *A Discourse on the Studies of the University*, 4th edn (Cambridge, 1835), p. viii.

⁹ W. Whewell, *On the Principles of English University Education*, 2nd edn (London, 1838), p. 41-2.

¹⁰ G.R. Evans, *The University of Cambridge: A New History* (London, 2010), pp. 282-6.

¹¹ Engel, 'Emerging Concept of the Academic Profession', pp. 322-3.

¹² J.S. Mill, *Inaugural address delivered to the University of St Andrews* (London, 1867), pp. 5-10.

¹³ [DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 22 March 1862.

Licentiate in Theology. It was also intended that professional students in medicine would prepare students for the Licence of the Society of Apothecaries. A course in Civil Engineering leading to the University's own award of the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer followed in 1837. To understand the institution, it is necessary to appreciate that all these courses were equally important aspects of the original vision.

Despite these grand intentions to reform the traditional understanding of what was taught in an English university, however, historians have tended to dismiss Durham's early academic ambitions. Michael Sanderson, for example, described Durham as 'a specifically Anglican arts-oriented university with no interest in industrial science'.¹⁴ W.H.G Armytage stated the University was merely 'forced by the pressures of the time to make provisions for professional training'.¹⁵ While Keith Vernon's verdict was that Durham managed only 'a sop towards modernity in the form of a school of engineering ... which failed conspicuously to prosper'.¹⁶ It is true that engineering did not prosper but it is an error to assume this was because there was no desire to make provision for professional learning. While the causes of Durham's decline will be examined later, this chapter will explore the original scope, scale, and ambition of the University's curricula and academic infrastructure. For Durham was intended to be a multi-functional university, with a strikingly contemporary mixture of academic and vocational programmes, delivered as separate courses, by a professoriate that actively lead the studies in their respective fields. Public engagement was part of the mix too. This was to be no mere cloistered

¹⁴ M. Sanderson, *The Universities and British Industry 1850-1970* (London, 1972), p. 3.

¹⁵ Armytage, *Civic Universities*, p. 176.

¹⁶ Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, pp. 101-2.

experience for privileged students, nor was it simply preparation for work, it was a radical response to the demands of northern society.

The Course in Arts

The University developed ambitious courses in professional studies, but the Bachelor of Arts degree remained the core 'academical course' for students. At first, and for many decades afterwards, the majority of the University's students studied for the Bachelor of Arts: of the 56 students admitted in the first academic year, 48 were students in Arts and the remaining 8 were students in Theology. Although there were lectures in a range of subjects, including Modern Languages and Chemistry, these disciplines were not originally examined as part of the requirements for the BA. Nevertheless, the subjects for possible examination under the heading of 'Mathematical & Physical Sciences' followed the broader Cambridge model than the more limited Oxford practice.¹⁷ Under Chevallier's guiding influence Astronomy was soon listed as an optional subject of examination for the BA, and under Johnston Chemistry was added in 1848.¹⁸

Durham craved equality with Oxford and Cambridge and for many years the University Calendar stated that the 'regular course of general academical education' was 'similar to that' given in the older universities. Admission was by passing a matriculation examination which covered the rudiments of the Christian religion, Greek, Latin, arithmetic, and mathematics. This was an innovation in England, as the practice had yet to be universally adopted by the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, which perceived such tests as an attempt by the University to restrict who they could

¹⁷ Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 157-60.

¹⁸ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 March 1847, 15 June 1847.

admit.¹⁹ Entrance exams had, however, been instituted in Scotland at Marischal College and St Andrews in the early 1820s.²⁰ Like Oxford and Cambridge, Durham restricted the Arts course to those between 15 and 21: the average age of the first cohort was 18, and it stayed high throughout the nineteenth century.²¹ Students at London University, by contrast, were generally younger, with many under 15 and two of the original intake were only eleven.²² A limited age restriction for entry was brought in at London in 1831 but even this was only for Junior Students in Latin, Greek and Mathematics who it was recommended (not required) should be at least 15. Those who were under 15 could still be admitted but only following an examination, a stipulation that was necessary as students were not normally expected to pass an examination before commencing study.²³

Teaching at Durham was spread over three terms of eight weeks – called Michaelmas, Epiphany, and Easter – and students were required to present a certificate from the Registrar to prove that they had kept the term. At Oxford, the academic year nominally consisted of four terms (Michaelmas, Hilary, Easter, and Trinity).²⁴ Durham's pattern more closely followed the three terms at Cambridge (Michaelmas, Lent, and Easter).²⁵ At both places, however, a series of standard exceptions and alternate practices had built up around the formal regulations in the

¹⁹ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 25; S. Rothblatt, 'Failure in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxford and Cambridge', *History of Education*, 11/1 (1982), pp. 1-21, p. 11; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 154, 167-8.

²⁰ D.J. Withrington, 'Ideas and Ideals in University Reform in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Scottish Perspective', *The European Legacy*, 4/6 (1999), pp. 7-19, p. 13.

²¹ Figures for 1833/34 are based on 30 out of 48 Arts entrants; until 1905/06 the date of birth is known for 359 out of 2,528 Arts entrants and their average age was between 19 and 20.

²² Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 180.

²³ *London University Calendar 1831*, p. 1.

²⁴ *Oxford University Calendar 1833*, p. 94.

²⁵ *Cambridge University Calendar 1833*, p. 9.

Calendar. A Durham student in Arts was required to have kept at least nine terms by residence and to have passed at least twelve terms since admission before a grace was passed conferring a degree. This normally meant students followed a course of instruction for a minimum of three years, as was the general practice at Oxford and Cambridge. Durham also adopted the practice of waiving the rules for higher members of the aristocracy, who were permitted to graduate as soon as they had passed their examinations.

Many regulations adopted Oxford practices, but the examination system introduced a new concept to British higher education, which has remained an integral feature ever since: the external examiner. These external examiners were recruited from Oxford and were an essential part of the strategy to demonstrate the equivalence of Durham awards. 'By their assistance the same standard of attainments has been fixed for a certificate which is observed on the like occasion in' Oxford, the Calendar for many years proudly proclaimed.²⁶ In addition to the desire to demonstrate equivalence, the introduction of external examiners followed the accepted principle in the older English universities that teaching and examining duties should be separated: the colleges taught and the university examined. The Oxford regulations stated that 'no person can examine a Candidate of the same College or Hall with himself',²⁷ and at Cambridge a detailed cycle of nominations ensured that examiners were drawn from different colleges.²⁸ Durham was far too small for sufficient separation to be introduced between examiners and teachers and hence the only option was to import

²⁶ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 8.

²⁷ *Oxford University Calendar 1833*, p. 99.

²⁸ *Cambridge University Calendar 1833*, p. 15.

examining staff.

The principle was not followed in Scotland, however, where the concept of federal institutions on the London model never displaced the unitary university, despite being floated in the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858.²⁹ But even in Scotland the practice of external examiners was eventually adopted in the late 1850s.³⁰ The University of London founded in 1836 also instituted external examiners. Where the Durham and London external examiner models differed, however, was that in London the examiners were appointed to examine students sent to them from the colleges, and so were all technically London examiners. The London model was explicitly based on the Cambridge practice, and the 1836 Charter even referred to the 'Board of Examiners' performing 'all the functions of the examiners in the Senate House of Cambridge'. At Durham the internal examiners from the University were supplemented by the external examiners from Oxford, who were there not to ensure consistency within Durham but between Durham and Oxford.

Examinations were held at the end of every year, with two internal examiners joined by one external examiner for the first two years and two for the final year. Students seeking honours were examined on paper and viva voce while pass students, the students of lesser ability, were examined on paper alone. By the 1830s, the general national move from oral to written examinations was nearly complete. The process started first at Cambridge, with a gradual shift away from viva voce assessment starting about 1772 through to new regulations in 1828 which required all papers to be

²⁹ S. Rothblatt, 'Historical and comparative remarks on the federal principle in higher education', *History of Education*, 16/3 (1987), pp. 151-80, p. 178.

³⁰ Anderson, *British Universities*, p. 110.

printed as well as for answers to be written.³¹ While pedagogic practice did play its part in this transition, it was also a practical response to the difficulties of examining a growing student population: it is a necessary part of an oral examination that examiners can only examine one student at a time.³²

Like their contemporaries at Cambridge and Oxford, Durham students were examined separately in 'Classical and General Literature' and in 'Mathematical and Physical Sciences'. At Cambridge, classification started in 1753 with ranking by merit in the Senate House Examinations (later called the Mathematical Tripos). Designed to engage students with their studies, it also introduced considerable exam anxiety.³³ Three classes were used: Wrangler (the top of which was the Senior Wrangler), the Senior Optimes, and the Junior Optimes (the bottom of which was the wooden spoon).³⁴ In each of these three classes the students were ordered by merit.³⁵ Oxford later introduced its own classification system, at first using only a single class that was limited to a maximum of 12 students, then with two classes in 1807: a first class and a second class. From 1809 this second class was divided by a line into two, with the names above the line being students whose performance was superior to those below the line. A third class was used for students who had passed but not received honours. Oxford changed its practice again in 1825 when the divided second class was dropped in favour of four distinct classes (three for honours), and again in 1830 when the

³¹ C. Stray, 'From Oral to Written Examinations: Cambridge, Oxford and Dublin 1700-1914', in R. Lowe (ed.), *The History of Higher Education* (5 vols., London, 2009), vol. 4, pp. 159-207, p. 170; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, p. 158.

³² Stray, 'Examinations', pp. 188-90.

³³ Rothblatt, 'Failure in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxford and Cambridge', pp. 6-8.

³⁴ C. Stray, 'The Wooden Spoon: Rank (dis)order in Cambridge 1753-1909', *History of Universities*, XXVI/1 (2012), pp. 163-201.

³⁵ *Cambridge University Calendar 1833*, p. 182.

number of classes rose to five (four for honours).³⁶

The listing of students by merit at Durham, Thorp noted, was 'pushed' by the 'Cambridge men' on the Chapter, though the classification system Durham adopted was more like the Oxford model.³⁷ Durham students were placed in Classes from 1 to 4 for each of the two areas of examination; for 'those students not judged worthy of distinction' in the first four classes a single classification was given. The number of these additional classes was left to the examiners' determination, which resulted in degrees being classified to the seventh or even eighth class. The use of the eighth class was not uncommon, though occasions like the Easter Term 1839 examinations, when 4 of the 11 graduating students were given this classification, were fortunately rare.

The desire to demonstrate equivalence with the Arts courses at Oxford and Cambridge limited the potential for radical departure at Durham. Nevertheless, under Johnston's guidance, Chemistry, which had been taught since the opening of the University, became a voluntary subject of examination for Arts students in 1848.³⁸ The role of Chemistry in the early University is therefore worth exploring since it illustrates the difficulties of integrating a new field of study into the Arts curriculum while still demonstrating the importance attached to such disciplines by the University's higher authorities. The fact that this level of importance was attached to Chemistry also demonstrates the extent to which Durham was a reforming university, since science too had its reform movement during the 1830s to 1850s.³⁹

³⁶ *Oxford University Calendar 1833*, pp. 101-2; Stray, 'Examinations', p. 179.

³⁷ [Bal] JP, IVA.2: Thorp to Jenkyns, 31 July 1834.

³⁸ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 March 1847, 15 June 1847.

³⁹ G.A. Foote, 'The Place of Science in the British Reform Movement 1830-1850', *Isis*, 42/3 (October 1951), pp. 192-208.

Johnston was supplied with a laboratory in a room behind the Bishop's Registry on Palace Green.⁴⁰ The provision of the laboratory was funded in part by the 'additional fee' that the 'laboratory pupils' paid in return for instruction.⁴¹ In a diary entry from 1839 Johnston records a typical day in his lab:

I am writing a little book to be entitled, "Outlines of Organic Chemistry", and to this having breakfasted &c by 9 AM I devote 2½ hours. At half past 11, I go to lecture which occupies me till about ½ past one. I then prepare an organic analysis as far as to be ready for the combustion and come home to dinner at 3. I return to my laboratory, finish my combustion and weighings by 7, and after tea make my calculations and write up my days work.⁴²

In November 1837 it was agreed that gas should be introduced to the Castle for the first time, and 'that Mr Johnston should be allowed to have five gas burners in his lecture room and laboratory'.⁴³ At that date, gas burners were not used for heating in experiments: Robert Bunsen, at the University of Heidelberg, was not to invent his eponymous burner until the mid-1850s. Gas burners in 1837 would have given flaring smoky luminous rather-yellow light. Sometimes they were 'bats-wings', flattened tubes so that the flame spread out.⁴⁴ As the burners would most likely have been used for lighting it does suggest that the laboratory was well-used into the evenings and on dark days; although natural light might have sufficed to be working in his lab at 7pm in May, if Johnston kept the same hours in winter he would certainly have needed the illumination.

To encourage talented students to study at Durham, the University at first

⁴⁰ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 65.

⁴¹ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 14.

⁴² [DUL] Johnston's Journal: 5 May 1839, p. 6.

⁴³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 November 1837.

⁴⁴ This information concerning gas burners of the 1830s has been provided by Professor David Knight.

offered up to 20 positions as 'students of the Foundation'. The students who held these Foundation scholarships received free admission, tuition, £30 towards their Board, and lodging.⁴⁵ Nomination to the foundation scholarships originally rested as private gifts with the Dean and Prebendaries in rotation according to seniority, with the Dean getting double nominations.⁴⁶ This system was gradually opened up, and during the 1840s some scholarships were awarded competitively on examination performance, starting with the new Dean, Waddington.⁴⁷ In December 1853, the Tutors asked for all the Foundation Scholarships to be 'disposed of by the result of examinations', noting testily that a previous application had 'been rejected' by the Dean and Chapter 'without any statement of reasons'. The Senate, however, were not inclined 'to interfere in a matter upon which the Dean and Chapter have already pronounced their opinion'.⁴⁸ Though more of the Scholarships were subsequently thrown open, some personal nominations persisted until November 1860 when all the Foundation Scholarships were opened to public competition through examination.⁴⁹

The Course in Theology

Although the majority of Anglican clergy had passed through the liberal education at Oxford or Cambridge, this education was not theological.⁵⁰ Writing in 1839, for example, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Tait, recoiled at the

⁴⁵ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1833. The Chapter had agreed the package for these students in February 1832 but, concerned by the institution's financial situation, the Chapter agreed that they would be charged tuition and room rent in July 1834. cf [DUL] COB: Chapter Meetings, 20 February 1832 and 21 July 1834.

⁴⁶ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 20 February 1832.

⁴⁷ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 79.

⁴⁸ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 13 December 1853.

⁴⁹ *Durham University Calendar 1861*, p. 15; [DUL] Senate Minutes: 29 November 1859.

⁵⁰ Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, pp. 132, 164. The first reliable figures are for 1834-43 which show that 82% of clergy were graduates of Oxford (39%) or Cambridge (43%).

thought of the ‘crowds of young men’ who were ‘unwillingly forced to seek such instruction in the metropolis, or at Durham, or on the continent’ due to inadequate provision at Oxford and Cambridge.⁵¹ Indeed, the absence of professional ministerial training at the older universities provoked continued agitation for improvement from within both the Church and universities well into the mid-century.⁵² At Oxford in 1840, for example, Gaisford urged the establishment of a ‘quasi-degree’ for candidates in Theology, and he was perhaps influenced by the establishment of the divinity course at Durham.⁵³ Newman described the scheme’s promoters as being ‘jealous of Durham’ as well as of the new theological colleges in Chichester (1839) and Wells (1840).⁵⁴ A start was eventually made to rectify the absence of lectures in support of ministerial preparation at Oxford and Cambridge in the early 1840s, but even these developments were controversial and limited.⁵⁵ Cambridge instituted a Voluntary Theological Examination in 1842, for example, but did not provide any instruction.⁵⁶

During the nineteenth century the ordained ministry also faced similar pressures for expansion as did other professions, which included the demands of an increasing population and the need to improve the quality of parochial provision. In these respects, the development of clerical training was much like the reforms in medicine, law, engineering and other professional areas.⁵⁷ The general

⁵¹ A.C. Tait, *Hints on the Formation of a Plan for the Safe and Effectual Revival of the Professorial System in Oxford* (Oxford, 1839), p. 24.

⁵² D. Inman, *The Making of Modern English Theology: God and the Academy at Oxford 1833-1945* (Minneapolis, 2014), pp. 43-103.

⁵³ Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 110.

⁵⁴ Newman, *Letters and Diaries*, Vol VII: Newman to F. Rogers, 25 November 1840, p. 449; cf Newman to J.W. Boden, 14 December 1840, p. 459.

⁵⁵ Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 182-4; Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 110; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 168-74.

⁵⁶ D.A. Winstanley, *Later Victorian Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1947), p. 148.

⁵⁷ Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 5-7; Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church*, pp. 13-5.

professionalisation of vocational occupations and the intransigence of Oxford and Cambridge help to explain the development of the theological colleges, starting with St Bees and St David's Colleges, but later expanding rapidly throughout the country and not just the remote extremities.⁵⁸ In addition, although the various Church parties of the early nineteenth century had profound differences, groups as diverse as the Evangelicals, the Hackney Phalanx and (a little later) the Tractarians could find common ground in their desire to bring about a spiritual renewal among the clergy of the Established Church through improvement in clerical preparation.⁵⁹

Against this background, the University was amongst the earliest institutions to pioneer new forms of professional clerical training through the development of the Licentiate in Theology (LTh). Durham quickly gained a strong reputation for its theological course. Despite his criticism of the University, Tait at least noted 'the praiseworthy labours of the Theological Professor at Durham', for example.⁶⁰ The curriculum was initially developed by Rose during his brief tenure as Professor of Divinity. He did not lack ambition: 'might not Durham be made a grand Theological School', he suggested to Watson, 'where, even after the Universities, they who could afford it might go for a year or two?'.⁶¹ Although many of Durham's BA graduates would enter holy orders, the express purpose of the divinity course was to allow students to qualify for ordination, hence the Licence would only be granted after students passed both the final examination and were granted a satisfactory testimonial as to their moral character. Both the documents were granted under the University

⁵⁸ Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 180-91; Inman, *Modern English Theology*, pp. 45, 79-80.

⁵⁹ Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, p. 23.

⁶⁰ Tait, *Revival of the Professorial System in Oxford*, p. 26.

⁶¹ Rose to Watson, 27 September 1833, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, p. 184.

seal and both were required to be awarded the Licence. Unlike the Arts course, the divinity course did not seek to emulate the older English universities as those institutions offered no equivalent course.⁶²

Rose's main motivation in coming to Durham, he told Newman, was that 'the duties of the Professor will so much lie in the formation of the clergy'.⁶³ However, this may in part explain the tensions which eventually led to his departure; for while he perceived Durham as 'a grand Theological School', the divinity course was but one part of the University's academic offering. Hence, when Rose demanded longer terms and additional staff he was also, in effect, creating an intolerable imbalance between theology and other aspects of the University.

Admission to the course was open to graduates who held the BA of Durham, Oxford, Cambridge or Dublin, while others could be admitted between the ages of 21 and 26 provided they first passed an entrance examination in Greek, Latin and Theology. The final examinations tested students in the liturgical practice as well as the Articles of the Church of England, and also covered the criticism and interpretation of the New Testament, the ecclesiastical history of the first three centuries and of the Church of England, and English composition – important, of course, for the writing of sermons. Graduate students were required to study for one year while non-graduates were only permitted to take the final examination after two years (between 1841 and 1846 three years were necessary). At first, graduates with the Durham BA were also required to study for two years, the same as non-graduates, but this disadvantage was soon dropped and Durham graduates were likewise entitled to sit the final

⁶² Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 61.

⁶³ Newman, *Letters and Diaries*, Vol IV: Rose to Newman, 20 August 1833, p. 30.

examinations after one year.⁶⁴

Given the lack of a central controlling bureaucracy within the Church to sanction qualifications as meeting the necessary expectations of ordinands, the approval of individual Bishops was of great importance.⁶⁵ Gaining the approbation of the Episcopate for the divinity course and confirmation of their willingness to accept Durham graduates for ordination was therefore vital for the University's hopes of success. In December 1833 Thorp asked Van Mildert to enquire 'whether the Degree with Testimonials' from Durham would 'be regarded by the Archbishops and Bishops as the Degrees and Testimonials of Oxford and Cambridge are regarded with reference to Holy Orders' and similarly to learn their view on accepting non-graduate students of the divinity course.⁶⁶ Van Mildert first sought the view of the Archbishops and the Bishop of London. While the Archbishop of York, Vernon Harcourt, had a positive experience of students from St Bees and so would accept non-graduate as well as graduate students with the Licence in Theology, the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley, and the Bishop of London, Charles Blomfield, confirmed only that they would accept graduate students with a Licence but would make no promises about the non-graduate divinity students.⁶⁷ Receiving only limited enthusiasm for accepting non-graduate divinity students was a disappointment, but more positively the three most senior clerics of the Church of England had given their support to the University by agreeing to accept Durham graduates of the divinity course on an equal footing with graduates of Oxford and Cambridge who had taken the divinity course.

⁶⁴ Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 259-60.

⁶⁵ Dowland, *Theological Training*, p. 187.

⁶⁶ [DUL] TC, 137: Thorp to Van Mildert, 5 December 1833.

⁶⁷ [DUL] TC, 139: Howley to Van Mildert, 7 January 1834.

Buoyed by this support Van Mildert wrote to the remaining Bishops in early February 1834.⁶⁸ By the end of the month Rose recorded with satisfaction that ‘twenty-four out of the twenty-six Prelates have agreed to accept the full education’ offered at Durham for candidates for ordination.⁶⁹ This included Edward Maltby, who wrote a positive reply agreeing to accept for ordination graduates from the Arts course and even going as far as to say that he thought by doing so he had the ‘chance of securing a better stock of really professional knowledge, than is at present supplied by our Universities’.⁷⁰

The two objections came from Edward Grey, Bishop of Hereford and younger brother of the Prime Minister, and George Murray, the Bishop of Rochester, who sent in the last reply. While Grey avowed that he did not doubt ‘the probable utility’ of the University, still he could not ‘hold out any assurance whatever’ that he would accept awards from Durham as equal to those ‘of the ancient and long-tried Universities of the realm’.⁷¹ Murray disapproved because he did not want to ‘encourage the inferior orders of the people to aspire to stations for which there are already too many candidates in the classes immediately above them’.⁷² Van Mildert did not take their refusals lightly. ‘To admit our Graduates merely as admissible to become Candidates for Ordination, seems to involve no very fearful responsibility’, the Bishop remarked sarcastically to Thorp on the stance taken by the Bishop of Hereford. Though Grey wanted to have ‘more experience of the working’ of the University before he could

⁶⁸ [DCL] VML, 367-8: Van Mildert to Thorp, 30 January 1834.

⁶⁹ Rose to Watson, February 1834, quoted in Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*, p. 187.

⁷⁰ [DUL] TC, 161: Maltby to Van Mildert, 13 February 1834.

⁷¹ [DUL] TC, 153: E. Grey to Van Mildert, 11 February 1834.

⁷² [DUL] TC, 168a: Murray to Van Mildert, 19 February 1834; Yates, ‘An Opportunity Missed?’, p. 328.

reach a final judgement Van Mildert felt that this did 'in effect' throw 'an obstacle in the way of it's working at all, in as much as without some well-grounded expectation of becoming admissible to Ordination' students would be less likely to seek entry to the University in the first place.⁷³ Van Mildert wrote a lengthy reply to Murray objecting that the Dean and Chapter were not establishing a 'Theological Seminary' only but an institution with a 'wider range' and 'general public utility' that it was hoped would attract the 'many, very many, persons, not fairly to be classed among those inferior orders whom I suppose you to mean'.⁷⁴ The two refusals were an annoyance, but the majority of Bishops responded broadly in the University's favour. By comparison, the non-graduate theological colleges founded throughout the nineteenth century received much more mixed and often unfavourable reactions from among the episcopacy, and negative attitudes towards the colleges persisted even into the twentieth century.⁷⁵

The Course in Medicine

It was originally intended that the University would offer a course in medicine. This was against Gaisford's advice: 'it strikes me to be perfectly absurd to attempt making such a provincial town as Durham a school either of law or medicine. If there are readers appointed in either of these branches they will be sinecures ab initio, and continue so' he warned.⁷⁶ Gaisford's opinion normally held great sway with Van Mildert, but the Bishop assured Thorp that he remained 'quite disposed' to retain

⁷³ [DCL] VML, 374-5: Van Mildert to Thorp, 13 February 1834.

⁷⁴ [DUL] TC, 169: Van Mildert to Murray, 22 February 1834.

⁷⁵ Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 151-76.

⁷⁶ [Bal] JP, IVB.[A]: Gaisford to Van Mildert, 26 December 1831.

Readers in both disciplines.⁷⁷

Though Gaisford's advice proved quite correct, elsewhere medicine was a fast-developing discipline. By the 1830s the medical profession and medical education were in a process of transition and rapid growth. During the first half of the century, for example, the traditional boundaries between the three medical orders of physician, apothecary, and surgeon became less distinct, though they had not yet disappeared, and there was a growing desire to obtain formal qualifications.⁷⁸ In London, University College had established a medical school which largely maintained the viability of the institution (alongside its junior department) and the Scottish universities had significant and highly successful medical schools.⁷⁹ Why should Durham not seek to emulate these institutions?

The education and training expected of a medical practitioner was evolving slowly too. While the simple and often very limited model of apprenticeship had been superseded by formal examinations, in England, unlike in Scotland, responsibility for these examinations resided almost entirely outside of the universities.⁸⁰ The most prestigious practitioners, the physicians, obtained a licence from the Royal College of Physicians. Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians had to hold a degree from Oxford or Cambridge, but these degrees did not provide medical training but assured

⁷⁷ [DCL] VML, 211-3: Van Mildert to Thorp, 5 January 1832.

⁷⁸ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 166-75; J.F. Kett, 'Provincial Medical Practice in England 1730-1815', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 19/1 (January 1964), pp. 17-29, p. 17; F.J.W. Miller, 'Glancing Back; Teachers and Students 1834-1934', in G. Dale, et al, (eds.), *Sesquicentennial Celebrations*, p. 18; Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 80-1; S.E.D. Shortt, 'Physicians, Science, and Status: Issues in the professionalization of Anglo-American Medicine in the Nineteenth Century', *Medical History*, 21/1 (January 1983), pp. 51-68, p. 62.

⁷⁹ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 143; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 64; C. Newman, *The Evolution of Medical Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1957), p. 13.

⁸⁰ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 39-42.

that physicians would be classically educated gentlemen.⁸¹ The examination for a Licence of the College, for example, was conducted in Latin until 1830. Fortunately for the physician's patients, many men subsequently went on to give themselves a firmer grounding in medical practice than was required for their degree or Licence.⁸² While physicians were graduates they were still usually men of lower social standing, and the majority continued to labour at a social disadvantage throughout their careers.⁸³ Lady Chettam, in George Elliot's *Middlemarch*, from 1830, remarked that she preferred her 'medical man more on a footing with the servants'.⁸⁴

Men intending to become surgeons obtained their training through 'walking the wards' in one of the London hospitals though very little by way of systematic medical education was provided.⁸⁵ Time in the hospital would therefore be supplemented by attendance at a private anatomy school, and by apprenticeship to an existing practitioner.⁸⁶ The surgeons sought their professional recognition through Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS). The requirement for the MRCS was that a student should have spent at least six years in training, attending courses in anatomy, botany, chemistry, materia medica, and the theory and practice of physic

⁸¹ Harte, *University of London*, p. 61; Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 5; Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 152, 160-6.

⁸² Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, pp. 9, 12, 47-9.

⁸³ R. Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind. A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (London, 1997), pp. 348-52; W.G. Runciman, *Very Different, But Much the Same: The Evolution of English Society Since 1714* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 75-7; G.G. Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine 1834-1934* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1934), p. 6;

⁸⁴ G.E. Eliot, *Middlemarch, Volume 1* (London, 1852), p. 107.

⁸⁵ Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 35.

⁸⁶ Kett, 'Provincial Medical Practice', p. 19; J.R. Bradford, 'University College London and Medical Education', *The Lancet*, 209/5412 (May 1927), pp. 1093-7, p. 1094.

and also to include attending surgical practice in a recognised hospital.⁸⁷ The surgeon was thought to be a skilled operator, not an educated professional, and (in a time before anaesthetic) swiftness and dexterity were the prime desiderata.⁸⁸ A university degree was therefore an irrelevance.⁸⁹

The role of the Society of Apothecaries (also known as the Apothecaries Hall) was formalised by the Apothecaries Act of 1815 which gave the Society responsibility for licensing practitioners. The award the apothecaries aimed for was the Licence of the Society of Apothecaries (LSA). In addition to attending classes in chemistry, botany, and anatomy, candidates had to serve an apprenticeship of not less than five years.⁹⁰ The more ambitious student would attempt to pass both “College and Hall”, meaning they qualified as a surgeon and an apothecary.⁹¹

There was therefore no single or universally recognised qualification which granted entry to medical practice. This state of affairs persisted in part due to the long tradition of mutual animosity between the different medical associations.⁹² The eminent importance of public health, however, gave the government an interest in the reform of the medical profession. The Apothecaries Act represented the first step in the formal regulation by the State of medical practice in England, but further legislation came with the passing of the Anatomy Act in 1832, which encouraged the

⁸⁷ Bradford, ‘Medical Education’, p. 1094; L.P. Le Quesne, ‘Medicine’, in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The University of London and the World of Learning 1836-1986*, (London, 1990), pp. 125-45, pp. 126-7; Porter, *Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 316-7.

⁸⁸ Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 17.

⁸⁹ Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, p. 152.

⁹⁰ Regulations of the Apothecaries’ Hall, in Dale, et al, (eds.), *Sesquicentennial Scrapbook*, p. 8.

⁹¹ Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 8.

⁹² Newman, *Evolution of Medical Education*, p. 130.

establishment of medical schools.⁹³ It would, however, be more than forty years after the passing of the Apothecaries Act, and a further seventeen Bills in Parliament,⁹⁴ before the Medical Act of 1858 established a unified medical register and created the General Medical Council; and even then unlicensed practice remained not only legal but could still be a route to successful practice.⁹⁵

Persuaded by these rapid developments in the medical profession, the growing demand for a medical education, and the visible success at other institutions, but despite Gaisford's pleading, one of the original members of the academic staff was a Reader in Medicine: William Cooke, M.D. of the University of Edinburgh. His appointment was on a similar basis to that of Johnston: what Whitley called an 'allied power'. Described by contemporaries as suave and well-adapted to scientific pursuits, his appointment was listed in the first Prospectus.⁹⁶ He had moved to Durham from Ealing, in Middlesex, sometime after 1806, and had been physician to the *Infirmery for the Sick and Lame Poor of the County of Durham* at Allergate in Durham since 1822.⁹⁷ Cooke offered his services to the Infirmery gratuitously, which is an indication of how successful he was as one of the City's four physicians in private practice.⁹⁸

⁹³ Porter, *Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 317-8, 355.

⁹⁴ Harte, *University of London*, p. 61.

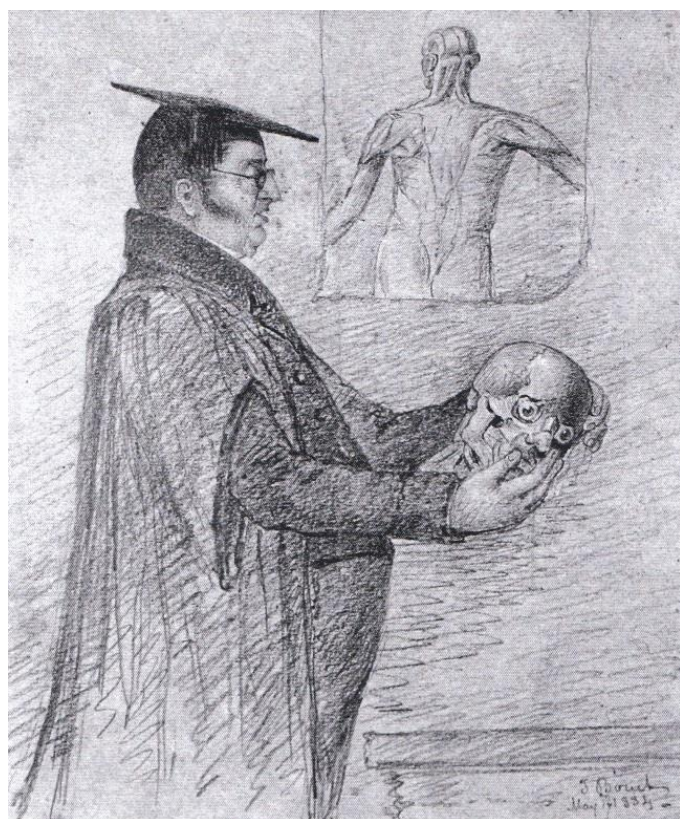
⁹⁵ Porter, *Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, pp. 355-6; Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 8-9.

⁹⁶ [DUL] TC, 652: Prospectus, 20 July 1833; *The Durham Directory and Almanac for 1858* (Durham, 1858), p. 32.

⁹⁷ J. Burnley, 'Cooke, Sir William Fothergill (1806-1879)', rev. B. Bowers, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2011); Cross, *Bouet's Durham*, p. 34.

⁹⁸ W.M. Parson and W.M. White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the Counties of Durham and Northumberland: Volume 1* (Leeds, 1827), p. 208.

Illustration 6: William Cooke, by Joseph Bouet⁹⁹



The *British Magazine* announced that Cooke's first lecture would be delivered on 12 November 1833 and would be 'continued on alternate days, at one o'clock'.¹⁰⁰ The topic was anatomy and physiology and would be delivered in a course of fifty lectures during the Michaelmas and Epiphany terms. The first edition of the Calendar adds that on each Friday at two o'clock there would be 'Demonstrations, in allusion to the previous Lectures, explaining the application of Anatomy to the Practice of Surgery and Pathology'. This Calendar also sets out an ambitious and eminently practical set of 'principal subjects' including 'the Structure and Functions of the Vital Organs; the Brain and the Nervous System; the Component Parts of the Blood; the Absorbent System; the Muscles, and their Functions; the Heart and the Blood Vessels;

⁹⁹ Cross, *Bouet's Durham*, pp. 34-5.

¹⁰⁰ *The British Magazine*, IV, (1833), p. 469.

the Thoracic, Abdominal, and Pelvic Viscera; the Organ of Hearing, Voice, Taste, and Smell; the Foetal Circulation; the Teeth, etc., etc.’.¹⁰¹ Cooke’s lectures were enhanced by ‘a complete osteological collection ... wax models and graphic representations’, which were provided by his son.¹⁰² Without easy access to bodies for dissection, such teaching aids were vital to the success of any medical school – and he is presumably holding just such a model in Boeet’s drawing. Even after the Burke and Hare murders of 1828 led to the subsequent passing of the Anatomy Act 1832, which expanded the legal supply of medical cadavers, the lack of refrigeration constrained practical anatomy lectures to the winter months.

An undated scheme of the ‘Medical Lectures’ produced by Cooke, which most likely relates to the 1833/34 academic year, provided some additional detail of the intended syllabus for medical students.¹⁰³ The first course in the Michaelmas Term would cover the structure & functions of the human frame: anatomy and physiology. In the next term (incorrectly labelled after the Oxford practice as the Hilary Term) Cooke intended to continue with the diseases of the human frame: pathology and nosology.¹⁰⁴ Finally, the third course in the Easter Term would cover the treatment and care of diseases: *Materia Medica*¹⁰⁵ and therapeutics. ‘Medical students’, it was added, would be furnished with ‘a syllabus of each Course of Lectures’.¹⁰⁶

The descriptions in the Calendar and in the scheme of lectures demonstrate that the intention was to offer a course which would enable students to satisfy the

¹⁰¹ *Durham University Calendar 1833*, pp. 18-9.

¹⁰² *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 12.

¹⁰³ [DUL] TC, 630: Medical Lectures.

¹⁰⁴ i.e. the classification of disease.

¹⁰⁵ i.e. the study of drugs used in the treatment of disease.

¹⁰⁶ [DUL] TC, 630: Medical Lectures.

requirements of the LSA, as was similarly practised in King's College and London University.¹⁰⁷ There was demonstrable interest in such a professional course, and, 'enquiries having been made', the *Durham Advertiser* confirmed that the University intended to seek 'recognition ... as a School of Medicine' from the Apothecaries Hall.¹⁰⁸ The first calendar stated two fees for Cooke's course: one for 'Medical Students and Practitioners' and one for 'Amateurs'.¹⁰⁹ It was also noted that Cooke's weekly 'Anatomical Demonstrations' would be of general interest but were 'intended more especially for the benefit of the Professional Student'.¹¹⁰ It is clear that the intention was to offer a practical and professional medical course.

There is no record of how many people attended Cooke's lectures, or how many (if any) counted themselves as 'medical students'. Cooke delivered lectures in 1834 'upon Anatomy and Physics' and in 1835 'upon comparative Anatomy' but this was a significant reduction over the ambitious plans laid out in 1833.¹¹¹ In 1836 Cooke's lectures were 'illustrative of Paley's Natural Theology',¹¹² which indicated Cooke's diversion into more general lectures as Arts students were required to take examinations in Paley's Evidences. Cooke's public lectures also tended more towards matters of accessible general interest which Van Mildert hoped to attend himself.¹¹³ After 1836 there is no record of Cooke providing any academic lectures for students, and 1837 is the last year in which there is a record of him delivering public lectures.

¹⁰⁷ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 145; Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 113-4.

¹⁰⁸ *The Durham Advertiser*, 1 November 1833, 8 November 1833.

¹⁰⁹ *Durham University Calendar 1833*, p. 19.

¹¹⁰ *The Durham Advertiser*, 8 November 1833.

¹¹¹ *Durham University Calendar 1836*, p. 11.

¹¹² *Durham University Calendar 1836*, p. 11.

¹¹³ [DCL] VML, 415-6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 27 May 1834.

The medical venture in Durham City petered out sometime before Cooke resigned his post at the University (and his work at the Infirmary in Allergate) in March 1842.¹¹⁴ The wax models had been briefly displayed in a 'biological museum' on Palace Green but Fowler recorded that they seemed to 'have ceased to exist in 1840-41'¹¹⁵ which is shortly after Cooke stopped lecturing and shortly before he quit the city. This makes the teaching of medicine in Durham City a short-lived affair lasting only from 1833 to probably no later than 1837 and certainly not beyond March 1842.

The Course in Civil Engineering

Students were first admitted to Durham's course in civil engineering in Epiphany Term 1838. Their aim was to achieve the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer. While Chevallier felt that the establishment of this course would enable civil engineering to 'take the rank in society which its importance demands', the risk was in fact that the low esteem in which most engineers were held would damage the University's already fragile standing.¹¹⁶ Yet civil engineers had achieved national prominence as demand for their services had grown to meet the needs of an ever-expanding array of industrial activities. This was especially true in the north-east. For many years this was articulated in the University's Calendar:

The extensive public works of this country, and the vast national interests involved in them, seemed to require that the Civil Engineer should have an education expressly adapted to his profession. And the University of Durham was considered, from its local position, to have peculiar facilities for combining, with the requisite instruction in science, a practical insight into all the ordinary operations of Civil Engineering and Mining.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 19 March 1842.

¹¹⁵ Fowler, *Durham University*, pp. 103-4.

¹¹⁶ [DUL] DDR: Chevallier to Maltby, 25 November 1837.

¹¹⁷ *Durham University Calendar 1838*, p. 8.

Through offering a professional vocational education, the course in civil engineering was a radical departure from the long-established model of English higher education and because of this it must be considered the most important academic development at Durham in its early years.

Despite the growing technical complexity of civil engineering, in the early nineteenth century scientific activity was still largely undertaken by the landed gentry and the professional classes as a hobby; as described by David Knight: 'scientific research was still simply *recherché*'. It was only towards the end of the century that academic science had evolved, with duly erected boundaries between defined disciplines.¹¹⁸ The early professionalisation of science was driven in part by the formation of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1831, which had been created following persistent attacks on the perceived deficiencies of the Royal Society that had been accused of being more interested in the wealth of potential members than their scientific accomplishments.¹¹⁹ From its outset the Association was concerned with the applicability of science to commercial and practical uses: 'to the object of bringing theoretical science in contact with that practical knowledge on which the wealth of the country depends' as it was put by Charles Babbage.¹²⁰ The newly developing colleges also embraced scientific activity, and the industrial applications of scientific knowledge. London University had intended to establish a department of Engineering but this had not happened due to difficulties with the academic staff; a

¹¹⁸ D. Knight, *The Age of Science* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 3-7.

¹¹⁹ Foote, 'Science in the British Reform Movement', pp. 196-200.

¹²⁰ Babbage addressing the second meeting of the Association. *Report of the British Association*, p. 107.

chair in Civil Engineering was not appointed until 1841.¹²¹ The civil engineering course at King's College followed closely after Durham's, being announced in April 1838 by Hugh James Rose, who was then Principal.¹²² A prospectus was issued 3 weeks later, and the first students were admitted in October 1838.¹²³ It is possible that the course was influenced by Rose's brief time at Durham. It may also not be a coincidence that the fee for the course at King's was set at £10 10s a term, the same as at Durham.¹²⁴ The curricula were similar too, though at King's students were admitted at 15,¹²⁵ rather than 16 as was the case in Durham, and included a course on electricity delivered by Charles Wheatstone, the co-developer of telegraphy, who lectured at the College until about 1840.¹²⁶

Chevallier, Whitley, and Johnston were the driving force behind the new course. What they shared was not only a desire to advance scientific knowledge but more especially the application of science for practical purposes. Johnston returned on numerous occasions to the value of applying scientific discoveries to practical and commercial interests: 'the progress of knowledge forbids us to cling pertinaciously to old opinions and processes' he urged.¹²⁷ The idea of a course for engineers was probably discussed within the University from the time of its opening in 1833, if not before. The earliest certain proposal is contained in a printed paper marked 'Private'

¹²¹ Bellot, *University College, London*, pp. 135-6, 266; W.O. Skeat, *King's College London Engineering Society 1847-1957* (London, 1957), p. 98.

¹²² Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 147; Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, pp. 98-9.

¹²³ Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, p. 99.

¹²⁴ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 147; Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, p. 100.

¹²⁵ *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, I (1838), p. 231.

¹²⁶ S.P. Thompson, 'Wheatstone, Sir Charles (1802-1875)', rev. B. Bowers, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2011).

¹²⁷ J.F.W. Johnston, *The Economy of a Coal-field* (Durham, 1838), p. 65.

and dated 19 December 1836. It was written by an anonymous author from outside the University, who proposed founding a 'Hall or College for Mining and Civil Engineering students'.¹²⁸ As 'the three largest colliery establishments in the world' were 'within seven miles of the City of Durham' the University's location was perfect, the author argued, and the 'scientific eminence' of the staff was ideal too. If these weren't sufficient reasons then the author reminded the University's authorities that their very existence was dependant on the Chapter's wealth derived from 'mining property'.¹²⁹ No further steps were recorded for almost a year until, at the first meeting of the new academic year in 1837, the Senate asked Chevallier and Whitley 'to prepare a statement ... for the formation of a class of students intended for the Profession of Civil Engineer, and to lay the same before the Senate at its next weekly meeting'.¹³⁰

One week after it had been requested, the plan was duly presented to the Senate.¹³¹ By the end of November this draft had been debated, revised, printed and circulated to members of Convocation, which approved it at a meeting on 22 November.¹³² Less than a week later Senate agreed the first set of examinations for the Engineer Students to be held in October 1838.¹³³ Johnston was given 'the charge of instructing the Students' under the superintendence of Chevallier.¹³⁴ The first seven engineer students matriculated in January 1838 (out of 13 new students that term) and

¹²⁸ [DUL] TC, 658: Proposal for a Hall or College of Mining, 19 December 1836. Given the similarities between this proposal and the ideas he put forward in the mid-1850s, as discussed in chapter 6, it is possible that Nicholas Wood was the author.

¹²⁹ [DUL] TC, 658: Proposal for a Hall or College of Mining, 19 December 1836.

¹³⁰ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 October 1837.

¹³¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 31 October 1837.

¹³² [DUL] Convocation Minute Book: 22 November 1837.

¹³³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 November 1837.

¹³⁴ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 13.

they were granted a special dispensation to discount the Michaelmas Term to allow the academic year 1837-8 to be counted in full.

Chevallier and Johnston published an article in July 1838 concerning the new course. 'It has long been a subject of regret', they wrote, 'that no institution existed in England in which young men might receive an education which should peculiarly fit them for the higher branches of the profession of Civil Engineer'. 'The University of Durham', they declared, would be 'the first public body ... to supply this deficiency'.¹³⁵ Though the new initiative was to all intents and purposes a degree the University did not feel able to use that title: 'as such a degree did not exist', Chevallier later recalled, 'at any other University' it would have been 'too strong a measure for a small body like us to take upon ourselves to create a degree'.¹³⁶ Instead Durham offered students the post-nominal designation 'C.E.'. Nevertheless, the entry requirements were demanding as were the examinations.¹³⁷ The nearest contemporary equivalent, the engineering course at King's College, was not a degree either but that institution did not have degree awarding powers. When King's resolved the matter of certificates for their course in 1840, they settled on the even more cumbersome title of Diploma of Associate in the Department of Civil Engineering and Science applied to the Arts and Manufactures.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ T. Chevallier and J.F.W. Johnston, 'Education of Students in Civil Engineering and Mining in the University of Durham', *The London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science*, 13 (July 1838), pp. 1-8, p. 1.

¹³⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 426, p. 18.

¹³⁷ A. Guagnini, 'Worlds apart: academic instruction and professional qualifications in the training of mechanical engineers in England, 1850-1914', in R. Fox and A. Guagnini, (eds.), *Education, Technology and Industrial Performance in Europe 1850-1939* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 16-41, p. 18.

¹³⁸ Skeat, *KCL Engineering Society*, p. 99.

The Durham course encompassed a broad range of subjects, including both practical and theoretical mathematics and engineering, such as Algebra, Surveying, and Material Mechanics, as well as elements of the Arts course.¹³⁹ Students were even required to study Latin, Greek or a modern European language, a subject in which the new University had appointed a lecturer: James Hamilton, who was also Scottish and one of the 'allied powers' like Johnston. This inclusion may be due to Chevallier's influence, himself a modern linguist, as he also examined students in German, French and Italian.¹⁴⁰ Though the maths content in the second and third years remained high more practical subjects were incorporated in higher proportions than the first year. These practical subjects included Integral Hydrostatics and Hydraulics, the Construction of Machines and Instruments, Pneumatics, Surveying, Levelling and the Use of Instruments, Practical Mapping and Architectural Drawing, Theory of Perspective and Projections, The Steam Engine, Optics and Optical Instruments as well as Astronomy and Astronomical Instruments.¹⁴¹ In February 1838 the Senate agreed £20 for the purchase of instruments for the 'class of Civil Engineers',¹⁴² which was soon followed by a further grant of £30.¹⁴³

Prizes were also offered for practical skills. William Taylor, one of the first students, won the prize 'for the best plan of KEPHIR Colliery from actual survey' in 1838.¹⁴⁴ Students were not kept in the classroom. Charles Grey recorded that 'in

¹³⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 November 1837.

¹⁴⁰ A. Klottrup, "'...Astrorum Acerrimus Indagator...'" Temple Chevallier and Durham 1834-1873', *Durham University Journal*, 78/1, (December 1985), pp. 11-21, p. 14.

¹⁴¹ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. x-xii.

¹⁴² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 13 February 1838.

¹⁴³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 May 1838.

¹⁴⁴ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 67.

January, 1843, Mr Beanlands took us and taught us levelling and laying down sections'. Grey also noted that in April 1843 'I took levels and plans from Mungywell to the castle, and drew plans and sections which I was required to show to, and explain to, the Warden and Senate, on the 9th May, for the purpose of laying water pipes'.¹⁴⁵ Johnston recorded organising an excursion for the engineering students in his journal: on 20 June 1839 he 'set out on a short Geological excursion into Teesdale with some of the Engineer students during which we experienced much kindness and attention from Mr Stag the lead company's agent at Middleton'.¹⁴⁶ Neither was the practical application of theoretical knowledge left out of the examination syllabus: typical questions required students, for example, to calculate 'how many tons of water should a ten horse engine raise 9 feet in 6 hours? and find the length of a waste weir to discharge this quantity in 5 hours' and to 'describe the common methods for laying foundations in deep water and the general nature and construction of such methods', including giving 'examples in this or other countries'.¹⁴⁷

Chevallier, wrote to Maltby with a copy – indeed *on* a copy – of the new regulations, and expressed his hope that 'the facilities' they offered 'both for the theoretical and practical studies connected with engineering and mining may be attended with good effects'.

The great national works in daily progress, and the immense amount of capital involved render it essential that the first studies of those who shall be engaged in the direction of those works should be such as to qualify them to form a sound and independent judgment. And I consider it to be also a consideration of no slight moment that the profession of Civil Engineer should take the rank in society which its importance demands, and, as a preliminary step, that those who aspire

¹⁴⁵ C.G. Grey, *The Story of His Official Life* (Dublin?, 1907?), p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ [DUL] Johnston's Journal: 30 June 1839, p. 14.

¹⁴⁷ *Durham University Calendar 1843*, pp. 51-2.

to the highest stations should receive the education of Christian Gentlemen.¹⁴⁸

The launch of Durham's new course did not go unnoticed. The first volume of *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal* noted that the 'progress of professional education' had received a 'sudden impulse' by the launch of the new course which, it was hoped, would 'augment its real value and its estimation in public opinion'. The Journal continued that 'the University of Durham has been the first to include among its faculties courses of Civil Engineering and Mining and this example has been pursued in London by University and King's Colleges'. In fact, some reckoned the foundation of classes in civil engineering in Durham and London as of equal importance for the future success and prestige of the profession as the creation of the Institution of Civil Engineers itself.¹⁴⁹

However, the Journal recorded two reservations. First, the course was expensive, requiring £100 per year, and so could only be of benefit to the 'richer classes'. Second, and more importantly, any academic course of lectures, even one as comprehensive as that to be offered in Durham, could only provide part of the education needed to produce an engineer.

So in the present case, after a student has passed three years in the college, he must consider his education but half complete, and should be articulated for at least three years more to some man of business, who would give him the opportunity of perfecting himself in the technicalities of his profession.

Nevertheless, the future prospects for the venture were most propitious if links to 'men of business' could be established.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ [DUL] DDR: Chevallier to Maltby, 25 November 1837.

¹⁴⁹ *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, I (1838), pp. vi, 246.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 66.

The Senate was acutely aware of the need to gain the support and encouragement of professional civil engineers if the course was to have any hope of succeeding, in the same way as the Bishops needed to be willing to receive Durham men for ordination. But the task was far greater than persuading leading mining and civil engineers to recognise the course on offer at Durham, and more difficult than persuading a defined and relatively small group of Bishops of the value of the University's education, as it required a loosely connected and diverse range of professional engineers to adopt an entirely new concept of training for their profession. They had to be persuaded that an academic course was a legitimate way of developing professional skills and knowledge. As the country which had industrialised before any other, by the late 1830s there was in Britain a well-tried and deeply-rooted industrial tradition. The existing practices of civil engineers had enabled the new economy to expand rapidly and had supported the development of the world's leading manufacturing and industrial base. The case for change was hardly compelling.

To help in the process of acceptance, the new engineering course copied the use of external examiners which had been pioneered for the Arts examinations. By bringing in these external examiners it was hoped that the course could ensure its practical relevance and more easily gain professional recognition. This was not an easy task. 'I am at a nonplus to find some good practical as well as theoretical mathematician to aid in examining our engineer students in June', Chevallier confided to his friend Corrie. 'There are but 4 men to examine: but we wish to set the style of examination for future years; & to have examiners whose names will carry weight', he

emphasised.¹⁵¹ Corrie could not help on this occasion though the three external examiners appointed for the Easter Term examinations in 1840 (the first set of final examinations) were certainly men whose names would carry weight. Sir John Rennie was a Fellow of the Royal Society and engineer to the Admiralty from 1831.¹⁵² James Forbes, the Professor of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh, was also a Fellow of the Royal Society as well as a founding member of the British Association and was, with Johnston, on the Local Committee in Edinburgh.¹⁵³ Nicholas Wood was a local mining engineer (he was born within Thorp's parish at Ryton). He had not received a university education, but had been trained as a colliery manager at Killingworth, where he formed a lasting friendship and professional association with George Stephenson. Later on Wood became the founding President of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers and promoted stronger ties with the University.¹⁵⁴

The external examiners' insights into the content of the course would be absolutely necessary if the students produced by Durham were to stand any chance of being valued in the professional – and above all *practical* – world of civil engineering. Such acceptance would not come easily as the University faced stiff competition from premium pupillages and apprenticeships. The essential element of both these routes was practical experience. A premium pupillage involved three years' practical experience in different aspects of engineering from drawing, through workshops, to

¹⁵¹ [DUL] CC, 47: Chevallier to Corrie, 21 March 1840.

¹⁵² A. Saint, 'Rennie, Sir John (1794–1874)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

¹⁵³ *Report of the British Association*, p. 46; R.N. Smart, 'Forbes, James David (1809–1868)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2012).

¹⁵⁴ R.M. Birse, 'Wood, Nicholas (1795–1865)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2010).

the commercial office. The fees for these pupillage positions were expensive (between £100 and £300 per year) and competition for places at the most prestigious firms was intense. Apprenticeships offered a cheaper and more accessible route into the profession but, while there were no or very low fees, the training period lasted up to seven years and competition for places was at least as demanding as it was for a premium pupillage. An apprenticeship was also less likely to lead to a senior position.¹⁵⁵ The very ambiguity of this system helped maintain it: progression was possible for men of little means precisely because the lack of a formal route opened up numerous possibilities for progression for a man with ingenuity and imagination.¹⁵⁶

The Museum

The University's academic development was not confined to what it taught, as it also established a physical academic infrastructure, including a museum and an observatory, that were similar to developments at other institutions.¹⁵⁷ Such initiatives were central to the notion of a broadly-based institution cultivating academic, practical, and professional knowledge amongst students and the general public alike, or, as Thorp later described it: to elevate 'science & literature in the minds of a population then undergoing a great social change'.¹⁵⁸ The latter part of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of numerous institutions that sought to bring intellectual and cultural stimulation to a wider public. This included

¹⁵⁵ Guagnini, 'Training mechanical engineers in England', pp. 24-5.

¹⁵⁶ W.J. Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1966), pp. 123-4.

¹⁵⁷ S. Rothblatt, *The Revolution of the Dons* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 250; B. Wittrock, 'The Modern University in its Historical Contexts: Rethinking Three Transformations', *History of Universities*, XXVII/1, pp. 199-226, pp. 207-8.

¹⁵⁸ [DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 22 March 1862.

the Literary and Philosophical Societies in provincial towns, including Newcastle, but also antiquarian and scientific societies and national institutions such as the British Museum (founded in 1753, opened in 1759, and itself under pressure to reform in the 1830s).¹⁵⁹

As part of the desire to create an institution that would be of use to, and therefore supported by, the residents of the north in general but in this instance of Durham specifically, the creation of a museum to hold a university collection was an integral part of the original plan for the University, dating from September 1831. The Dean and Chapter eventually agreed 'to open a deposit for Antiquities & other objects of science & curiosity to be the foundation of a Museum with a view to the studies of the University' in February 1833.¹⁶⁰ The museum's first home was the abbey's old worsted mill, fitted up by an allowance of £100.¹⁶¹ An annual grant of £10.10. from the University Chest was agreed in March 1838.¹⁶² With not a little poetic licence, the *Calendar* described the old mill as 'a commodious building ... on the banks of the river Wear'.¹⁶³ It was at least on the banks of the river: but even though the collection was ruined by damp, the museum was not removed to more salubrious accommodation on Palace Green until 1876.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, pp. 133-6; A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), p. 47; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, pp. 162-74; D.R. Jones, *The Origins of Civic Universities: Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool* (London, 1988), pp. 108-14; N. McCord, 'Origins to Armstrong College: Newcastle in the 19th Century', in McCord (ed.), *Newcastle University*, pp. 16-8, p. 17; E. Miller, 'Education: The British Museum', in G. Sutherland, et al, (eds.), *Education* (Dublin, 1977), pp. 112-24; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 17-26.

¹⁶⁰ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 9 February 1833.

¹⁶¹ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 24 May 1834.

¹⁶² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 13 March 1838.

¹⁶³ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁴ A.F. Harding, 'Durham University Museum, 1833-1982', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, new series 6 (1982), pp. 37-43, p. 40; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 287.

The basis of the museum's collection was a donation by Thomas Gisborne, Prebendary of the 1st Stall.¹⁶⁵ The University Calendar for many years proudly proclaimed Gisborne's act of philanthropy when he 'purchased and presented to the University a valuable collection of objects of natural history'.¹⁶⁶ The original star exhibit from Gisborne's donation was a collection of British birds. The Calendar provided an annual list of some of the examples needed to complete the 288 species in *Selby's Catalogue*, that was only discontinued in 1931.¹⁶⁷ The collection was augmented by 'several valuable additions by donations from members of the University and others', including occasional grants from the University itself.¹⁶⁸ One such grant was made in 1837, when the Senate advanced £30 for the purchase of objects of natural history.¹⁶⁹

With piecemeal acquisitions and donations, the Museum's holdings became increasingly eclectic, and while some aspects of its collection related to the University's studies (such as the medical wax works) many of the items were simply curiosities intended for public interest. Some acquisitions may have served both purposes. In late 1834 the University made an unsuccessful attempt to purchase the collection of the Scottish mineralogist Thomas Allan; while no doubt of general interest this collection would have also supported the course in civil engineering and been of use to future mine managers. Contemporary accounts described this collection as 'by no

¹⁶⁵ Gisborne held the 5th Stall 1823-6 and the 1st Stall 1826-46.

¹⁶⁶ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁷ Harding, 'Durham University Museum', p. 41; C.E. Jackson, 'Selby, Prideaux John (1788-1867)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004). The reference to *Selby's Catalogue* is presumably to his *Illustrations of Ornithology* published in nineteen parts between 1821 and 1833. Selby was awarded an honorary MA in 1839.

¹⁶⁸ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 12 December 1837.

means the largest' but 'undoubtedly the best-selected and the most instructive in the kingdom' and as 'almost unrivalled for its excellence'.¹⁷⁰ Johnston pressed for the collection to be purchased, and Van Mildert pledged £500 to the subscription.¹⁷¹ The University, however, was outbid and Johnston recorded that the collection had been 'purchased by a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Manchester', for £1,600 as the University had not been 'in a position to offer more than £1000'.¹⁷² The collection can now be found in the Natural History Museum (itself an integral part of the British Museum until 1963) which demonstrates the value of the collection.

The Observatory

The University found much greater success with its observatory; a facility described by Forgan as perhaps 'the oldest specialized type of scientific building'.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, the number of formal university observatories was tiny, making even Durham's small contribution significant: the number working in the five university observatories rose from one in 1773, to three by 1800, and to seven by 1838.¹⁷⁴ The meteorological readings, for example, established at the same time now form the 'second longest continuous record at one site at a university in Britain'.¹⁷⁵ The

¹⁷⁰ 'Death of Thomas Allan, Esq.', *The London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science*, III/XVI (October 1833), pp. 317-8, p. 317; 'Review of Robert Allan's Manual of Mineralogy', *The London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science*, VI/XXXI (January 1835), pp. 53-4, p. 54.

¹⁷¹ [DCL] VML, 444-6: Van Mildert to Thorp, 25 October 1834.

¹⁷² [TRS] Fox Papers, 58: Johnston to Robert Were Fox, 16 May 1835. The 'gentleman in Manchester' was Robert Hyde Greg, who helped found the Royal Institution and the Mechanics' Institute. cf C.W. Sutton, 'Greg, Robert Hyde (1795-1875)', rev. M.B. Rose, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2009).

¹⁷³ S. Forgan, 'The Architecture of Science and the Idea of a University', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 20/4 (1989), pp. 405-34, p. 408.

¹⁷⁴ R. Hutchins, *British University Observatories 1772-1939* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 50-1.

¹⁷⁵ J.M. Kenworthy, T.P. Burt, and N.J. Cox, 'Durham University Observatory and its meteorological record', *Weather*, 62/10 (2007), pp. 265-9.

observatory also represented a nascent concept of research, and enabled Durham to demonstrate a measure of parity with the older universities.

In 1839 a collection of astronomical instruments was obtained through 'a liberal subscription ... among the members and friends of the University', which amounted to £1,345 15s 0d.¹⁷⁶ The collection included a Fraunhofer Refractor telescope and a clock by Hardy, the telescope staying in use until 1891, while the clock was still in use in 1932.¹⁷⁷ This collection was offered for sale to the University by Dr Thomas Hussey, a priest and amateur astronomer of considerable merit based in Kent.¹⁷⁸ Chevallier made the journey to Kent to inspect the collection, and sought advice from the Astronomer Royal, George Biddell Airy, and the Lowndian Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge, George Peacock.¹⁷⁹ Having determined that the collection was of the highest quality (the Fraunhofer was the only one in the country and is described by Rochester and Parton as 'undoubtedly one of the best in Europe'), Chevallier directed the efforts to raise the necessary funds for their purchase.¹⁸⁰ Hussey had been trying to sell his instruments for at least a year, following a severe injury which prevented him from undertaking any practical astronomical work. It seems Hussey was demanding a considerable, though not necessarily unfair, price for his highly regarded collection.¹⁸¹ Chevallier even returned to Kent to oversee the packing of the

¹⁷⁶ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, pp. xiii, 22.

¹⁷⁷ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 108; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 283.

¹⁷⁸ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 7 January 1839.

¹⁷⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 14 January and 28 January 1839.

¹⁸⁰ Hutchins, *British University Observatories*, p. 40; G.D. Rochester, and G.M. Parton, 'The Durham Obelisk', *Durham Archaeological Journal*, 2 (1986), pp. 105-110, p. 107.

¹⁸¹ D.W. Dewhirst, 'The Correspondence of the Rev. B.W.S. Vallack', *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 23 (1982), pp. 552-5, p. 553.

instruments to ensure their safe transit by road.¹⁸² Salvin was soon employed to design the observatory, which was constructed just outside the city, and Hussey was invited to help install the instruments.¹⁸³ A local landowner, William Wharton, added a northern meridian obelisk in 1850.¹⁸⁴ Chevallier relished the opportunity to employ the instruments in observational astronomy. He thought they were 'likely to be of essential service to the University as well as to the progress of Science in general'.¹⁸⁵

Conclusion

In retrospect, it appears that in the early nineteenth century there should have been an overwhelming case for curriculum reform in the universities and the development of professional studies as an integral part of their purpose. It is therefore striking that a powerful combination of reactionary views in the universities and vested interests in the professions successfully managed to restrict significant reform at Oxford and Cambridge for decades and to hold back the development of new institutions. This was in no small measure due to the conceptual triumph of liberal education as the essential development of cultivated individuals and the related removal of professional studies to a system of vocational apprenticeship outside the universities. Each side in turn denigrated the other: professional studies had little value when seen through the lens of liberal education, and vocational training was viewed as merely practical preparation for work from the perspective of the more intellectual Arts curriculum. In the English context at least, David Watson's assertion that 'Universities have always had an intimate relationship with the 'professions'' is,

¹⁸² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 April 1839.

¹⁸³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 November 1840.

¹⁸⁴ Rochester and Parton, 'The Durham Obelisk'; [DUL] Senate Minutes: 3 Dec 1850.

¹⁸⁵ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 January 1839.

excepting only perhaps the priesthood, simply wrong.¹⁸⁶

Some opponents of change in the old universities, even into the twentieth century, held that any subject which was of benefit to industry, business, or commerce had little place in the intellectual realms of a university: using this, for example, as an argument in favour of teaching Latin and Greek, and against teaching French and German, because the latter supported international trade while the former did not.¹⁸⁷ It was not until the early 1900s that the new universities, such as Liverpool, Leeds, and Sheffield, engaged enthusiastically and successfully with the professions. By this point, however, many old and emerging professions had gained their own status through legislation that granted them the unique right of determining entry to their profession leaving the universities to play at best a subordinate role in delivering courses that matched the expectations of the professional bodies. These bodies might have found it desirable to secure the added status (especially scientific status) imparted by a university degree but it was clear that by the start of the twentieth century the balance of power lay with the professions.¹⁸⁸

Thorp's commitment to the delivery of professional courses in emerging subjects did not wane after the initial attempts described in this chapter, for throughout his time as Warden he innovated and changed his approach to the development of new disciplines. He frequently partnered with other individuals and associations in the north-east, including at Newcastle in relation to medicine and engineering, as will be covered in chapter 7, but also within Durham itself. He was,

¹⁸⁶ D.Watson, 'Foreword', in B. Cunningham, (ed.), *Exploring Professionalism* (London, 2008), pp. vii-viii, p. vii.

¹⁸⁷ Rothblatt, *Revolution of the Dons*, pp. 256-7.

¹⁸⁸ Engel, 'English Universities and Professional Education', pp. 302-5.

for example, the prime mover in the creation of the Durham Diocesan Training School for Masters which opened in 1839. It was one of the earliest colleges of its kind but was still Thorp's second attempt.¹⁸⁹

Durham's failure, then, was not due to its disregard for the times or a leader who was reluctant to innovate; in fact, it was almost the opposite: that even though the University attempted to deliver what educational reformers and some elements of the professions desired, forces beyond the Warden and Senate's control meant the chances of success were slim. Whatever faults there were within the University, and, as will be seen, there were indeed several key failures, there was no limitation of ambition nor intent to reform what was taught in the universities through the innovation of discrete courses addressing contemporary and professional disciplines – an approach that extended even to theology and practical preparation for ministry.

¹⁸⁹ I. Booth, *College of St Hild and St Bede, Durham* (Durham, 1979), pp. 4-5, 210-2, 217; K.R. Wilkinson, 'The Durham Diocesan Training School for Masters 1839-1886' (Durham University MEd thesis, 1968), pp. 28-9.

The opening of the Durham University has already effected a great change in the appearance of our streets; where many a strange face is now to be seen under an Academic Cap. There seems every probability that the anticipations of the founders of the University will be more than realised.¹

Durham Advertiser, November 1833

Introduction

The dominant English model of student life was collegiate: paternal, highly structured, concerned with moral as well as academic development, and intimately linked to religious practice. The University did not seek to create an alternative model, but it did attempt to make student life more accessible and better suited to a less affluent cohort. It also relocated teaching from the college to the university level, as part of the professoriate-led academic model described in chapter 3.

At first the only option was University College which offered a form of domestic living similar to that at Oxford and Cambridge. Nevertheless, Thorp intended that University College would offer cheaper domestic arrangements than at the older universities. Although partially successful in this respect, the College did not prove itself sufficiently to avoid criticism or to attract new classes of students. It was not until 1846 that University College was joined by a second residential body: Bishop Hatfield's Hall, named after Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham from 1345 to 1381, who re-founded and endowed Durham Hall in Oxford.² Bishop Cosin's Hall followed in 1851, named again for a Bishop of Durham, John Cosin, who was

¹ *Durham Advertiser*, 1 November 1833.

² Catto, 'Durham College at Oxford', pp. 461-2.

enthroned in 1660 and died in 1672 and who restored the cathedral after the turbulent years of the Commonwealth.³

It was Hatfield Hall under its first Principal, David Melville, that achieved the economy which had been desired from the start. Although the new Hall was the cause of what became a very public, bitter, and crippling dispute, it does also demonstrate one important trait of the University during Thorp's time as Warden: that initial setbacks would not prevent the University trying again in some other way to achieve its ambitions. At first sight, then, the collegiate model Durham adopted appeared to underline the University's attempt to imitate Oxford and Cambridge, but even here innovation and reform could be found.

Housing the University

Descriptions of Durham City in the early 1800s presented it as decidedly poor and wretched. It was generally looked upon as small, cold, and remote with a character of meanness and squalor that served to emphasise the contrasting riches of the cathedral clergy and their Golden Prebends. Constrained by its medieval street pattern, the city's narrow alleys developed a reputation for disease and vermin, a reputation which was well-deserved for the city had the highest death rate in the county.⁴ A visitor in 1825 described Durham as a place of 'very great steepness, narrowness, and dirt. The houses are mostly mean and untidy, and the town is full of small, filthy alleys and courts'.⁵ Stephen Gilly described his city parish of St Margaret in similar terms: 'abounding in mean houses', he wrote, 'it naturally becomes ... the

³ Stranks, *This Sumptuous Church*, pp. 56-60.

⁴ Pocock, *Durham*, p. 95; M. Roberts, *Durham: 1000 Years of History* (Stroud, 2003), p. 114.

⁵ S. Glynne, 'An account of a visit to Durham in 1825', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, VI (1906-11), pp. 33-42, p. 33.

abode of the poorest orders; and ... attracts very many of the vagrants, and loose and suspicious characters, who pass along the great North-road'.⁶ Sheldon Rothblatt's bucolic description of the University as founded 'on a bluff overlooking a delightful English river' is at best an anachronistic view of Durham in the 1830s.⁷

While Durham retained its status as the ecclesiastical capital of the Palatinate, it was largely unaffected by industrial development: there was a carpet factory, and mustard production was important too, but little else.⁸ With only limited impetus for expansion the City did not experience the vast increase in population which was such a common characteristic of the age. By 1801, Durham's population had grown to around 7,500 from somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 in 1635. By 1841, it had increased to 14,200 but would still be only 16,000 in 1901 and 19,000 in 1921.⁹ This compared to a staggering increase in the population of County Durham, which increased from 165,293 in 1811 to 1,479,033 in 1921 an increase of 795%, far greater than the national increase of 273% over the same period.¹⁰ Adding students to this environment was an innovation that would have a profound impact on the city.

The Chapter started buying properties for the University as early as October 1831, so that when the institution opened in 1833 various buildings around Palace Green had been acquired and brought into use for teaching and residential purposes.¹¹ Even earlier, in September 1831, some of these buildings, as well as parts of the

⁶ W.S. Gilly, *Horae Cathedicae or an Exposition of the Duty and Advantages of Public Catechising in Church* (London, 1828), p. 182.

⁷ Bender, *The University and the City*, p. 141.

⁸ G. Ornsby, *Sketches of Durham* (Durham, 1846), p. 167; K. Proud, *Durham City* (Chichester, 2003), p. 100; Pocock, *Durham*, pp. 84-5; Roberts, *Durham*, p. 28.

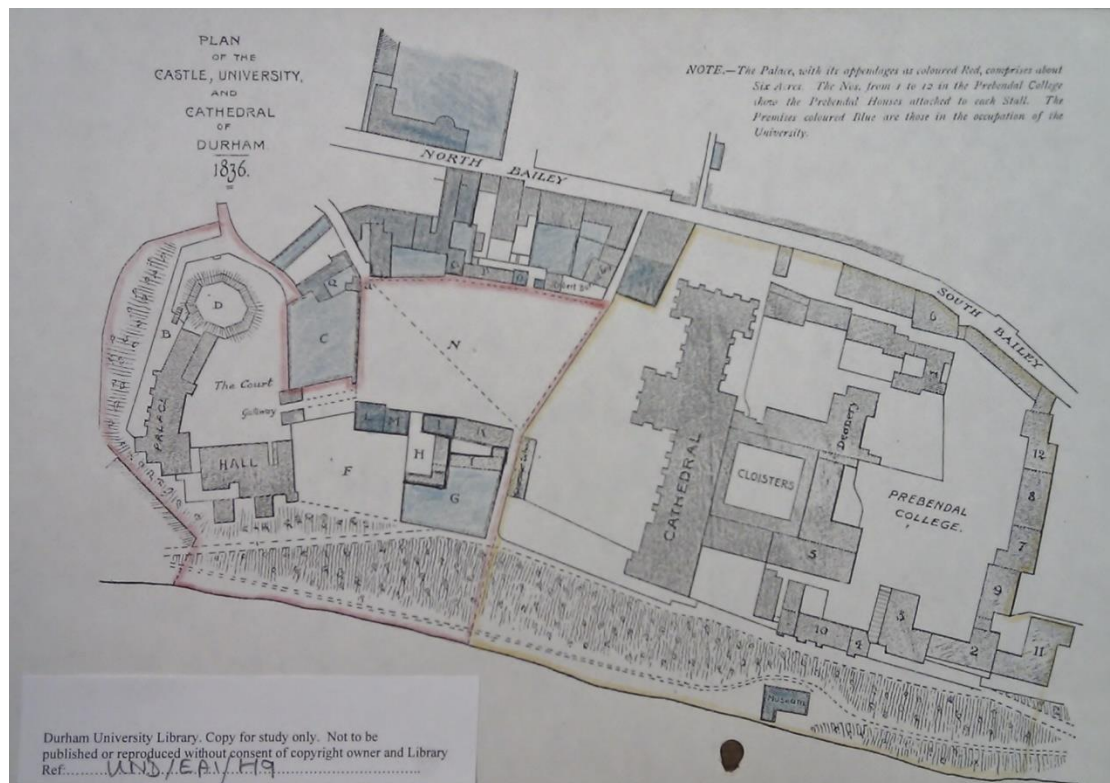
⁹ Roberts, *Durham*, pp. 28-30.

¹⁰ Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 5.

¹¹ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 1 October 1831; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 57.

Cathedral itself, had been identified provisionally for specific purposes: the Nine Altars for a chapel, the Galilee Chapel for the Divinity School, the Dormitory for lecture rooms, the Crypt for a hall, the Exchequer for a museum, and the dismantled Chapter House, it was proposed, would be restored and used for public occasions.¹²

Illustration 7: Plan of the Castle, University, and Cathedral of Durham (1836)¹³



While few of these ideas were realised there was a general intention that Palace Green should become, in effect, a large college quadrangle.¹⁴ Thorp described this as ‘the centre of the University’ and proposed ‘to enclose within the College Square the whole of the precincts of the Castle’.¹⁵ He even went as far as to have gates erected to close off Palace Green but these were removed by local residents on more than one occasion,

¹² [DUL] TC, 44: List of buildings on Palace Green, September 1831.

¹³ [DUL] DUR, EA1/H9: Plan of the Castle, University, and Cathedral of Durham (1836)

¹⁴ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 71.

¹⁵ *Documents Relating to the Establishment of Durham*, p. 48.

assisted by boys from the Grammar School, and so the scheme was dropped.¹⁶

It was the residential portion of the University, however, that occupied the greatest space. The 20 'students of the Foundation' were accommodated in Archdeacon's Inn on Palace Green, under the Bursar, Luke Ripley. Other students who could not be accommodated in Archdeacon's Inn were lodged in approved houses as nearby as could be arranged.

Unlike most other new institutions at the time, however, the University did not erect a grand new building to mark its coming into existence. 'It is to be regretted', wrote one local historian in 1834, that time 'did not permit the erection of a suitable edifice'.¹⁷ This meant that there would be few physical changes to mark its establishment or give it an identity separate to the Cathedral. At least in part this must have been a conscious decision, as the University was meant to be viewed as an integral part of the Cathedral. Yet it was also a pragmatic policy, as without utilising at least some existing buildings it would have been hard, if not impossible, to find a home in the centre of the small and crowded city. This approach to housing the University also enabled it to acquire a grand setting at minimal expense.

The Collegiate Model

The colleges at Oxford and Cambridge had an increasingly dominant position in their universities, as these smaller private entities attracted lavish endowments. The public central university in both cases was unable to attract such donations given that their key remaining function was to award degrees and for most students a degree

¹⁶ W.T. Jones, 'The Palace or "Place Green" at Durham', *Durham University Journal*, 22/12 (July 1922), pp. 443-5, p. 444; [DUL] DDR: J.G. Wilson to Bishop of Durham, 7 October 1924.

¹⁷ E. Mackenzie and M. Ross, *An historical, topographical, and descriptive view of the county palatine of Durham* (2 vols., Newcastle, 1834), vol. 2, p. 413.

was of considerably less value to them than the social status and network of influential friends they could develop in their college.¹⁸

Durham was the only English university foundation of the nineteenth century to establish a residential college system; although residential halls were created elsewhere, including, for example, from the 1840s at St Bartholomew's, and the other London teaching hospitals.¹⁹ Even though London University was non-residential this did not mean it was immune from halls either, as others stepped in to fill the vacuum.²⁰ The Unitarians, for example, opened University Hall in 1849 to provide 'the accommodation and social advantages of college residence'.²¹ Towards the end of the nineteenth century at Manchester, quasi-collegiate halls were established too.²²

The University was not simply imitating Oxford by opening a college, therefore, it was supporting one side of a contemporary debate. That is, as discussed in chapter 1, whether students should live with their own families, or in lodgings if they could not, or under the controlling influence of corporate and collegiate life. James Yates, for example, proclaimed 'an English parlour as a fitter place to acquire kind feelings and virtuous manners than a Gothic refectory, and a family as a better residence for every student, who can afford it than, a college'.²³ Nevertheless, a simple practical reason for the establishment of a residential college was that without such a facility the University would be unable to attract students from beyond the City of

¹⁸ Rothblatt, 'Federal principle in higher education', pp. 152-4.

¹⁹ K. Waddington, *Medical Education at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 1123-1995* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 78-83.

²⁰ Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 40-1.

²¹ Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, pp. 183-214.

²² H.S. Jones, 'Student life and sociability, 1860-1930: comparative reflections', *History of Universities*, XIV (1998), pp. 225-46, pp. 240-1; Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 256-7.

²³ Yates, *Academical Education*, p. 177.

Durham: as the City simply presented too small a recruitment base and, as has been seen, was probably too squalid to house all the students that Thorp hoped to attract. Yates' ideal was, after all, for an urban university. Thus a college was in part a necessary, practical expedient, in the much the same way as halls of residence in the mid-twentieth century allowed universities to be established in places that were likewise too remote or too small to sustain a university population without attracting students from other places.²⁴

But the collegiate model was ideological too: it was about the enculturation of students into the habits of academic life, and specifically the virtues of Anglican gentlemen. The college would provide what the University Calendar for many years called that 'system of domestic discipline and instruction which has been found to be so efficacious in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge'.²⁵ The extent to which teaching occurred in the College or the University is hard to determine, since until 1846 there was only the one college and hence what constituted the College and what the University was not easy to differentiate. Tutors were appointed, for example, and until 1849 were listed as being of University College; from 1850 they are listed as Officers of the University. Students of Hatfield Hall were listed from the start as being 'on the same footing' as University College students, under the same 'Professors and Tutors'. There were also references in University College's Calendar entry to termly examinations that were 'independent of those appointed by the University', though this requirement disappeared in 1858. Nevertheless, the Fellows were always Fellows

²⁴ W. Whyte, 'Halls of Residence at British Civic Universities, 1870-1970', in J. Hamlett, L. Hopkins, and R. Preston, (eds.), *Residential Institutions in Britain, 1725-1950: inmates and environments* (London, 2013), pp. 155-66, p. 158.

²⁵ *Durham University Calendar 1842*, p. 7.

of the University, not the College, and academic instruction was led by the Professors from the start.²⁶

A university with a single college was not without precedent. There were a number of so-called college-universities operating under similar schemes in Scotland and elsewhere in Europe.²⁷ This included college-universities in Aberdeen and Sigüenza, though perhaps the symbiotic relationship of Trinity College and the University of Dublin was the best known example.²⁸ There is no evidence that any of these institutions influenced the establishment and structures at Durham, however. Indeed, it was as early as 1836 that Thorp first suggested an additional College or Hall. This scheme he promoted as a way of honouring Van Mildert but the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley, advised him that personal affection for the Bishop, and the principles for which he stood, had diminished and that the foundation of a scholarship was a more realistic aim.²⁹

Salvin's Unbuilt College

Despite, or perhaps because of the piecemeal acquisition of property, the University's facilities were quickly stretched beyond capacity. Even a visitor's guide to the city from 1834 noted that Archdeacon's Inn was 'fully occupied'.³⁰ Given the ambitious scope of the new institution, and the optimism which at first broadly

²⁶ Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 86-7.

²⁷ J.M. Fletcher, 'The College-University: Its Development in Aberdeen and Beyond', in Lowe (ed.), *The History of Higher Education*, vol. 4, pp. 89-99.

²⁸ Fletcher, 'College-University', p. 89; H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (2 vols., Cambridge, 2010), vol. 2, part 1, p. 98 (for Sigüenza); vol. 2, part 1, pp. 309-11 (for Aberdeen).

²⁹ [DUL] TC, 213: Thorp to Howley, 27 February 1836; vol.2, 216a: Howley to Thorp, 21 March 1836.

³⁰ Mackenzie and Ross, *Durham*, vol. 2, p. 413.

prevailed, it was perhaps inevitable that a new and grander building would be felt necessary. Therefore, in June 1834 the Chapter asked a young architect, Anthony Salvin, to develop 'plans, elevations & estimates for the building of a Hall, Common Rooms, and other buildings for the University on the West side of the Green'.³¹

Thorp knew Anthony Salvin well: he was a local man of aristocratic descent from a military family; he was born in 1799, the only child of his Father's second marriage, and had been educated at Durham School, at that time still situated on Palace Green.³² In the early 1830s he was known for his ecclesiastical work in the Diocese, and when the University was founded he was working on Bamburgh Castle, the home of Lord Crewe's Trust, where he was provided with lodging.³³ Castles would become something of a speciality for Salvin: from his very early role assisting in the restoration of Brancepeth Castle between 1818 and 1821, to the commissions he received later in his long career to work on the Tower of London and Windsor Castle, and his creation of Peckforton Castle in Cheshire.³⁴ This work, however, lay in the future. By 1834, Salvin's completed commissions included St Paul's Church Sunderland for the Lord Crewe's Trustees (1830 to 1833), and the Holy Trinity Church South Shields (1832 to 1834) which was financially aided by the Dean and Chapter.³⁵ His first five church commissions were all in the north as a result of his Durham

³¹ [DUL] CARUD: Chapter Meeting, 14 June 1834.

³² J. Allibone, *Anthony Salvin: Pioneer of Gothic Revival Architecture* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 2-5; R. Holder, 'Salvin, Anthony (1799-1881)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004); E. Cambridge, 'Review Article: Anthony Salvin and Durham', *Durham Archaeological Journal*, 4 (1988), pp. 69-73, p. 69.

³³ [NCS] Orders of Lord Crewe's Trustees, B.a.7: 25 January 1831; Allibone, *Salvin*, pp. 15, 157.

³⁴ Allibone, *Salvin*, pp. 9-12, 139-47; M. Girouard, 'Peckforton Castle, Cheshire - I', *Country Life*, (29 July 1965), pp. 284-7; M. Girouard, 'Peckforton Castle, Cheshire - II', *Country Life*, (5 August 1965), pp. 336-9.

³⁵ Allibone, *Salvin*, pp. 156-8.

connections, which brought him into regular contact with Thorp.³⁶

The design Salvin presented was for a large and solid group of buildings without significant ornament. Nevertheless, his modern biographer goes too far in calling it 'a rather dreary Tudor gothic'.³⁷ Salvin's proposal was for a college around a quadrangle on the west side of Palace Green between the green itself and the steep banks leading down to the river. The designs which remain in the University archive are, however, incomplete. Perhaps most frustratingly there is no overall plan for the building to show the intended layout, and no design for the east wing which would have faced on to Palace Green.

Illustration 8: Salvin's Plans for Durham College, riverside elevation³⁸



³⁶ Allibone, *Salvin*, p. 110; C.J. Stranks, *The Charities of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe and Dr. John Sharp 1721-1976* (Durham, 1976), p. 18.

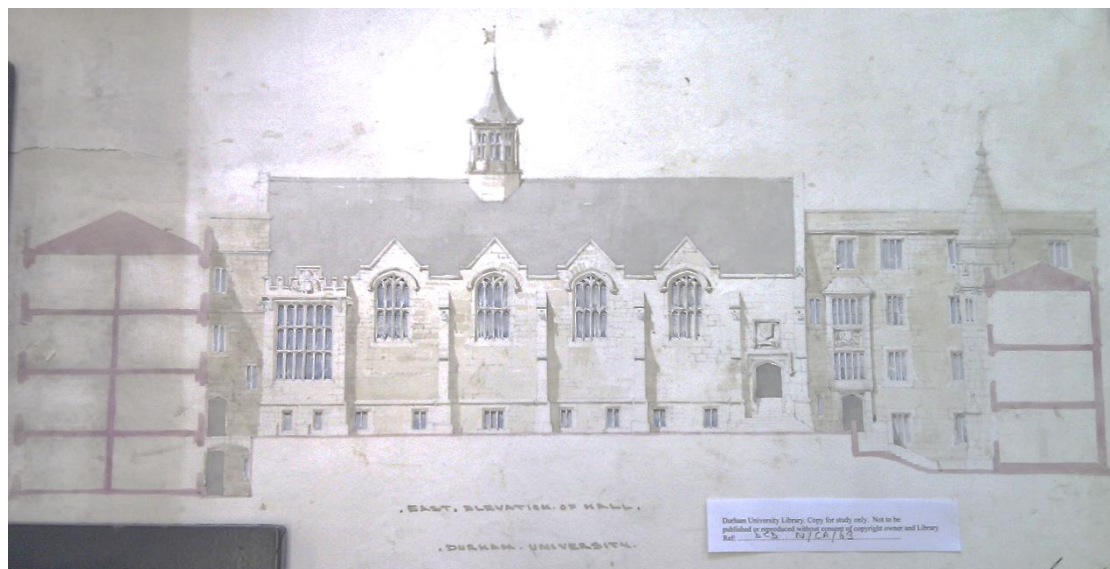
³⁷ Allibone, *Salvin*, p. 132.

³⁸ [DUL] Salvin's Plans for Durham College (1834).

What is clear is that the view of the new college from both the riverbank and the quadrangle would have been dominated by the hall. Occupying nearly the full length of the west wing, the hall would have been lit by a series of four large windows, as well as two square mullioned oriel windows projecting out of the body of the hall on either side at the south. The internal section shows a single hammer-beam roof with a wide central arch.

The design of the inward-facing elevations of the quadrangle is a little more decorative than the external aspect looking over the river: extending upwards to four storeys, the different sections are grouped irregularly with some occasional additional features which add interest and character. There was intended, for example, a two-storey oriel window projecting over a doorway in the west wing and a crenelated octagonal stair turret in the north wing which Salvin topped off with a stubby spire.

Illustration 9: Salvin's Plans for Durham College, quadrangle elevation³⁹



The missing designs for the east wing make it possible to speculate that the grandest treatment could have been reserved for the public face. It might not have been unlike

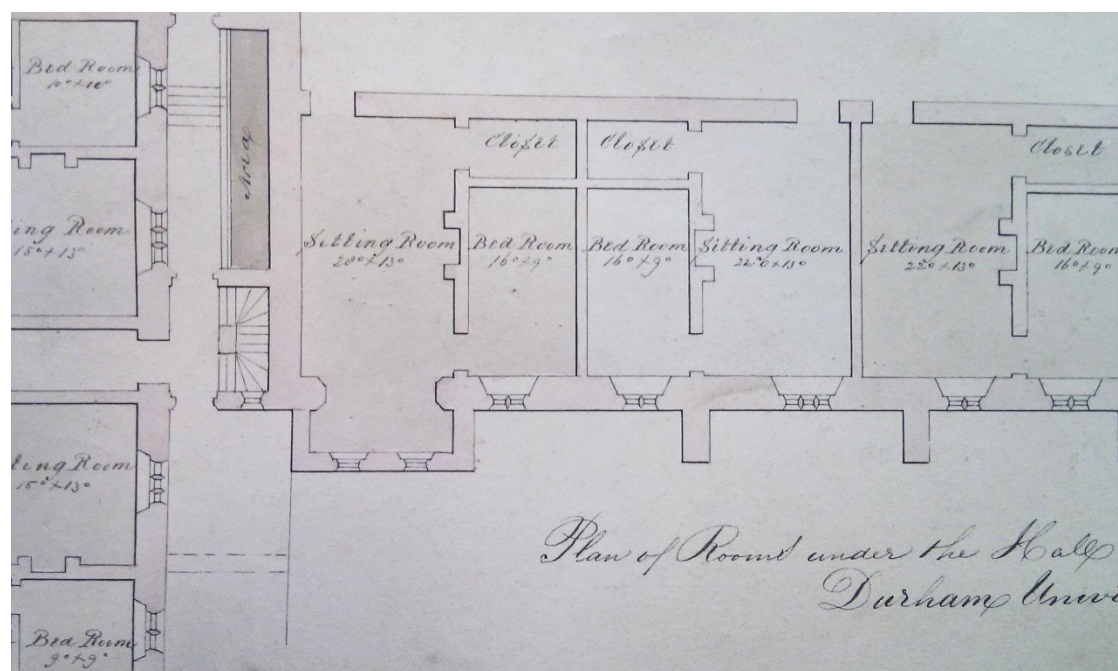
³⁹ [DUL] Salvin's Plans for Durham College (1834).

the entrance he designed for the Master of Balliol College, Richard Jenkyns, the brother of Durham's first Professor of Greek.⁴⁰ Constructed in 1853, the new building facing Magdalene Street contained a range of student rooms and included an entrance tower. Simple and relatively unadorned, the archway is surmounted by a projecting bay window, a smaller protruding window, and finally a small window flat to the wall. Square crenellations top this side entrance, with a small turreted tower marking one end which is very obviously drawn by the same hand which had projected the tower for the stair turret in the north wing of the proposed college in Durham.

The function of the proposed new building was primarily residential and two of the six remaining plans show the detail of student rooms. These rooms ran underneath the hall in the west wing, making maximum use of the sloping site. They would not, however, have been very desirable. Sitting at basement level, with up to a further four storeys rising above them, and facing west into the wooded riverbanks, they would have been quite dark. Each set of rooms was comprised of a large sitting room (around 20' by 13'), a smaller bedroom (around 16' by 9') and a closet.

⁴⁰ Allibone, *Salvin*, p. 138.

Illustration 10: Salvin's Plans for Durham College, floor plan⁴¹



Salvin's plans indicate that a similar style of student life was anticipated to that of the older universities: including rooms for the butler and a servants' hall. It was clearly the intention that there would be quite a number of domestic assistants employed to satisfy the students' needs. However, it was a novelty that the sets of rooms, which were common in Oxford and Cambridge colleges, were off corridors and not staircases; in some parts of the building Salvin even included separate corridors for servants and students. The first use of corridors in Oxford, rather than staircases, was still more than 30 years in the future, when Butterfield employed them in his design for Keble College.⁴² At Keble, corridors were employed for economic reasons. At Durham, it seems more likely that corridors were the most efficient way to fit the greatest number of rooms into the awkward sloping site. Interestingly,

⁴¹ [DUL] Salvin's Plans for Durham College (1834).

⁴² G. Tyack, *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (Oxford, 1998), p. 231; M.B. Vickery, *Buildings for Bluestockings: The Architecture and Social History of Women's Colleges in Late Victorian England* (Newark, Del, 1999), pp. 10-2.

however, when economy was specifically called for as part of the design for the new rooms at Hatfield Hall, Salvin reverted to staircases.⁴³

The extent to which the architecture of the new universities and university colleges of the nineteenth century adopted a slavish imitation of Oxford and Cambridge has received much attention from historians.⁴⁴ Lowe and Knight, for example, concluded that 'in the main, the new colleges were built around quadrangles, erected pretentious towers and disguised their teaching rooms as best they could as bedrooms'.⁴⁵ Most of these developments were still several years in the future when Salvin drew up his proposal; but was Salvin similarly attempting to build a pretentious copy of medieval Oxford?

Despite the similarity of function with the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and the common language of Tudor Gothic, Salvin's design would not have created a faux Oxbridge college but something more akin to an extension of Durham Castle. Indeed, Allibone mistakenly identified Salvin's plans as a drastic re-working of Durham Castle itself rather than a new building.⁴⁶

⁴³ A. Moyes, *Hatfield 1846 – 1996* (Houghton-le-Spring, 1996), pp. 9-11; M. Roberts, *The Buildings and Landscapes of Durham University* (Durham, 2013), p. 58.

⁴⁴ Whyte, *Redbrick*, pp. 157-170.

⁴⁵ R.A. Lowe and R. Knight, 'Building the Ivory Tower: the social functions of late nineteenth century collegiate architecture', *Studies in Higher Education*, 7/2 (1982), pp. 81-91, p. 90.

⁴⁶ Allibone, *Salvin*, p. 132.

Illustration 11: Durham Castle and Framwellgate Bridge, by Edward Hastings (c. 1840)



Castles and colleges even had their similarities: both types of building traditionally housed self-contained communities around a courtyard including the standard elements of entrance tower, hall and chapel. Salvin's design kept these elements, though without a chapel (for which the cathedral served). It was generally held that traditional college buildings should not exceed two storeys plus an attic, which helped to emphasise their primarily domestic purpose, an approach Salvin did not adopt as his proposal included up to five storeys.⁴⁷ Given both Salvin's past and future expertise in castles it is not surprising that his design for a new building between

⁴⁷ Lowe and Knight, 'Building the Ivory Tower', p. 86; Tyack, *Oxford*, pp. 25-33, 85-6.

Durham's Castle and Cathedral called on those buildings for inspiration. In addition, the steeply sloped site on which Salvin was asked to construct the college influenced the style of building. This high peninsular made an excellent location to construct a defensible complex able to house the body of St Cuthbert but a less suitable one for the traditional courts and quadrangles of a university college. All of these considerations, therefore, make a more direct and appropriate comparison for Salvin's proposal the castles of Brancepeth, Bamburgh and Durham.

The style chosen by the Chapter for their new building would not simply have expressed educational connections and ideals but also its ecclesiastical associations. London University represented its allegiances in equal measure. Unlike in Durham, where a specific request was given to a local and well-known architect (much as the academic staff had been recruited through personal contacts), in August 1825 the Council of London University placed an advertisement seeking plans for their new buildings.⁴⁸ The selected design was by William Wilkins, architect and antiquary. Wilkins had enjoyed considerable success with collegiate works at Cambridge, where he lived, including King's (1824–8), Trinity (1823–5), and Corpus Christi (1823–7).⁴⁹ Wilkins' design for London University on Gower Street was classical, unlike his recent gothic additions at Cambridge, which echoed the non-sectarian nature of the institution it was intended to house. It was also a return to Wilkins' earlier Grecian designs, such as his plan for Downing College from 1805. The bold Greek revival style

⁴⁸ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 35.

⁴⁹ R.W. Liscombe, 'Wilkins, William (1778–1839)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2009).

of the new building for London University attracted both admirers and critics.⁵⁰ As would have been expected, Pugin was amongst those who objected to the new building, which he contrasted with traditional collegiate architecture. The buildings at Oxford were 'noble monuments' that displayed 'Catholic wisdom and Catholic piety', he pronounced, unlike 'the modern collegiate buildings and the system pursued in the godless colleges' including the 'London University with its useless dome and portico'. Pugin nevertheless conceded that 'anything ecclesiastical or Christian would be very inappropriate', derisively adding 'that the *Pagan* exterior is much more in character with the intentions and principles of the institution'.⁵¹

By way of contrast to the buildings on Gower Street, or Salvin's proposal, the new College at Lampeter was conceived of by Bishop Burgess as an Oxford or Cambridge college relocated to the valleys of Wales and that is precisely what the architect, Charles Robert Cockerel, delivered.⁵² The architecture of St David's represented the academic values and affiliations of the College which were based heavily on the concept of a liberal arts education at the ancient English universities. The *Carmarthenshire Journal* noted the beneficial effect on students of being 'enviored within the quadrangle of his college', which sentiment expressed the perceived link between collegiate residential accommodation and sound moral and academic education.⁵³

It is, however, possible to over-emphasise the importance of the style chosen

⁵⁰ W. Whyte, 'Redbrick's unlovely quadrangles: Reinterpreting the architecture of the civic universities', *History of Universities*, XXI/1 (2006), pp. 151-178, p. 155.

⁵¹ B. Ferrey, *Recollections of A.N. Welby Pugin and his Father, Augustus Pugin* (London, 1861), p. 342.

⁵² Price, *Saint David's*, pp. 189-97; Dowland, *Theological Training*, pp. 18-9.

⁵³ *Carmarthenshire Journal*, 3 July 1868, quoted in Dowland, *Theological Training*, p. 19.

by Salvin for his designs. In 1834 the war of styles between Greek and Gothic was only starting and more than conformity Victorian architecture actually reflected an eclectic approach to styles.⁵⁴ Even the (re-)gothicisation of the buildings of the two ancient universities was still some time in the future. A visitor to Oxford's Turl Street in 1834, for example, would find classical frontages still adorning both Exeter and Jesus Colleges, as they were not remodelled and renovated until the early 1850s. The University's largest recent commissions at the time employed not Tudor gothic but bold classical styles. The new University Press was erected in 1826-7 to a Roman classical design by Daniel Robertson, and the University Galleries (now Ashmolean Museum) and Taylorian Institute of 1839 were built to a dramatic design which blended Grecian, Roman and Renaissance classical traditions by the same architect who produced Lampeter's replica of collegiate gothic. In the same year as Cockerel's design was chosen for the University Galleries the Oxford Architectural Society was formed which would help lead the development of a more scholarly approach to gothic – and eventually to the renovation of buildings to what was perceived to be the more appropriate gothic style.⁵⁵ It is true to the period therefore that not all Salvin's commissions in Durham used the gothic style: Salvin used Gothic where it was the prevailing milieu of the neighbouring buildings but where he was given free rein, for the new observatory, he adopted a simple classical style with a domed roof serving a practical as well as an aesthetic purpose.⁵⁶

However, Salvin's designs for a new college never left the planning stage, as

⁵⁴ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, pp. 44-6.

⁵⁵ Tyack, *Oxford*, pp. 167, 199, 207-8, 221.

⁵⁶ Allibone, *Salvin*, p. 134; Roberts, *Buildings of Durham University*, p. 129.

University College was in July 1837 housed in Durham Castle, the Bishop's ancient fortress and palace.⁵⁷ Chevallier called the Castle 'a grand old place with a baronial Hall nearly as large as that of Trinity' but added prophetically that without 'some money to keep it' it would 'be like a present of an elephant to a day labourer'.⁵⁸ The building did provide the University with as impressive a setting as any university in the country, and Gilly noted it had the added advantage of keeping the students on the other side of the cathedral from members of the Chapter, but Chevallier's fears that the Castle would be a financial drain were well-founded.⁵⁹

University College: Foundation

It was always intended that the University would have a collegiate structure.⁶⁰ At first, however, the University and its College were practically indistinguishable and it is not clear when the name 'University College' was adopted for the residential portion of the University. Whiting claims the name was not agreed until 1841, though there is a clear reference at Senate to 'the Officers of the University College' in November 1837.⁶¹

University College had (and continues to have) no independent legal incorporation separate from that of the University, unlike the colleges and halls at Oxford and Cambridge (and unlike some of the later colleges in Durham too). 'The College here is analogous to the Halls which formerly existed in both of the old

⁵⁷ [DUL] TC, 216b: Thorp to Lord Melbourne, 5 March 1836; *Order in Council for Appropriating Durham Castle to the use of the University of Durham* (London, 1837); R. Brickstock, *Durham Castle: Fortress, Palace, College*, (Durham, 2007), p. 1; Roberts, *Durham*, p. 31.

⁵⁸ [DUL] CC, 12: Chevallier to Corrie, 11 March 1836.

⁵⁹ [CERC] Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Commission, Minutes of Evidence, EDR/5/2/13: Gilly, 22 April 1836.

⁶⁰ Wheeler, *William Palmer*, p. 32.

⁶¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 28 November 1837; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 86.

Universities' explained William Walters, the Chapter Clerk.⁶² The original statutes for the government of the College were agreed in November 1834, this included confirming Thorp as having the 'chief government of the College' as Warden.⁶³ Discipline regulations followed in December formalising the rigid expectations upon students to attend prayers in College and Cathedral, as well as breakfast and dinner in hall.⁶⁴

Students were required to reside within the College, but as various buildings were initially used for this purpose they found themselves scattered about the peninsular. When the College occupied the Castle for residential purposes this helped ease the pressure on the accommodation but, as grand as it was, the Castle contained fewer rooms than might be anticipated given its size. The need for additional accommodation led to the reconstruction of the Keep which, by the end of eighteenth century, had fallen into complete disrepair.⁶⁵ It seems that the scheme was Salvin's idea and first received the blessing of Senate in April 1839 and, in June 1839, the approbation of the Bishop.⁶⁶ The reconstruction of the Keep was entirely typical of Salvin's sensitive yet practical approach to historic buildings, but it would not come cheaply. Salvin estimated that the total cost of the work would come to £2,769.⁶⁷ The money had to be found somewhere, and the Bishop offered a contribution of £200, plus a loan of £300.⁶⁸ Work started by November 1839.⁶⁹

⁶² [DUL] DCO, 6: Walters to Murray, 29 March 1841.

⁶³ [DUL] UCCMB: Statues for the Government of the University.

⁶⁴ [DUL] UCCMB: 3 December 1834.

⁶⁵ Pocock, *Durham*, p. 80.

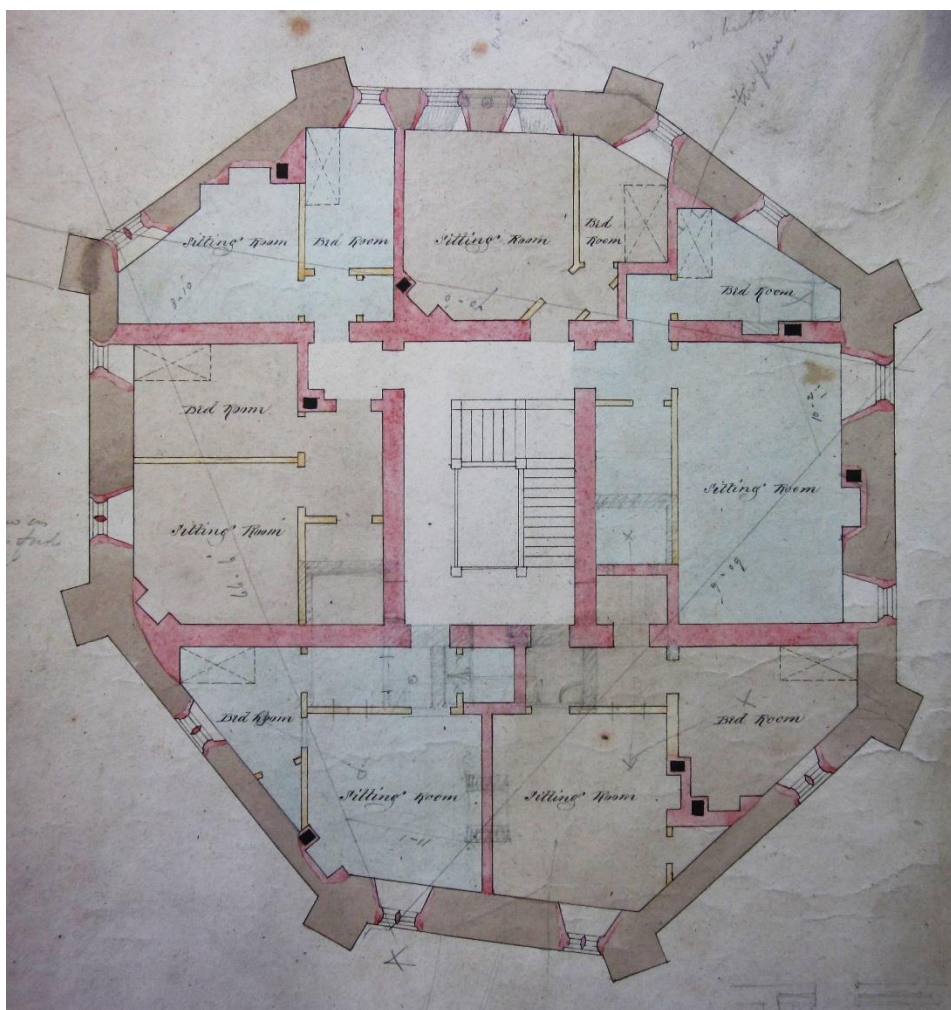
⁶⁶ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 30 April 1839, 14 June 1839.

⁶⁷ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 4 June 1839.

⁶⁸ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 October 1839.

⁶⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 26 November 1839.

Illustration 12: Salvin's Plans for Durham Castle Keep, floor plan⁷⁰



University College: Student Life

Some local residents were decidedly nervous about the influx of students, and their potentially rowdy and amorous behaviour.⁷¹ Whiting quotes the recollections of Miss Elizabeth Hayes, 'an old Durham resident'.

I remember well, when the university was talked of as a thing likely to be, how a Mrs Fox, grandmother of the Reverend Henry Fox, bemoaned it, and said what an anxiety it would prove to all mothers with daughters.⁷²

As Mrs Fox feared, the daughters of the town did provide a major attraction for the

⁷⁰ [DUL] Salvin's Plans for Durham Castle Keep (1839).

⁷¹ Rothblatt, *Modern University*, pp. 143-8.

⁷² Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 32.

young gentlemen of the University. According to Palmer the feeling was mutual.

The people are quite wild, the ladies especially about the gown. There being few young men in Durham, they declare that they will begin to dance at one in the day if necessary; but Academical beaux they will have! On the other hand the students are no less enchanted.⁷³

Romantic affairs would eventually be the undoing of some students. One such incident involved Henry Deer Griffith, from Newcastle, who matriculated in April 1834 having previously been a member of University College, Oxford, where he failed to graduate. He studied with more success at Durham and graduated with a BA in November 1837, gaining a third class in classics. Staying on as a student in Theology, however, he came undone when he was found on 19 November 1838 'having been walking with a female ... under suspicious circumstances'. This might not have required Griffith's expulsion but he then 'offered a bribe to the Proctor's man to induce him to conceal his knowledge of the fact'.⁷⁴ Such dishonesty could not be tolerated and he was sent down forthwith.

Concern about student rowdiness was not unique to Durham. In London, when it was proposed that King's College would be erected in Regent's Park, one correspondent to *The Times* complained that students were generally 'inconsiderate, rude and mischievous'. If the building was to go ahead, the correspondent pronounced, its presence would be 'far more turbulent, and vastly more mischievous, than the bears, the kangaroos, the wolves, and the tiger-cat in the adjacent menagerie'.⁷⁵ The author of *Hints for Oxford*, a short book crammed with moralising counsel, felt that Oxford student life had improved by 1823 as 'hard drinking' had 'of

⁷³ Wheeler, *William Palmer*, p. 41.

⁷⁴ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 November 1838.

⁷⁵ *The Times*, 24 December 1828.

itself very much decayed'. His succeeding admonishment, however, against those students who 'sally forth to the street, with whoop and holla, to insult females and bully tradesmen, and break lamps and windows' seems somewhat too insistent if vice had really fallen so much out of fashion.⁷⁶

It is of course unfair to characterise all students by the behaviour of the worst, but numerous accounts of student misdemeanours demonstrate that at least some of the fears of Mrs Fox and the residents of Regent's Park were well-founded. One rather extreme example comes from Henry Press Wright, who was one of the original entry of students to Durham. He migrated after only two years to Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he graduated BA in 1842. His migration is perhaps not surprising given that while at Durham he was threatened at gunpoint by a fellow student.⁷⁷ Thomas Maddison, a Foundation Student in Arts and the son of a tradesman, held a cocked pistol to his head. Palmer recorded that the students 'looked upon [Maddison] as mad, and has madness in his family ... he walks six miles every week to get his linen washed a penny cheaper'.⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly perhaps, Maddison never graduated.

Not all student misbehaviour was so extreme. Wright's account of his student days at Durham is contained in the memoirs of another of the first cohort: James Skinner, who had migrated to Durham from Marischal College, Aberdeen. In his account (wherein no mention was made of Maddison) Wright recorded that 'the amusements and pleasures offered by a large circle of friends in and around the old city interfered much with anything like close study'. Temptations such as 'dinners,

⁷⁶ J. Campbel, *Hints for Oxford* (Oxford, 1823), pp. 72-3.

⁷⁷ M.M.F. Trench, *James Skinner – A Memoir* (London, 1883), p. 12; P. Gripton, *A History of Greatham* (Worcester, 2007), p. 92.

⁷⁸ Wheeler, *William Palmer*, pp. 41-2.

dances, picnics, and archery' lured them away from their studies. In consequence Skinner inevitably spent the last two weeks of every term locked in his room to cram for his exams.⁷⁹ While in his later clerical career Skinner would become notorious as an extreme advocate of ritualism, in his student days he was pulled up for irregular attendance at chapel, and on another occasion he had to be 'admonished by the Warden upon misbehaviour'.⁸⁰ Such high-living no doubt contributed to Skinner's lowly achievement of only a fifth class in the final examinations for his BA in Easter Term 1836.

Heavy drinking, socialising and bringing back strangers to their rooms were common student pastimes, but sporting activities and outdoor pursuits were not neglected either. Hunting was initially one of the favourite activities and a pack of beagles was kept in University College until 1874.⁸¹ Rowing flourished from the start, and University students were crucial in the firm establishment of the Durham Regatta.⁸² Cricket, archery, boxing and wrestling were popular too.⁸³ The Choral Society offered a more refined pastime, and the singers occasionally ventured beyond the bubble of the Durham peninsular; in March 1854, for example, they travelled some twenty miles to provide the music at the installation of the new organ in Billingham.⁸⁴ There was even an Architectural Society for a while, and John Luke Clennell was one

⁷⁹ Trench, *James Skinner*, p. 12.

⁸⁰ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 29 May 1838; [DUL] UCCMB: 7 March 1838.

⁸¹ J. Henderson, 'The University College Beagles 1859-63', *Durham University Journal*, 22/6 (July 1920), pp. 201-4, p. 203.

⁸² A.A. Macfarlane-Grieve, *A History of Durham Rowing* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1922), pp. 13-7.

⁸³ Wheeler, *William Palmer*, p. 41.

⁸⁴ Fordyce, *County Palatine of Durham*, vol. 2, p. 309.

of a group of students to start a quarterly journal in the mid-1840s.⁸⁵

Responsibility for maintaining order in University College fell to the Censors and Proctors. A Censor was included in the staff of the University as early as September 1831, two Censors were listed in the original Calendar from 1833, and two 'Censors or Proctors' were included in the first statutes for the University, agreed by the Chapter on 4 April 1834.⁸⁶ The first Senior Censor was Thomas Peile, who was initially supported by Palmer as Junior Censor but then by Charles Whitley who was appointed in Palmer's place in July 1834 with a salary of £50.⁸⁷ The title Censor was dropped in favour of Proctor by the Act of Chapter passed on 20 July 1835, though Censor (and Pro-Proctor) was retained at the College and Hall level.⁸⁸ The Council of University College received further 'Statues for the Government of the University' which had been passed by the Chapter on 20 November 1834, in which the duties of the Censors included 'to take notice of all offences committed out of the walls of the College to enforce the wearing of the Academical dress by all Undergraduates' as well as 'the ordinary discipline such as attendance at Prayers, in the Hall at Dinner, returning to College at a reasonable hour at night'.⁸⁹ In theory at least, a student's day was highly regimented, as they were 'required to be present' at breakfast in Hall, at Chapel Prayers and Cathedral Service at the times appointed, at Dinner in Hall and at Prayers in the Evening. They were 'also required to attend such Lectures of the

⁸⁵ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 151; W.B. Scott, *Autobiographical notes of the life of William Bell Scott* (London, 1892), p. 198.

⁸⁶ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meetings, 28 September 1831 and 4 April 1834.

⁸⁷ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 21 July 1834.

⁸⁸ [DUL] COB: Chapter Meeting, 20 July 1835.

⁸⁹ [DUL] UCCMB: Statues for the Government of the University.

Professors and Tutors and such other Lectures as the Authorities may direct'.⁹⁰

It was apparent more or less from the first day that more needed to be done to moderate student behaviour. Palmer recommended giving every student a copy of the regulations on matriculation, as happened at Oxford; but Thorp thought the idea 'great humbug – for nobody reads them'.⁹¹ Strict regulations were brought in to control students and, on the basis that only those things which people are actually doing get banned, these regulations provide a useful insight into what the earliest students were up to. They were banned from 'all play with Dice and Cards', frequenting 'Inns, Public-Houses, Cooks' or Confectioners' Shops' and going 'to the neighbouring Towns, (as Sunderland, Newcastle &c.)'.⁹² The Bursar instructed that a 'Bill of Students entering after 10 o'clock to be sent in every morning to Mr Palmer'.⁹³ These rules were frequently flouted as the students were quite capable of paying staff little respect. Palmer recorded that Charles Curwen, an Arts student who entered in Easter Term 1834, had refused to reveal the names of the friends he was with. By October that year Curwen had left the University with substantial debts.⁹⁴

John Berrington matriculated in October 1841 as a student in Arts, after having spent five terms at Caius College, Cambridge. He had not been in the University long, before a complaint was made against him 'for having induced two gentlemen to come to him from Ireland, by unauthorized representations that he was able to provide them curacies and titles for Holy Orders'.⁹⁵ After attending the first meeting of Senate to

⁹⁰ [DUL] UCCMB: Regulations of Discipline &c, 3 December 1834.

⁹¹ Wheeler, *William Palmer*, p. 41.

⁹² [DUL] UCCMB: Regulations of Discipline &c, 3 December 1834.

⁹³ [DUL] Bursar's Memorandum Book: 10 November 1833, p. 38.

⁹⁴ Wheeler, *William Palmer*, pp. 40-1.

⁹⁵ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 6 November 1841.

answer the charges, he subsequently intimated 'he was too ill to attend' and on 9 November he was sent down.⁹⁶ Many years later, in August 1873, *The Times* carried an article describing how he had spent a life-time defrauding, swindling, and breaching confidence with a series of unfortunate individuals in England and Belgium. The life of crime he led eventually caught up with him and he was found guilty and, despite being over 60, was sentenced to 15 years' penal servitude, which the judge noted 'at his time of life, rendered his release from prison virtually hopeless'.⁹⁷

John Luke Clennell, mentioned above as having started a journal, was a poet and the son of the painter Luke Clennell. John entered University College aged 31 intending to take holy orders. In his room in the castle he kept a study of Wellington, painted by his father, above his corner fireplace. Sadly, he fell out with the younger students who would kick loudly on his door to torment him. He never graduated as, like his father, he ended his life in a Newcastle asylum, where he muttered darkly about how he would establish a 'perfect institution'.⁹⁸

The most famous chronicler of Durham's early years was Edward Bradley, who was a student from 1845. He graduated both BA and LTh in 1849. Using the pseudonym Cuthbert Bede, Bradley authored a highly popular series of illustrated novels about an Oxford undergraduate called Verdant Green. Originally, however, Bradley had set his story in Durham. These earlier sketches, produced under the title *Ye Freshmonne his Adventures at Univ. Coll. Durham*, portrayed various aspects of student life including sport, fashion, drink and ladies. Bradley later moved the story

⁹⁶ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 8 and 9 November 1841.

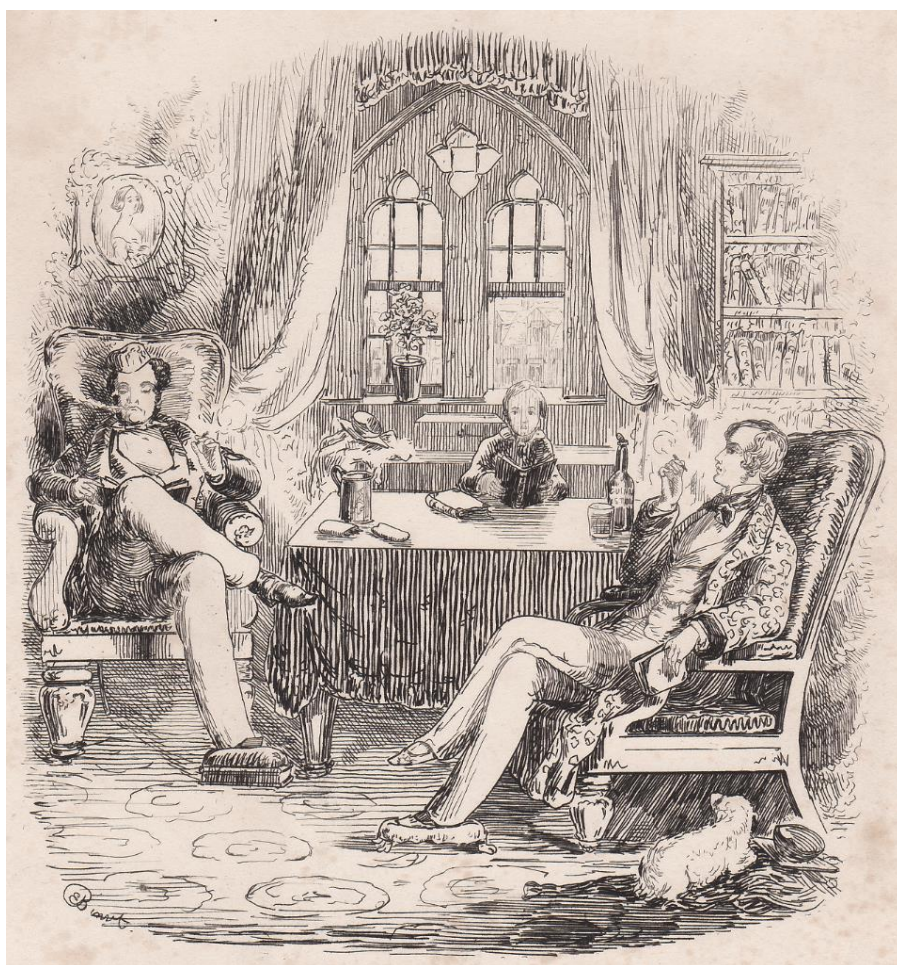
⁹⁷ *The Times*, 22 August 1873.

⁹⁸ Scott, *William Scott*, p. 201.

to Oxford 'of which I knew a little', he claimed. He felt confident in doing so because he 'really saw very little difference' between student life in Oxford and Durham. Curiously, Bradley had previously declined a suggestion from the editor of *Punch* to change the setting of the sketches to Cambridge.⁹⁹ Bradley also produced a series of drawings for a book called *College Life*. Some of these showed images portrayed more sedate episodes in student life, including one peaceful scene where a dog is resting and a helpful boy reads from a book.

⁹⁹ K.M. Hutton, *The Adventures of Mr Verdant Green or an Idea in Need of a Publisher* (Durham, 1994), pp. 9-11.

Illustration 13: Getting up Lectures, Edward Bradley (c. 1850)¹⁰⁰



Bishop Hatfield's Hall

In Michaelmas Term 1846 University College was joined by a second residential body: Bishop Hatfield's Hall. It was not, however, launched with a fanfare. The first Principal and instigator of the Hall, David Melville, later wrote that it had been at best 'but a permitted experiment, which had to prove by its success the wisdom of its design'.¹⁰¹ Melville designed Hatfield to be much more economic than a traditional college. This was a direct response to the perceived failings of University

¹⁰⁰ Property of the author. Proof of plate 20 in E. Bradley, *College Life*, (Oxford, Cambridge, and Durham, 1849-50). cf Hutton, *Verdant Green*, pp. 20-3.

¹⁰¹ D. Melville, *A Practical Question About Oxford Considered in a Letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone* (London, 1850), p. 22.

College. The key elements of Melville's plan were that the Hall would let all rooms furnished, that all meals would be taken in common, and that the cost of board and lodging would be kept as low as possible.¹⁰²

Melville was born in February 1813 and after attending Shrewsbury School he proceeded to Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1827 but migrated as a Scholar to Brasenose College where he was a student from 1832 to 1835. He graduated BA in 1836, with second class honours in classics, and MA in 1839. Melville came to Durham as a tutor in 1842, and was admitted *ad eundem* as MA on 22 June. He first appeared in the Calendar for 1843 where he is listed as Pro-Proctor, a curator of the library, Tutor in University College and Junior Censor. The idea for the new Hall was agreed at Senate on 15 December 1845.¹⁰³ In his later published letters, Melville clearly gives himself the credit for the concept of the new Hall and Chevallier confirmed this in his evidence to the Durham University Commissioners.¹⁰⁴ The Senate minute, however, is brief and recorded only that the Hall was proposed by the Warden and supported financially by the Bishop, Maltby. It was an ambitious proposal to be made by a young man with only three academic years' experience at Durham. It was the act of a remarkably confident man.

Melville wrote that it was his experience as a resident tutor in University College which spurred him to make his proposal. Writing in 1866 he recorded that his idea came about through a disagreement over buying bread.

I remember the butler complaining one day that some men got into college their own bread, and did not draw college rations. On inquiry I found this was done by them, being poor men, to save their pockets;

¹⁰² Moyes, *Hatfield*, p. 4.

¹⁰³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 15 December 1845; Moyes, *Hatfield*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 184, p. 10.

and it struck me that to talk of the social advantages of a college life after the Oxford type for these men, was a delusion, whilst for a young University to sacrifice to this both their economy and their comfort, was a wrong.¹⁰⁵

There is also an even more personal explanation for Melville's motivation, as he had graduated from Brasenose in severe financial difficulties following his father's bankruptcy.¹⁰⁶ Melville was a man who could appreciate the need for absolute financial probity as well as understanding first-hand the difficulties of being a student with limited means.

The Council of University College had considered a general plan for the establishment of halls in May 1836. By this plan the officers of a new hall would be a Head Tutor, a Censor and two Assistant Tutors. Hatfield Hall was the first such body to be founded, and was discussed at a meeting of Senate on 8 December 1845. At the following meeting of Senate, on 9 December, it was agreed that Melville would be Principal. A licence was initially granted in June 1846,¹⁰⁷ though it was only finally passed by Senate in November.¹⁰⁸ Thorp's first proposal for the governance of the new hall was that he would be the head of both the College and the Hall, with Vice-Principals to run the day-to-day affairs in each, along the lines of the general plan for halls agreed in 1836. It was only after much friction that Thorp permitted Melville a licence as Principal in his own right. The Licence still reserved significant powers to the Warden: including that the Warden had to approve the duties of the officers who

¹⁰⁵ *Special Report from the Select Committee on the Oxford and Cambridge Universities Education Bill* (London, 1867), appendix 2(B): Melville to Shirley, 15 January 1866.

¹⁰⁶ J. Dimpleby, *A Profound Secret* (London, 2004), p. 30; A. Moyes, *Class of '46: The Story of the Original Students of Hatfield Hall* (Durham, 2004), p. 54.

¹⁰⁷ [DUL] TC, 395: Licence for Bishop Hatfield's Hall, 24 June 1846.

¹⁰⁸ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 November 1846.

supported the principal, and that the Warden had to be consulted in any 'extraordinary circumstances'.¹⁰⁹ These restrictive terms gave the Principal little freedom in the management of the Hall. Equally, it ensured that there was less opportunity for the Principal to bring the University into disrepute. Whichever interpretation is more accurate, the terms under which the Hall operated would in the longer term create significant tension between Thorp and Melville, and sowed the seeds for a lasting enmity between the old Warden and the young Principal.

Buildings for the new Hall on North Bailey, centred on the old Red Lyon Inn, had been purchased for the cost of £4,250.¹¹⁰ George Pickering, Salvin's trusted Clerk of Works in Durham, was allowed up to £600 to ensure the buildings were fitted out ready for the reception of students.¹¹¹ The name originally agreed for the new Hall was St Cuthbert's but the seventh-century Saint was later dropped in favour of the fourteenth-century bishop, probably to emphasise the link between the University and Durham College, Oxford.¹¹²

The Hall was an instant success. Melville's reports to Senate showed that the Hall returned a surplus in its first term of £62.13.10¼, which increased to £73.5.10½.¹¹³ Although still less than a year old, and on top of the £1,216.12.7½ already spent on fitting out the original buildings, by March 1847 the Senate agreed to ask Salvin to

¹⁰⁹ Moyes, *Hatfield*, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ [DUL] TC, 414: Hatfield Hall Accounts; T.A. Whitworth, *Yellow Sandstone and Mellow Brick: An Account of Hatfield College, Durham, 1846 – 1971* (Durham, 1971), pp. 17-8.

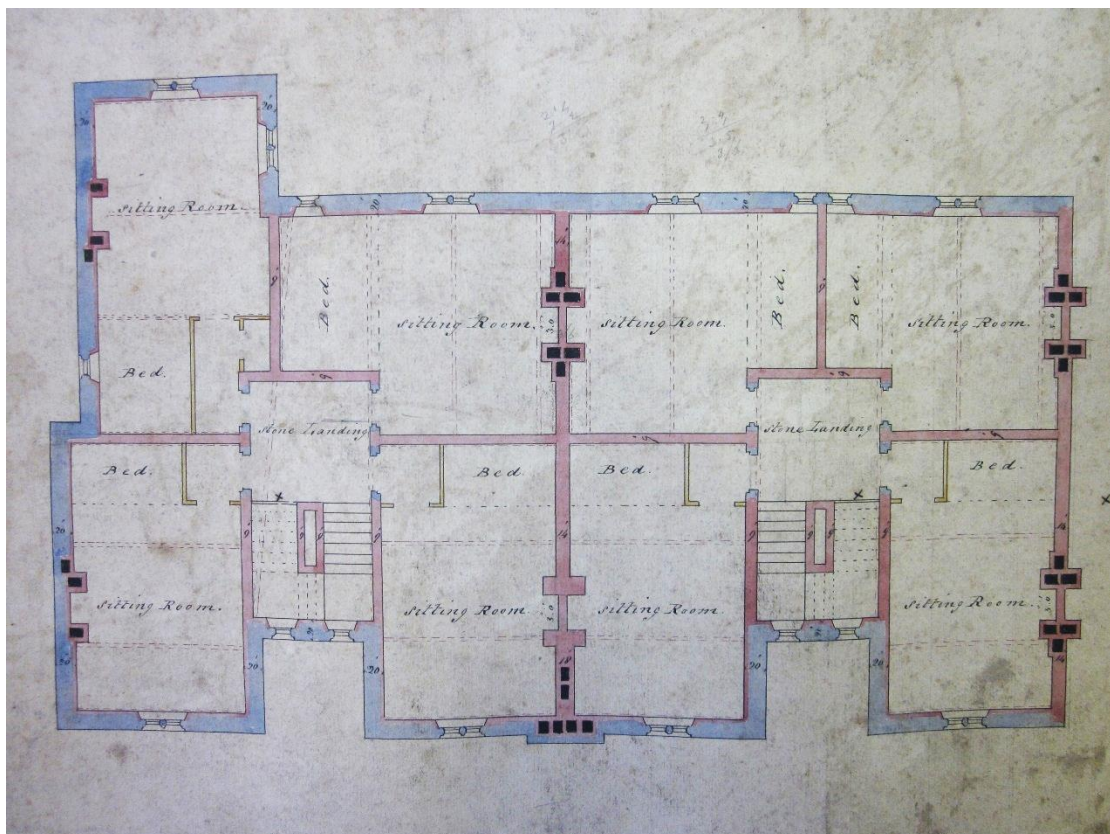
¹¹¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 June 1846; Allibone, *Salvin*, pp. 132-3.

¹¹² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 December 1845. The name change was agreed sometime between December 1845 and May 1846 when the Senate minutes referred to the new Hall as 'Bishop Hatfield's Hall' without the need to cross through 'St Cuthbert's Hall', cf [DUL] Senate Minutes: 26 May 1846.

¹¹³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 31 December 1846, 23 March 1847.

design a new building for the Hall.¹¹⁴ In June, Senate approved Salvin's plans and resolved to seek £4,000 for the new buildings from the Court of Chancery.¹¹⁵ Melville later asserted that Thorp had opposed the plans for this building, stating that when he 'moved for additional accommodation' Thorp replied that 'had he foreseen the proportions to which we were growing, we never should have existed at all'.¹¹⁶

Illustration 14: Salvin's Plans for Bishop Hatfield's Hall, floor plan¹¹⁷



Compared to the rooms which would have been constructed in Salvin's unbuilt college, the economy of Hatfield Hall is apparent in the new building. In total the block offered 28 new rooms, eight on each of the main floors and a further four rooms

¹¹⁴ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 March 1847; Moyes, *Hatfield*, pp. 9-11; Roberts, *Buildings of Durham University*, p. 58.

¹¹⁵ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 June 1847.

¹¹⁶ *Special Report of from the Select Committee on the Oxford and Cambridge Universities Education Bill* (London, 1867), p. 280.

¹¹⁷ [DUL] Salvin's Plans for Bishop Hatfield's Hall (1848).

in the basement with smaller windows and an undesirable location (next to the toilets, the coal stores, and the two servants' rooms). All the rooms were roughly the same size, around 14' 8" by 23', and were designed as a combined sitting and bedroom unlike the sets envisaged for the unbuilt college. The size of rooms in the reconstructed Keep varied considerably, but almost all were sets and larger than the rooms in Hatfield.

News of Hatfield's success spread beyond Durham. When in 1848 Charles Marriott, Fellow of Oriel and a former Principal of Chichester Theological College, advocated a new hall for Oxford which would cost a student between £65 and £80 a year, when £200 was quite common, he had Hatfield in mind.¹¹⁸ While nothing came of the suggestion at that point, Hatfield's example was later used to inform the arrangements for Keble College.¹¹⁹

Bishop Cosin's Hall

Named after the first post-Restoration Bishop of Durham, Cosin's Hall operated between 1851 and 1864. The first Principal was John Pedder, nominated to the role by Thorp.¹²⁰ Pedder had studied at the University after Manchester Grammar School: matriculating at University College in October 1840 as an engineering student, he graduated with the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer (CE) in June 1843, and then proceeded to graduate BA in 1845, LTh in 1847, and MA in 1848. He was awarded the prize for Chemistry in 1842, was placed in the first class for 'Mathematical and Physical

¹¹⁸ Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 140.

¹¹⁹ G. Rowell, "'Training in Simple and Religious Habits": Keble and its First Warden', in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 7, The Nineteenth Century, Part 2* (8 vols., Oxford, 1984-), pp. 171-92, pp. 172-3.

¹²⁰ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 August 1851.

Sciences' in both his final BA and MA examinations, and he obtained the Bishop of Durham's prize for Mathematics in 1845. James Lonsdale, Principal of Hatfield Hall in 1853/54, described him as having 'had a genius for mathematics'.¹²¹ Becoming a Fellow in 1846, Pedder had been the Bursar of University College since 1848 when he was given the charge of the new Hall. From 1850 onwards Pedder became one of Thorp's most trusted acolytes in running the University, and he was appointed time and again to committees charged with important duties: in 1850 he joined the committee investigating the possible affiliation of the College of Medicine in Newcastle, in 1852 he shared responsibility for the construction of the chapel at Bishop Hatfield's Hall, and in 1853 he was one of those appointed to examine the accounts of Neville Hall and report on its future management.¹²² A bond of trust clearly existed between Thorp and Pedder. Given the tension that existed between Thorp and Melville, the fact the Warden felt he could trust Pedder would no doubt have been an important factor in his appointment.

However, Pedder's successor as Principal of Cosin's Hall, James John Hornby, was a very different character. Unlike Pedder, Hornby was from outside the University: he had been educated at Oxford in the reforming years of the late 1840s and early 1850s. After attending Eton College, Hornby studied at Balliol College from 1845. When he graduated BA in 1849 he was placed in the first class for classics, and in the same year he was elected a Fellow of Brasenose College and served as a Tutor. He proceeded MA in 1851. In 1854 he moved to Durham as Tutor and Principal of

¹²¹ R. Duckworth, *A memoir of the Rev. James Lonsdale, late fellow and tutor of Balliol College, Oxford* (London, 1893), p. 143.

¹²² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 3 December 1850, 15 June 1852, 20 February 1855.

Cosin's Hall. Initially, at least, it seems that Hornby's interests were as much athletic as academic. He had rowed in the Oxford eight in 1849 and 1851, and he maintained his vigorous lifestyle while at Durham; he even kept a private gym in Cosin's Hall.¹²³ Hornby was especially keen on the beagles of University College, which he felt offered good healthy recreation (better than billiards), and he was a pioneer of alpine climbing.¹²⁴ Hornby and Chevallier were both keen skaters – Chevallier skated 'like a young man' well into his seventies – and they shared academic interests too. In early 1868 Hornby took up the position of Headmaster at Eton College and it is for the numerous notable changes he made there that he is now best remembered. At Eton he introduced compulsory French and science and, out of his personal funds, established the chemistry laboratory which opened in 1869.¹²⁵ These changes may well have been influenced by his time at Durham, where Chevallier was a proponent of Modern Languages and where Johnston kept up the chemistry laboratory until his departure in 1855.¹²⁶ It is pleasing to imagine Chevallier and Hornby out skating on the frozen Wear in the shadow of the cathedral discussing the educational merits of scientific subjects and modern European languages.

Hornby struggled to make a success of Cosin's Hall. In 1856 Senate agreed to move the Hall to Archdeacon's Inn, and let the houses which had previously been occupied by the Hall.¹²⁷ Despite the grand new location, the Hall was too small and

¹²³ S. Powell, 'Reminiscences of Cosin's Hall', *Durham University Journal*, 22/1 (December 1918), pp. 8-9, p. 8.

¹²⁴ Henderson, 'University College Beagles', p. 201.

¹²⁵ L.H. Cust, 'Hornby, James John (1826–1909)', rev. M.C. Curthoys, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

¹²⁶ Powell, 'Cosin's Hall', p. 9.

¹²⁷ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 29 April 1856.

proved financially untenable.¹²⁸ The arrangements for its management were further changed in 1858 at Hornby's recommendation so that Cosin's Hall was made something of an affiliated Hall of University College. The effect of this rearrangement meant that the Principal of Cosin's Hall became also the Vice-Master of the College, saving the University a salary of £100. The kitchens also were combined, making a butler and a cook redundant, meaning that a total saving was made of approximately £200. Despite these changes Hornby estimated he lost £50 a year on average from 1854 to 1859.¹²⁹ A former student of the Hall, Scudamore Powell, recalled there being only six or seven students in residence in 1861.¹³⁰ As the number of students dwindled and the loss made by the Hall escalated there seemed little hope for the future: by 1862 Hornby suggested that the Hall should be closed: 'there would be more chance of making two establishments pay than three', he argued.¹³¹ In June 1863, the Senate agreed that the Principal of Bishop Cosin's Hall, who was also therefore the Vice-Master of University College, should become Principal of the two combined.¹³²

Conclusion

It was clear that Durham struggled to achieve the mix it desired of economy within a traditional English collegiate setting. While the excesses of student life at University College received a response in the innovations at Hatfield Hall, the very success of that Hall aroused the suspicions of the Warden. His response included founding a competing Hall, with a trusted Durham graduate in charge, which created

¹²⁸ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 89.

¹²⁹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 876, p. 43; q. 899, p. 44; q. 1014, p. 49.

¹³⁰ Powell, 'Cosin's Hall', p. 8.

¹³¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1005, p. 47.

¹³² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 June 1863.

excessive complexity in a small institution, and resulted in a deteriorating relationship with Melville. Yet, despite these difficulties, the innovations of both University College and Hatfield Hall were a reforming response. While they perpetuated a collegiate ideal that was in part a practical response to the disadvantages of the small town in which the University was set, but it was also a development of the college structure found in Oxford and Cambridge. And even though Melville and Thorp ended up in an incredibly bitter rivalry, Thorp's desire to innovate and respond to his circumstances meant he continued to support the Hall even after the departure of its founder and first Principal.

The great and increasing population of the North of England, and its remoteness from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, have long pointed out the expediency of establishing in that part of the kingdom an Institution which should secure to its inhabitants the advantages of a sound yet not expensive academical education.¹

Durham University Calendar for 1836

Introduction

The University's own ambition was to provide in the north a 'sound yet not expensive academical education'.² This leads to perhaps three key ways of judging Durham's success in its first decades. Was the recruitment of students buoyant? Did the University make higher education more financially accessible? And did Durham approach parity of esteem with the older universities? These are largely comparative questions, dealing with Durham's success measured against the established universities but also the other new institutions founded from the early 1800s onwards. These establishments reflected different educational, political, religious, and professional affiliations but they were all attempts at reform and, though this was not acknowledged at the time, formed a nascent higher education sector. Durham's initial progress therefore can be placed in the context of these developments through an analysis of some key trends.

Developments in the Higher Education Sector to about 1860

Higher education in England and across Europe did not expand consistently throughout the nineteenth century.³ Robert Anderson has shown that universities

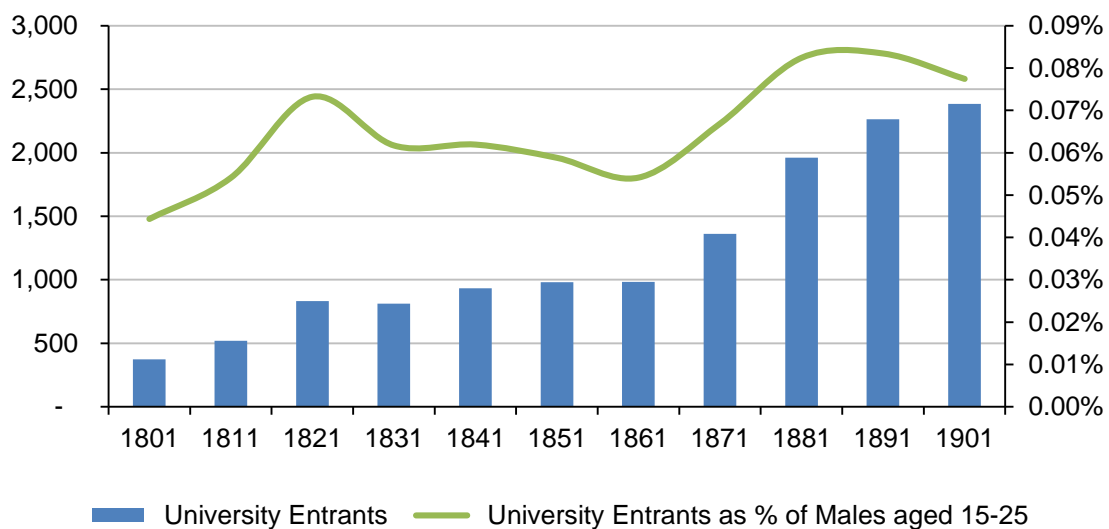
¹ *Durham University Calendar 1836*, p. 3. This is the opening text of the first full University Calendar, which remained the same until well into the twentieth-century.

² *Durham University Calendar 1836*, p. 3.

³ Anderson, *European Universities*, pp. 119-37.

from Scotland to Russia experienced the same broad trend of growth in the period up to about 1830, followed by stagnation until the mid-1860s, and then renewed growth from 1870 until the eve of the First World War.⁴ According to one analysis of enrolments, there was even a decline in the rate of admission to English universities between 1821 and 1861. The number of students enrolling in 1831 was lower than in 1821.⁵

Figure 1: Students in English Universities 1801-1901 (Male Students Only)⁶



The general pace of change accelerated from about 1870 onwards, though Oxford and Cambridge preceded this expansion by a few years with a surge that started in the late 1860s. From about mid-century too, the middle-classes showed an increasing interest in the growing number of public schools able to prepare their sons for careers in the

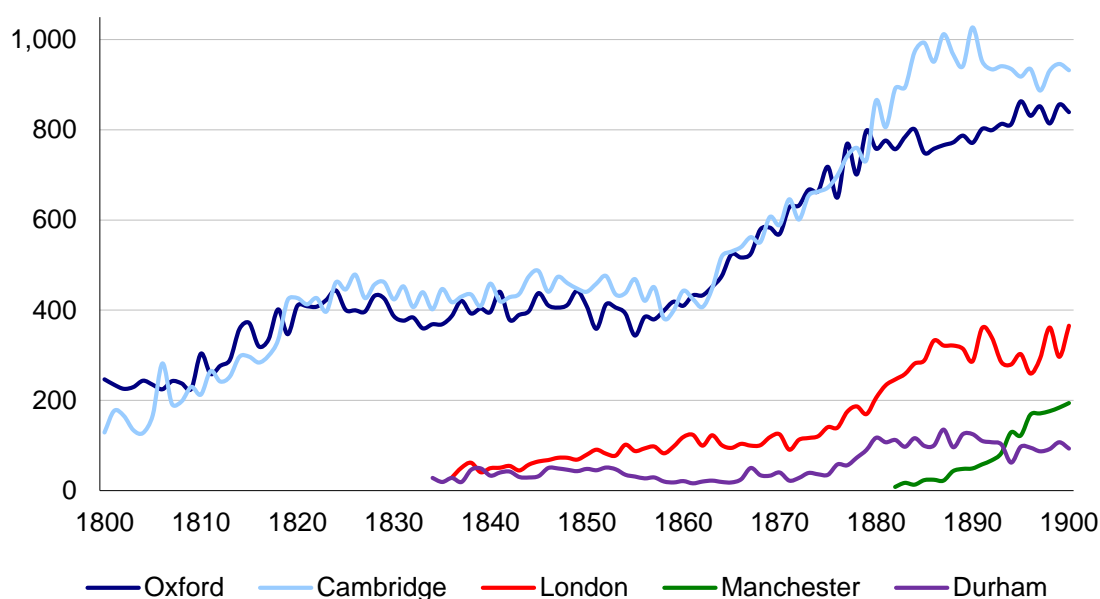
⁴ Anderson, *European Universities*, pp. 124-6; Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 142-5.

⁵ M. Greenwood, 'University Education: Its Recent History and Function', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 98/2 (1935), pp. 1-33. Greenwood's figures excluded female students for ease of comparison across the century, he therefore calculated the rate of entry as a proportion of the male population aged 15 to 25.

⁶ Source: Greenwood, 'University Education', p. 7.

civil service, military, or church.⁷ Owens College, which almost collapsed in the 1850s, expanded rapidly in the 1870s. This increase gave the College's leaders sufficient optimism to forecast the enrolment of 2,000 students.⁸ This hope proved fanciful, but the available statistics demonstrate that while there had been considerable growth between about 1810 and 1830, the decisive shift in the evolving higher education sector occurred from about 1870 onwards: between 1871 and 1881 alone there was a 44% increase in admission to university. This was a trend experienced internationally too, as the universities in different parts of the British Empire experienced growth from the 1870s as part of increasing Victorian globalisation.⁹

Figure 2: Entrants to English Universities 1799-1903 (Male Students Only)¹⁰



Though the expansion from 1870 onwards marked the start of rapid and persistent

⁷ Anderson, *Universities and Elites*, p. 33; Simon, *Two Nations*, pp. 302-3, 318-20; G. Sutherland, 'Secondary Education: The Education of the Middle Classes', in Sutherland, et al, (eds.), *Education*, pp. 137-95, pp. 137-59.

⁸ Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 283.

⁹ Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, pp. 5, 24-8.

¹⁰ Source: Greenwood, 'University Education', p. 6.

growth, one constant throughout the nineteenth century was that Oxford and Cambridge remained not only considerably larger but also one step ahead of their new rivals. Even by 1903, 72% of all male university students entered Oxford and Cambridge.

These figures tell the bleak story of the significant difficulties that beset all new institutions of higher learning during the nineteenth century. Even University College, London, and King's College, London – institutions normally feted for breaking the Oxbridge duopoly – conspicuously failed to prosper at first.¹¹ This is despite the advantage they enjoyed of being based in London with easy access to key facilities and potential students. Both colleges, unlike Durham, were also open to all without religious tests – a key demand of Dissenters and others who decried being locked out of English higher education – and neither insisted on an expensive mode of residential living. However, by the mid-1830s the decline in the number of students at University College was a matter of public debate.¹² The College's financial difficulties were considerable and mounting, even to the extent that 'bailiffs' were reported to have chased 'the Professor of Modern History round the quadrangle' after seizing 'the air-pump, the exhausted receiver, and the galvanic batteries'.¹³ The College, which had spent £2,580 on library books in 1828-9, sacked the first librarian in 1831 for lack of funds and dropped expenditure to an average of only £51 per year between 1832 and 1875.¹⁴ As early as January 1832 Van Mildert confidently asserted

¹¹ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 60.

¹² *The Morning Chronicle*, 25 April 1834.

¹³ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 177.

¹⁴ K.E. Attar, "'The Establishment of a First-Class University Library': The Beginnings of the University of London Library", *History of Universities*, XXVIII/1 (2014), pp. 44-65, pp. 44-5.

that University College was 'manifestly on the decline'.¹⁵ The Bishop was not alone. By February 1833 there were serious suggestions that the institution could not continue 'upon its present footing'.¹⁶ By 1846 the situation was little improved. Brougham bemoaned that 'his anticipations of its success had not been realized, or anything like realized', and he berated his fellow citizens, who despite having complained for 'a century' of the want of a university in London persisted in sending their sons 'to be corrupted at Oxford or Cambridge'.¹⁷ The early decades of King's College were much the same, and by the mid-1850s 'a general air of poverty and depression brooded over the dingy scene' at the Strand.¹⁸ Both colleges relied significantly on their medical departments and day schools for survival, rather than on their general Arts courses.¹⁹

Even by mid-century new institutions were suffering.²⁰ Owens College was in a very dangerous state just a few years after its foundation: the number of ordinary students almost halved from 62 in 1851/52 (the first full year of the College's operation) to 33 in 1856/57. In 1856 the first Principal of Owens College, Alexander Scott, reflected on the College's diminished intake of ordinary students and advised the trustees that it was their 'duty ... to persevere till the value of the college became matter of experience, and a demand was created which did not then exist'. He suggested that the College establish a school to help create a group of potential students; while Joseph Greenwood, the Professor of Greek and Latin, suggested it would have been better if

¹⁵ [DUL] TC, 77: Van Mildert to Thorp, 14 January 1832.

¹⁶ Bellot, *University College, London*, p. 178.

¹⁷ *The Times*, 21 May 1846.

¹⁸ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 206.

¹⁹ Armytage, *English Education*, pp. 103-4.

²⁰ Armytage, *Civic Universities*, p. 220; Briggs, 'Development in Higher Education', pp. 110-3.

the College had simply been a school in the first place rather than a college at all. Greenwood also held that its unsectarian nature had limited its likely supporters.²¹ In July 1858 the *Manchester Guardian* called the College a 'mortifying failure' bemoaning that only 'eight years ago' it had been hoped it 'would form the nucleus of a Manchester University'. The newspaper's editorial attributed the difficulties to the curriculum on offer: 'first, the College supplies a kind of education which is not wanted; and, secondly, it does not supply the education which is wanted'.²² Henry Roscoe, the Professor of Chemistry, described the College at that time as being 'nearly in a state of collapse'.²³

Back in London the story of disappointing beginnings continued. The Royal School of Mines, founded in 1851 as the Government School of Mines and of Science Applied to the Arts, was deeply unsuccessful: until 1869 it produced no more than 6 Associates in any year, and double figures were not reached until 1876.²⁴ Suspicious mine owners still distrusted academic theory and failed to show any real interest in the College – just as they had shown no interest in Durham's engineering course in the late 1830s, or Wood's proposed college in Newcastle in the 1850s.²⁵ This slow progress with the development of scientific and technical instruction was amply recorded in The Royal Commission on Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science (known as the Devonshire Commission) which undertook its investigations from 1870

²¹ J. Thompson, *The Owens College its Foundation and Growth and its Connection with the Victoria University, Manchester* (Manchester, 1886), p. 155.

²² *Manchester Guardian*, 9 July 1858.

²³ W.H. Chaloner, *The Movement for the Extension of Owens College Manchester 1863-73* (Manchester, 1973), p. 1.

²⁴ G.W. Roderick, and M.D. Stephens, 'Mining Education in England and Wales in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century', *The Irish Journal of Education*, 6/2 (1972), pp. 105-20, p. 109.

²⁵ Reader, *Professional Men*, p. 141.

to 1875. While the Commission's report noted some progress in places, including King's and University Colleges in London, Owens College in Manchester and the recently established College of Physical Science in Newcastle, it found grave deficiencies more generally and especially in the old universities and at an elementary level.²⁶

There is, then, an apparent contrast between the clear ambition which led to the establishment of new institutions (remembering also that many more institutions were projected and never founded) and the general failure and near collapse of these institutions in their early decades.²⁷

Student Recruitment at Durham

The number of students recruited at Durham was at first reasonably promising: after an exceptional response for the first intake, entrants dipped but then grew throughout most of the 1830s. Students from the north of England were in the majority, accounting for 58 out of 100 students with a known place of birth over the first decade, with 30 coming from the south of England and the remainder from the rest of the UK or overseas. While in most years the Arts course dominated, Theology and, for a while, Civil Engineering admitted significant proportions too.

²⁶ Jones, *Origins of Civic Universities*, p. 38-9; R. MacLeod, 'Scientific and Technical Education', in Sutherland, et al, (eds.) *Education*, pp.196-225, pp. 203-10.

²⁷ For example, proposals in Bath, Leeds, and Liverpool.

Figure 3: Entrants 1833/34 to 1842/43 (Durham Only, All Courses)²⁸

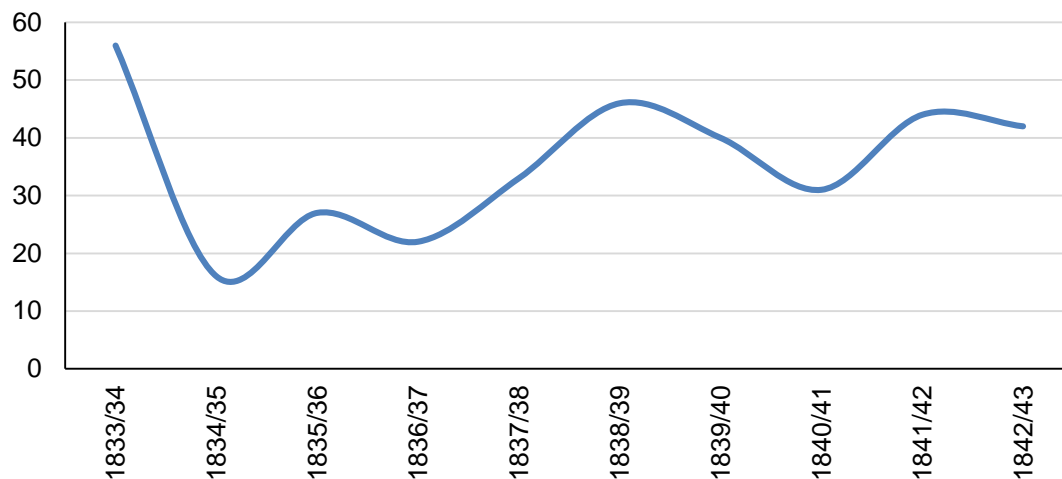
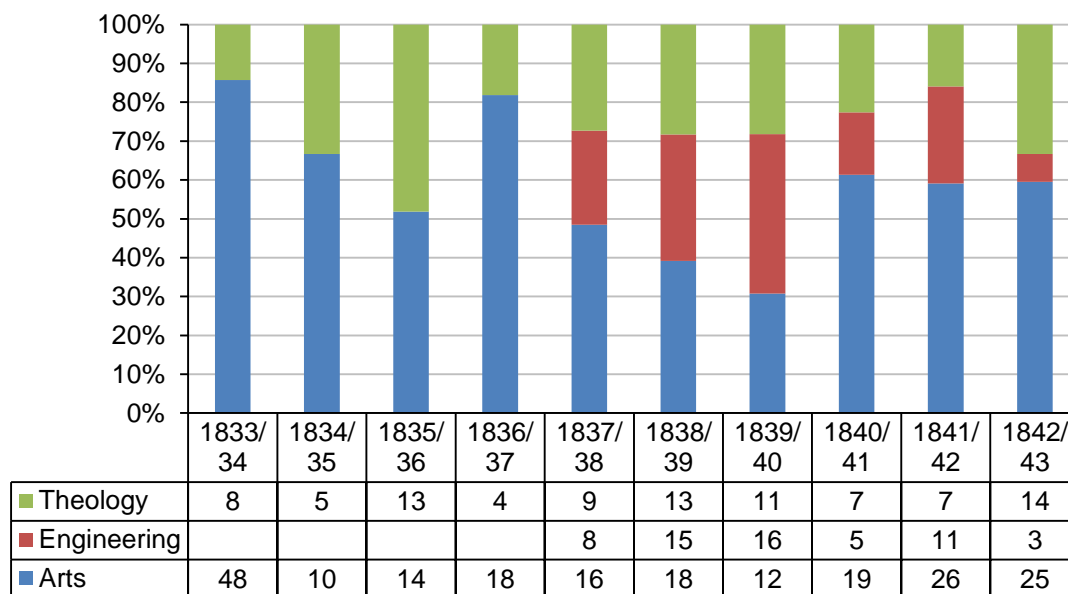


Figure 4: Entrants 1833/34 to 1842/43 by Course (Durham Only)²⁹



The student population in Durham grew slowly to a peak of 140 in 1852/53.³⁰

²⁸ Source: [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96.

²⁹ Source: [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96. Two students are omitted from this table as it was not possible to identify the course they entered to study. In addition, many students progressed from one course to a second course but these continuing students have been omitted.

³⁰ In his evidence to the Commission, Hornby stated that the maximum number of students at any point was 134. cf *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1006, p. 47.

This level did not last, however, and there was a significant drop in numbers during the 1850s.

Figure 5: Entrants 1843/44 to 1862/63 (Durham Only, All Courses)³¹

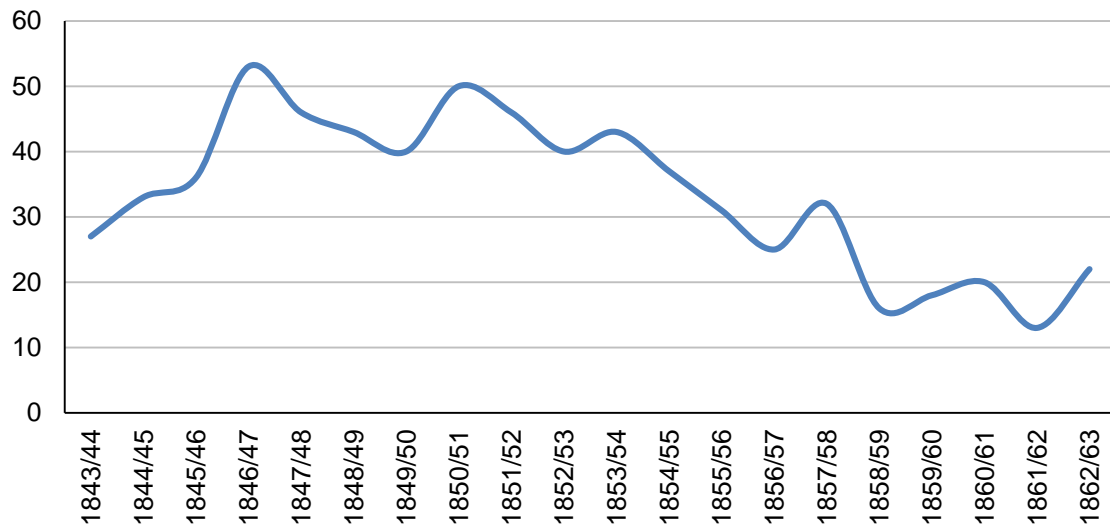
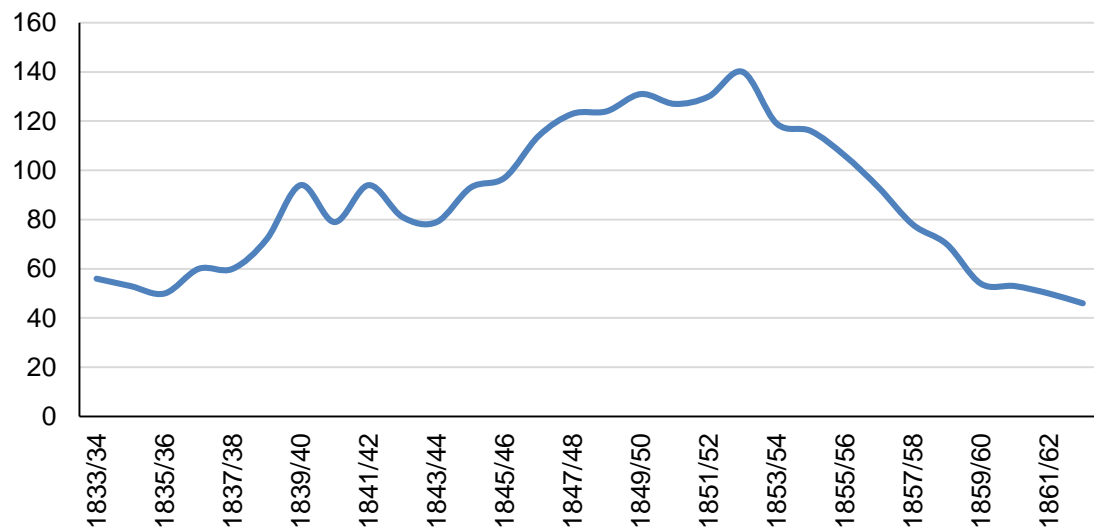


Figure 6: Students 1833/34 to 1862/63 (Durham Only, All Courses)³²



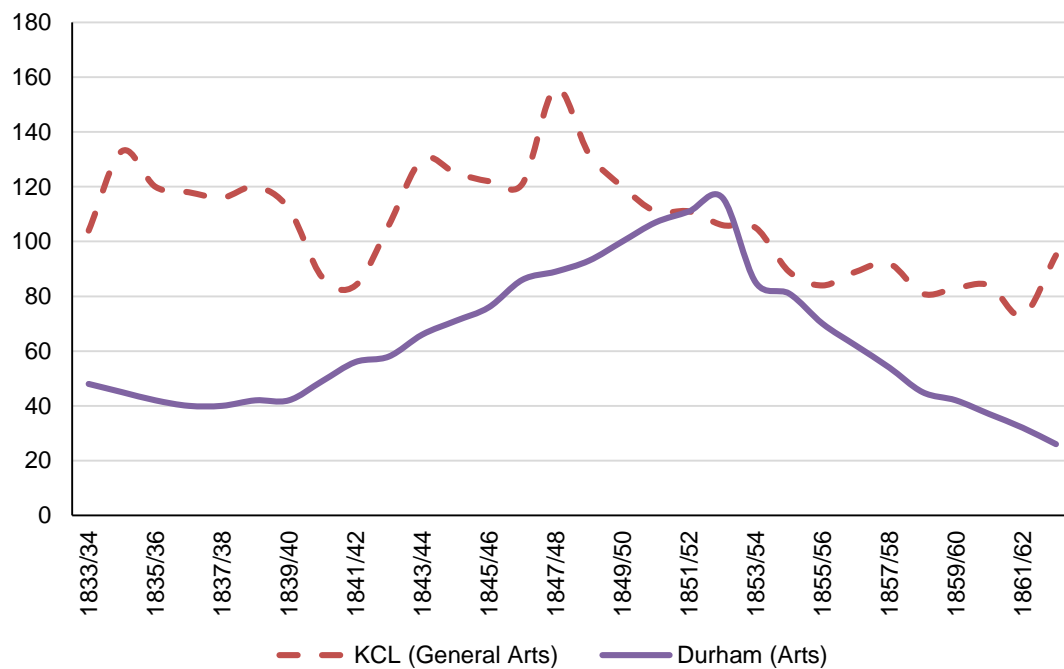
Durham's recruitment had, however, started to compare more favourably with other new institutions. The number of students studying the General course at King's

³¹ Source: [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96.

³² Source: As listed in the University Calendar.

College, London, provided a reasonable benchmark for Durham: both institutions were explicitly Anglican foundations, and the General Arts course was similar to the Durham BA, containing divinity, classics, mathematics and English (though Hearnshaw described the King's course as 'chaotic and aimless').³³

Figure 7: Students 1833/34 to 1862/63, Durham and KCL (Arts Course)³⁴



While the number of students at King's varied, the Arts course at Durham grew consistently every year throughout the 1840s until in 1852/53 there were more students studying Arts in Durham than were studying General Arts at King's. The decline at both institutions, though starting slightly early at King's, lasted throughout the 1850s.

Durham's success in Theology was more limited. Other colleges that did not have the benefit of University status outperformed Durham: between 1833 and 1842 St Bees College admitted an average of 17 and St David's College 18 students per year,

³³ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 111.

³⁴ Source: 'Durham (Arts)' as listed in the University Calendar. 'KCL (General Arts)' from Hearnshaw, *King's College London*.

compared to 9 at Durham.³⁵ The expense of studying at Durham no doubt was part of the issue, as both St David's and St Bees offered more economical routes to ordination. Comparatively stringent academic standards at Durham might have served to put off potential students too, certainly when compared to St Bees where the requirements for admission and successful completion were lower.³⁶ Crucially, however, for as long as the Bishops continued to take the vast majority of men directly into holy orders from the universities (around 80% of ordinands were Oxford or Cambridge graduates) or, indeed, admit men as non-graduate Literates (which accounted for about 10% of ordinands), there was no compelling reason to undertake the expense of studying for the LTh at all.³⁷

Van Mildert disliked comparing his great University with diminutive St Bees.³⁸ Despite the Bishop's misgivings, however, measuring progress in Durham with developments in Cumbria does provide some form of benchmark. Initially Durham recruited a similar number of students to its Theology course as entered St Bees, but from the 1840s onwards the Durham course proved consistently less popular.

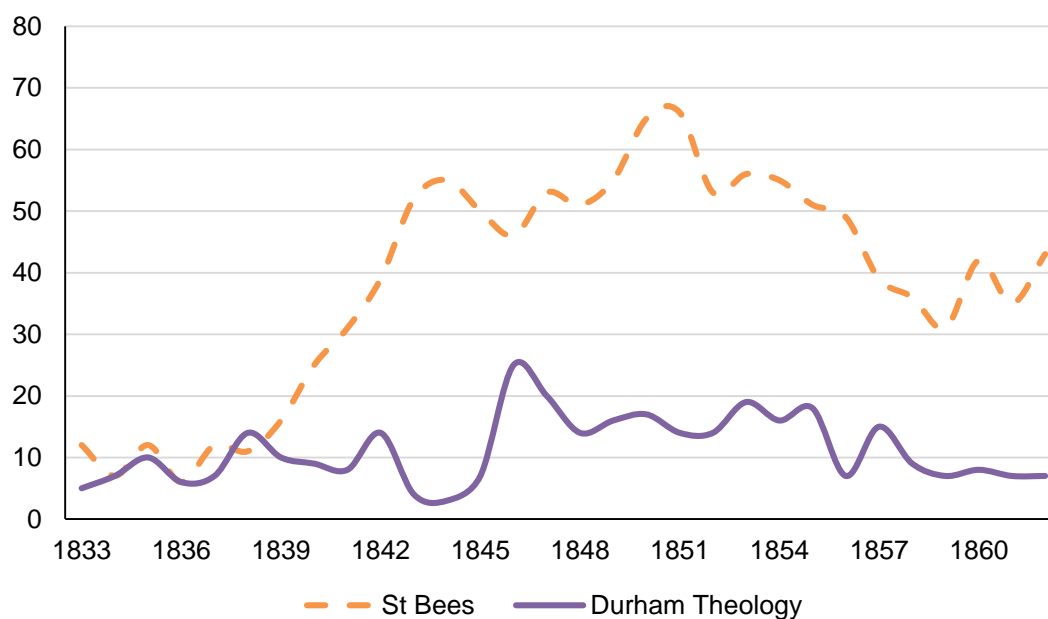
³⁵ Source: 'St Bees' from Park, *St Bees*. 'St David's' taken from Price, *Saint David's*, p. 207.

³⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, qq 582-5, p. 28.

³⁷ Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence*, p. 132.

³⁸ [DUL] TC, 164: Law to Van Mildert, 16 February 1834; vol. 1, f166b: Van Mildert to Thorp, 18 February 1834.

Figure 8: Entrants 1833 to 1862, Durham and St Bees (Theology Course)³⁹



Although recruitment at Durham was relatively poor, it remained stable throughout the late 1840s and the early years of the 1850s. Decline did set in at the end of the decade, but the decrease at St Bees was even greater, started earlier and lasted longer. This decline coincided with the continued growth of diocesan theological colleges.⁴⁰

Student Expenses at Durham

Thorp intended to tackle the excessive cost of being a student at Oxford and Cambridge. Although real success was only achieved with the opening of Hatfield Hall, Durham did make progress with reducing the cost of education. At first, the academic fees were only £9 a year. The fees due to the University directly, which were in addition to living expenses, were set as follows:⁴¹

³⁹ Source: 'Durham Theology' from [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96; 'St Bees' from Park, *St Bees*.

⁴⁰ Dowland, *Theological Training*, p. 5; Park, *St Bees*, p. 132.

⁴¹ *Durham University Calendar 1833*, p. 17.

	£	s	d
Admission of Students	2	0	0
Caution, deposit, of students	10	0	0
Tuition each Term, to be paid terminally in advance	3	0	0
University Chest	1	0	0
Detriment		10	0
Servants		10	0
Library		10	0

These fees remained stable for many years: the academic fees were only raised to £15 for 1842/43 where they stayed until 1861/62.

In October 1833 the Bursar estimated that the living expenses of an ordinary student would be '£50 at least: it might amount to, but ought not to exceed, 60£'.⁴² The residential cost of being a student at University College, however, never achieved these levels of economy. Still, even before Hatfield Hall, University College was not entirely unsuccessful in reducing costs. In August 1838, H. Longueville Jones presented a paper to the Statistical Society of London examining and comparing the universities of Great Britain and Ireland.⁴³ He concluded that the average annual sum spent by an individual student at Oxford was £300 per annum, at Cambridge £250, at Dublin £200, at Durham £150, at Edinburgh 'rather under' £100, at Glasgow 'about' £70, at Aberdeen 'about' £50, and at St Andrew's 'about the same sum or rather more'.⁴⁴ The 1861 Commissioners noted that the charges for 'education and living' in University College varied from £100 to £140, though they had 'reason to think that in

⁴² [DUL] Bursar's Memorandum Book: 12 October 1833, p. 12.

⁴³ H. Longueville Jones, 'Statistical Illustrations of the Principal Universities of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, I (November 1838), pp. 385-97.

⁴⁴ Longueville Jones, 'Statistical Illustrations', p. 390.

many instances the cost of education at the College exceeds the highest sum named'.⁴⁵ In 1865, however, the Master of University College, Joseph Waite, calculated that 'the average expenses of a student for battels, tuition fees, and all necessary College & University expenses, is not more than £75 a year'.⁴⁶

London University was at first entirely non-residential, and so the students that were admitted there from October 1828 either lived at home or made private arrangements for their lodgings, making direct comparison with Durham harder.⁴⁷ However, the University did offer a 'refreshment room'. In 1829 *The Lancet* recorded that the cost of breakfast and dinner there was half a guinea (10s 6d) a week which, it remarked favourably, was 'cheaper than at the lowest coffee-house'.⁴⁸

Course costs at London University were based on a complex system of fees per session for each class attended which varied according to whether or not the student was nominated by a Proprietor (those people who had purchased shares). In the General Department fees ranged between £5 for modern European languages and £7 10s for Latin and Greek. In the Medical Department, fees could be as low as £2 per session for Surgery or Comparative Anatomy but rose to £7 for Anatomy and Chemistry. These were, however, the fees paid by students of a Proprietor; other students would be subject to an additional charge of 5s per £1 in fees up to a maximum additional charge of £4 10s per year.⁴⁹ The average cost for a student nominated by a

⁴⁵ *Report of the Commissioners Appointed for the Purposes of the Durham University Act, 1861* (London, 1863), p. 3.

⁴⁶ [DUL] Senate Minutes: March 1865.

⁴⁷ The first hall of residence was the Unitarian University Hall, Gordon Square, opened in 1849. Harte and North, *UCL*, pp. 84-5.

⁴⁸ *The Lancet*, 13/37 (26 September 1829), p. 32.

⁴⁹ *London University Calendar 1831*, pp. 219-22.

Proprietor has been estimated at £22 7s.⁵⁰

At King's College, the fees charged for the General Arts course were £21 per year for students nominated by a Proprietor, whilst other students paid £26 5s.⁵¹ The College was concerned that the reasonableness of its tuition (compared to Oxford and Cambridge) was not sufficiently well known. In December 1833, an article on the College noted that 'few persons, comparatively, are aware at how small an expense students ... may now obtain ... an education precisely similar to that which they would receive at the Universities'.⁵²

Unlike London University, the original concept for King's College was that it would be residential but the site made available to the College, off the Strand next to Somerset House, was too small and so those grander plans had to be abandoned. In 1835, however, the attic of the College was converted into fifteen rooms, principally for the use of medical students from outside London. The charge for these rooms varied: a single room cost £30 per year, double rooms cost £36, £40 or £46 depending on the size of the room, and one suite consisting of two rooms cost the enormous sum of £80 a year.⁵³

At St David's College in Lampeter the topic of excessive cost was also an issue. Not that this had originally been a great concern to the Bishop, Jenkinson. In January 1826 he had noted there were apprehensions about the cost of attending the College, to the extent that it would mean 'very few comparatively of the natives of this Diocese' would be able to study there and prepare for ordination. 'So much the better' he

⁵⁰ Harte and North, *UCL*, p. 83.

⁵¹ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, p. 99.

⁵² *The Saturday Magazine*, 21 December 1833.

⁵³ Hearnshaw, *King's College London*, pp. 62, 119.

thought: 'what I lose in quantity, I shall gain in quality'.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, in February 1827 Jenkinson estimated that the annual expense of a student at the College would be £50. The strength of rumours that this amount was considerably insufficient led the College to work out statistics to refute the claims. This exercise indicated that in 1827 the actual expenses of nine students at the college varied between £47 2s 0d and £59 19s 6d. This included academic fees of £20. A year later a sample of the students' expenses had risen to between £55 2s 0d and £57 19s 0d; nevertheless, rumours still circulated that £100 was the necessary minimum.⁵⁵ By October 1833 Jenkinson had changed his view and thought 'it desirable that the expense of educating a young man at the College [should] be reduced'.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most frugal of all the new institutions of the nineteenth century was St Bees. One of the main reasons for St Bees' popularity was its economy: a student itemised his expenditure for the sixteen weeks from September 1823 to January 1824 and managed to live on £21 2s (which included a new pair of shoes at 10s).⁵⁷ Although this indicated a full year cost of nearer £40, it was still an economic rate compared to St David's College and an order of magnitude different to Oxford or Cambridge.

While all these estimated costs varied considerably, they all showed Durham to be markedly cheaper than Oxford or Cambridge and nearer the cost of attending Edinburgh. Though the benchmarks set by St David's and St Bees seemed beyond Durham's reach, the University did nevertheless achieve greater economy than the

⁵⁴ [UWL] UA/D/1/23: Jenkinson to Burgess, 13 January 1826.

⁵⁵ Price, *Saint David's*, pp. 39-41, 51-3.

⁵⁶ [UWL] UA/D/1/47: Jenkinson to [?], 21 October 1833.

⁵⁷ Park, *St Bees*, p. 102.

other residential English universities.

Recognition and Equality

Had the University achieved parity of esteem for its graduates and recognition of its degrees alongside those from Oxford or Cambridge? One such attempt to gain recognition was made in early 1844, when the Senate applied to Oxford University for the admission of Durham graduates to ad eundem degrees. An ad eundem degree was awarded by one university to a graduate of another university, recognising that graduate as having equal standing to one of their own – the term may be translated as ‘to the same’. The genesis of this request can be traced to March 1843, when one of the University’s earliest graduates, George Hills, wrote to Thorp concerning the promise of a parish in Leeds. The Patrons of this parish discovered that the Incumbent was required to ‘be a M.A. of Oxford or Cambridge’. This stipulation was not surprising, given that Oxford and Cambridge had hitherto been the only universities in England, but if requirements such as this one were strictly enforced it would clearly have a significant negative impact on Durham graduates. Hills was therefore ‘anxious to know whether any recognition had yet been made of Durham Degrees by the sister Universities’.⁵⁸ Durham had granted large numbers of ad eundem degrees from as early as 1837, but the older universities had not reciprocated. The situation deteriorated for Hills, when the diocesan Bishop, Charles Longley (who was translated to Durham in 1856) confirmed that ‘on mature consideration’ it was his decided view ‘that the nomination of anyone not a Graduate at either Oxford or Cambridge, would be illegal’.⁵⁹ Hills forwarded Longley’s trenchant response to Thorp, and begged the

⁵⁸ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12a: George Hills to Thorp, 27 March 1843.

⁵⁹ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12d: Longley to Hills, 26 May 1843.

Warden to intercede.⁶⁰ Longley's decision meant that Hills was barred from the living, but his career progressed nevertheless, and he eventually became the first Bishop of Columbia in 1860.

In April 1843 Hills was one of 19 Durham graduates who signed a petition that asked the Warden to seek recognition for their degrees from Oxford and Cambridge.⁶¹ Thorp assured the petitioners that he was confident 'the recognition of your degrees by the old Universities is little more than a question of time'.⁶² The Senate discussed the request and agreed that they would 'communicate with their friends in the University of Oxford, in order to ascertain the sentiments of the leading members of that University upon the subject'.⁶³ In December, Thorp wrote formally to Philip Wynter, the President of St John's, who was the Vice-Chancellor of the University at that time, enquiring how he might submit a petition from the Senate 'for the [admission] of our Graduates ad eundem'.⁶⁴ Wynter proved entirely receptive to the proposal, declaring confidently that he thought there would be 'little if any opposition ... to the proposed more intimate alliance between your University & our's'.⁶⁵ The petition was considered by the 'Board of Heads of Houses & Proctors' on 12 February 1844 which, contrary to Wynter's prediction, concluded 'that although the Board is by no means unfavourable to the eventual concession of this Privilege, they are nevertheless of opinion that, in the present incomplete state of the University of

⁶⁰ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12e: Hills to Thorp, 28 May 1843.

⁶¹ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12b1: Petition to Thorp, 21 April 1843.

⁶² [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12c1: Thorp to Petitioners, 25 April 1843.

⁶³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 May 1843.

⁶⁴ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12c1: Thorp to Wynter, 12 December 1843.

⁶⁵ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12f: Wynter to Thorp, 23 December 1843.

Durham, such and application is pre-mature'.⁶⁶ Wynter relayed the disappointing decision to Thorp and added the desultory note that he could 'only express my regret that I have it not in my power to offer to you & to your University a more immediate prospect of attaining the object of your solicitude'.⁶⁷

A similar and also unsuccessful attempt was made a decade later, but this time it was Bishop Maltby who approached his alma mater, Cambridge. Henry Philpott, the Master of St Catharine's College, (where Chevallier had been Fellow and Tutor) expressed his regret that the motion had not passed. While Philpott assured Maltby that 'hardly any member of Senate would object to a Proposition for enabling the University to grant such admissions' to Durham graduates, the Cambridge Senate had been asked to accept the motion "'That Graduates of other Universities, besides those of Oxford & Dublin, may be admitted to titular degrees corresponding to the degrees which they bear in their own Universities'". This has been rejected as it 'was too general, comprehending all other Universities'. Optimistically, Philpott added 'I have reason to know that it would have passed almost unanimously if it had referred to Durham only'.⁶⁸

Conclusion

While Durham's early years were marked with not inconsiderable progress the University did not achieve as much as had been hoped. Yet, until the mid-1850s, the University enjoyed more success than it has generally been credited with. In 1854 even Lord Brougham, in a debate on Medical Graduates, admitted that while he felt

⁶⁶ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12h2: Note of the meeting of the Heads of Houses & Proctors, 12 February 1844.

⁶⁷ [DUL] OSHDB, CA1/12h1: Wynter to Thorp, 13 February 1844.

⁶⁸ [DUL] DDR: Philpott to Maltby, 18 February 1854.

Durham did not have adequate provision for teaching medicine it was 'most excellently adapted for teaching all the other branches of knowledge'.⁶⁹

There is a stark contrast before and after 1852/53. Although the University had been unable to gain recognition from either Oxford or Cambridge it did, nevertheless, grow with reasonable consistency despite such set-backs. In the early 1850s more than a few key developments appeared to herald an era of continued growth: Cosin's Hall opened in 1851, the same year a fourth University Tutor was agreed,⁷⁰ a small but handsome chapel was erected at Hatfield Hall,⁷¹ and in 1853 one student even graduated with the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer – the first such award conferred in a decade.⁷² In Newcastle, the medical school came into connexion with the University in 1852, with Neville Hall opening at the same time,⁷³ and in early 1853 Thorp started discussions with Nicholas Wood about a School of Mines in Newcastle.⁷⁴ These developments in Newcastle did not run smoothly, however, and what might have been successful growth in engineering and medicine coincided with a downturn in fortunes at Durham leading to calls for drastic reform by the end of the decade.

⁶⁹ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HL Deb, 25 July 1854, vol. 135, c. 692.

⁷⁰ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 December 1851.

⁷¹ Moyes, *Hatfield*, pp. 26-8.

⁷² This was James Stovin Worsley (later Pennyman) on 25 January 1853. The last student to graduate with the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer was John Pedder on 21 June 1843.

⁷³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 1 May 1855.

⁷⁴ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 1 March 1853.

We have no feeling with respect to [the proposed College of Mining], except that of strengthening it, and doing it good; we do not wish to exercise control over local management; we do not wish to assume the responsibility of management, or interfere in any way with the direction of its affairs; but if we can be of use to you, we shall be very happy.¹

Charles Thorp, April 1853

Introduction

Thomas Greenhow's 1831 proposal for a college may have eventually come to nothing, but the story of higher education in Newcastle did not end there. A year after Greenhow delivered his lecture to the Literary and Philosophical Society, medical instruction began in the city. The College of Medicine that evolved from this experiment entered into a relationship with the University in 1852. Controlled residential living was also attempted for a short time in connection with the College, but without success. Neither was the idea of a college devoted to the physical sciences, mining, and engineering forgotten. For, again in 1852, Thorp and Chevallier worked with Nicholas Wood, the President of the newly formed North of England Institute of Mining Engineers, who had been an external examiner on Durham's own engineering course, to develop just such a proposal. These developments are direct parallels with the University's own attempt to establish courses in medicine and engineering in the 1830s

Progress in Newcastle demonstrates two important but normally overlooked factors in the University's growth to the 1850s. First, that Thorp and other members

¹ *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1852-3 Volume 1*, 2nd edn (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1860), p. 221.

of the Senate were personally committed to delivering their ambitions for a broader, professional education in the north-east. Thorp's desire to support northern interests had not waned: in fact, he continued to explore new, and different ways to deliver on those ambitions. The scale of Thorp's original ambitions was therefore no mere 'sop towards modernity'.² He could be sagacious in exploring alternative routes to achieve his desired ends, though ultimately success alluded him.

Second, the University's difficulties in establishing new and vocational courses were not unique. Even with the backing of the leading professional associations in the north-east professional higher education was either riven with dissent and difficulty, as was the case with medicine, or could not be realised at all, as was the case with engineering. This is instructive because it shows that there were complications during the period that affected all types of initiative, whatever their origin, and not just Durham alone.

A College for Medicine

Although not large by comparison with other cities, and hence containing only a small population of general practitioners and apprentices, Newcastle had a history of medical associations, including a Company of Barber Surgeons dating from 1442, and the more recent Philosophical and Medical Society of 1786.³ Medical instruction was first offered in 1832/32 and 1833/34 by a group of two physicians and four

² Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 101.

³ G. Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', in D. Gardner-Medwin, et al, (eds.), *Medicine in Northumbria* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1993), pp. 211-23, pp. 211-2; D. Embleton, *The Newcastle Medical Society One Hundred Years Ago* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1891); Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, pp. 7-8; McCord, 'Newcastle in the 19th Century', pp. 16-8; G.G. Turner, 'A Short History of the Durham University College of Medicine', *Durham University Journal*, 12/1 (February 1896), pp. 8-10, p. 8; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 118-9.

associates in Bell's Court: they were all practitioners, part-time and voluntary.⁴ Their classes were designed to supplement, not replace, the apprenticeship system.⁵ The students were all part-time too; amongst them was John Snow, who would go on to become one of the most famous medics of the nineteenth century noted for his work on cholera and his practice in anaesthesia.⁶

After the success of their first two years, the lecturers rented the Hall of the Company of Barber Surgeons and, on 1 October 1834, formally opened the Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine and Surgery.⁷ The School soon gained the recognition of both the Society of Apothecaries and the Royal College of Surgeons, and made steady progress, averaging 34 students per year from 1834 to 1844. The School declined somewhat over the next six years to an average of 22 students in the winter term (when dissections were possible) and only 15 in the summer.⁸

Perhaps in part because of this reduction in student numbers, a conversation about connecting the School with the University was underway by June 1850.⁹ In August, Dennis Embleton, one of the lecturers and proprietors of the School, stayed with Thorp at Bamburgh Castle and outlined a potential scheme which he 'perceived was favourably received' by the Warden.¹⁰ By the end of the year a joint committee of

⁴ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 8.

⁵ Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 211; Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 16; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 120-1.

⁶ Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 20; Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 211; Armstrong Davison, 'John Snow', in Dale, et al, (eds.), *Sesquicentennial Scrapbook*, p. 7; Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 10.

⁷ Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 23; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 121.

⁸ Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', pp. 212-3; Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 120; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 123.

⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 11 June 1850; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 124.

¹⁰ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 50.

the University and the School were formed to progress matters.¹¹

At about the same time, the School was forced to quit the Barber Surgeons' Hall as it was to be demolished to make way for a new railway.¹² John Dobson, the local architect responsible for much of the design of nineteenth-century Newcastle, designed a replacement building in an Italianate classical style at Rye Hill.¹³ Thorp laid the foundation stone in February 1851. After the ceremonial proceedings, members of the University, the School, and the Barber Surgeons' Company all dined together, further symbolising their increasingly close and cordial relationship.¹⁴

In April 1851, however, a bitter quarrel erupted amongst the staff of the School over the election of a surgeon to one of the Newcastle Poor Law Union's districts. Incredibly, this argument became so heated that in June it led to the School's dissolution.¹⁵ The episode became known as 'the Disruption' and, for a brief period, resulted in two competing medical schools.¹⁶ These were the Newcastle-upon-Tyne College of Medicine and Practical Science, which retained a minority of the students and became known colloquially as the Rye Hill College because it occupied the new building, and the Newcastle-upon-Tyne College of Medicine, with the majority of the students under the leadership of Embleton.¹⁷ Dobson's new building having been occupied by their rivals, during 1851/52 Embleton's supporters were forced to use the

¹¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 3 December 1850; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 123-4.

¹² Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', pp. 213-4.

¹³ *The Illustrated London News*, 25 January 1868.

¹⁴ Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', pp. 214-5.

¹⁵ Lecturers of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine and Surgery, *A brief statement of the facts connected with the disruption of the late Medical School in this town* (Newcastle, 1851); Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 38-9; Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 215.

¹⁶ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 57.

¹⁷ Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 215; Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 51; Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 43, 54.

gardener's house in the grounds of the old Barber Surgeons' Hall – this being the only building that remained after the demolition.¹⁸

Despite their insalubrious habitation, however, by October 1851 Embleton's College had received recognition from both the Society of Apothecaries and the Royal College of Surgeons. In January 1852, the University of London was empowered to receive certificates from students of the College too.¹⁹ To brighten their prospects further, in the same month Embleton also completed negotiations with the University about their connection. So the College became 'The Newcastle-upon-Tyne College of Medicine in connection with the University of Durham'.²⁰ This made it the only English provincial medical school with a formal university relationship.²¹ While the College remained a separate body under its own Council, it agreed to abide by academic and residential regulations that enabled students to proceed to Durham awards. To further bind the two institutions together Embleton, who was formally Registrar of the College, became the University's Reader in Medicine – a long delayed replacement for Cooke.

The new regulations required students to spend one year resident in Durham and to pass an examination similar to that of the first year students in Arts (hence those who already held the BA were exempted), before proceeding to an examination in the medical sciences after a further three years in a college in connection with the University.²² The end result of these studies was the Licence in Medicine, which gave

¹⁸ Dale, 'The Newcastle Medical School Buildings', in Dale, et al, (eds.), *Sesquicentennial Celebrations*, pp. 27-34, p. 30; Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 55-8.

¹⁹ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 53.

²⁰ Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 61.

²¹ Bettenson, *University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 15.

²² *Durham University Calendar 1853*, pp. 9-10, xxvii-xxix.

the same professional standing as qualifications obtained through the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and the Society of Apothecaries.²³ The first such awards were made to John Dickinson and William Young in June 1856; both men later received the Bachelor of Medicine, and Dickinson joined the inaugural Anglican Universities' Mission to Central Africa.²⁴

A residential aspect to the connection had been discussed as early as June 1850, when Senate agreed that the medical students should be 'under the moral and religious superintendence of an officer to be subject to the control of the University'.²⁵ Alongside the academic connection, therefore, the new regulations stated that students had to reside 'in some College, Hall, or House'.²⁶ Originally, both the academic and residential aspects of the College's activities were to be accommodated in Westmorland House, a dignified residential mansion next to the Literary and Philosophical Society which the College had purchased in 1852. The building was named after the Earls of Westmorland, who had had a town house called Westmorland Place nearby. The Earls of Westmorland were of the Neville family, and hence the name Neville Hall was chosen.

However, it quickly became apparent that Westmorland House was impractical; such lack of foresight is probably indicative of how desperate the College were to move out of the gardener's house.²⁷ As a result, a new academic building was built in the garden of Westmorland House on Orchard Street, and opened by Thorp in

²³ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 53.

²⁴ I. Conacher, *A Tyneside Martyr to Medicine* (Kirkby Stephen, 2012).

²⁵ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 11 June 1850.

²⁶ *Durham University Calendar 1853*, p. 10; Title VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 3.

²⁷ Dale, 'Newcastle's Medical Schools', p. 217.

October 1852. This left the House for residential purposes alone. Even with this compromise, however, it was agreed that a site away from the centre of town would be preferable and so the title Neville Hall was transferred to the newly built 1 Leazes Terrace. Westmorland House was sold to the Mining Institute which promptly demolished it.²⁸

William Greenwell was made Principal of Neville Hall with an annual salary of £100, the same amount as had been awarded to Melville as Principal of Hatfield in 1847.²⁹ Greenwell was a local man, and a graduate of the University: proceeding BA in 1840, LTh in 1842, and MA in 1843. After a rather unremarkable academic career, Greenwell held various positions in the University including as Bursar (1844-47) and Chaplain (1846-47) of University College. As a Durham graduate and existing staff member, Thorp would have felt he could be trusted.

At first, the prospects for the Hall were promising. It opened in October 1852 with a medical tutor alongside Greenwell and 11 students, which increased to 14 students in 1853/54. The domestic arrangements followed the Hatfield pattern, and the Treasurer of the Rye Hill College commented that the Hall 'was as much a hall as any in existence at Durham'.³⁰ Despite the number of students dipping to 13 in 1854/55 it was reported to Senate in October 1854 that Neville Hall was 'too small to accommodate a sufficient number of students', and so enquiries were made 'with a view of obtaining a larger house.'³¹ These investigations were slow, but by April the

²⁸ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, pp. 54-6.

²⁹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 15 June 1847.

³⁰ *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1853-4 Volume 2*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1854), p. 96.

³¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 October 1854.

following year the Senate was actively considering the purchase of houses at Rye Hill. However, the College authorities were not keen on this option. 'The houses at Rye Hill would be inconveniently distant from the Lecture Rooms', they argued, and so the idea was dropped in favour of hiring the neighbouring property on Leazes Terrace.³² They did not say so, but no doubt locating the Hall so close to their rival's College would not have endeared them to the plan either. The expansion proved unnecessary as the number of students in 1855/56 increased only to 15.

Greenwell did not stay long, and he was replaced in May 1854 by another Durham graduate: James Raine.³³ Born in Durham in 1834, Raine attended Durham Grammar School and the University, graduating BA in 1851, LTh in 1853, and MA in 1854. He was elected Fellow in 1852 and served briefly as Chaplain of University College in 1854.

In February 1855 Senate received the accounts of the Hall and noted that it was in debt by £254.11.11½. A committee of enquiry was formed under Chevallier to investigate.³⁴ The minutes of Senate, laconic as always, gave away little about what this committee discovered but in January 1856 Senate agreed 'that steps should be taken ... with the view of closing Neville Hall'.³⁵ The authorities of the College of Medicine were alarmed about this prospect, fearing what this meant for their own reputation, and senior staff from the College visited Senate the following month.³⁶ To show their commitment to the connection, Senate at first pondered diverting '£100 a

³² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 1 May 1855.

³³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 30 May 1854.

³⁴ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 20 February 1855.

³⁵ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 22 January 1856.

³⁶ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 128.

year ... for two years for a Medical Tutor to superintend the education at Newcastle of medical students belonging to the University', but it was eventually agreed 'that in lieu of the payment of £100 a year to the Principal of Neville's Hall, four scholarships of £25 for medical students of the University of Durham be given for three years'.³⁷

Throughout the Hall's brief existence student numbers were buoyant with those formally matriculated with the University rising from 3 to 16. Nevertheless, this was insufficient to make the Hall economically viable: neither did the residential model suit the older, more professionally-orientated students of medicine. Cost was once again a factor too, as it was cheaper to live in lodgings, or to stay at home; an option made easier by the College's Orchard Street site being right next to the central station.³⁸ The College also blamed the Hall's failure on the disruption.³⁹

Soon after the Hall closed, the number of students at the College surged following the establishment of the General Medical Council in 1858 and the introduction of a statutory requirement for formal education in order to register for medical practice. A further boon came with the reunification of the rival schools in May 1857.⁴⁰

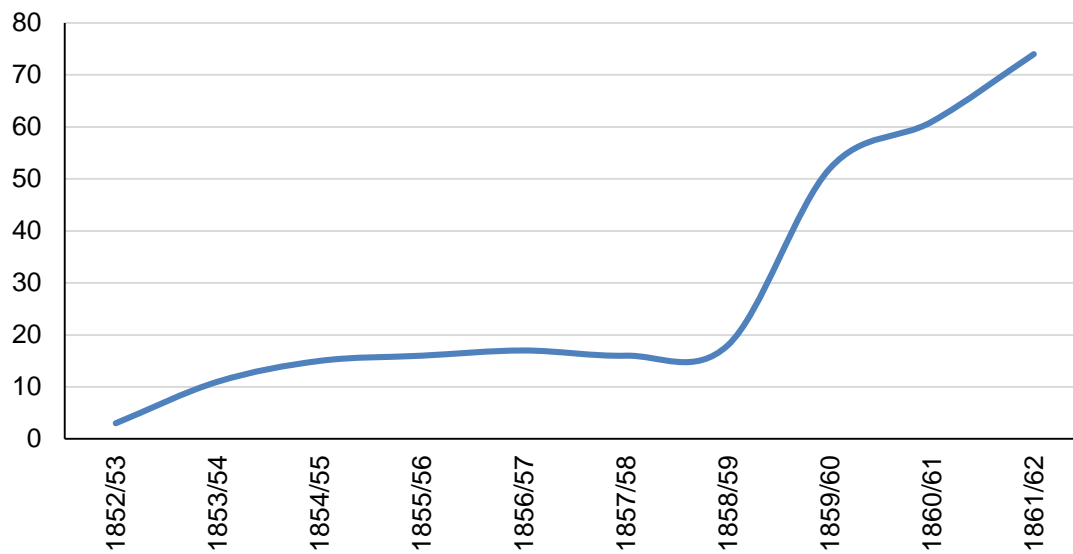
³⁷ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 19 February 1856, 25 February 1856.

³⁸ Turner, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 64.

³⁹ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 128.

⁴⁰ Bettenson, *University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 15; Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, p. 69; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 129-30.

Figure 9: Students 1852/53 to 1861/62 (Newcastle Only, Medicine)⁴¹



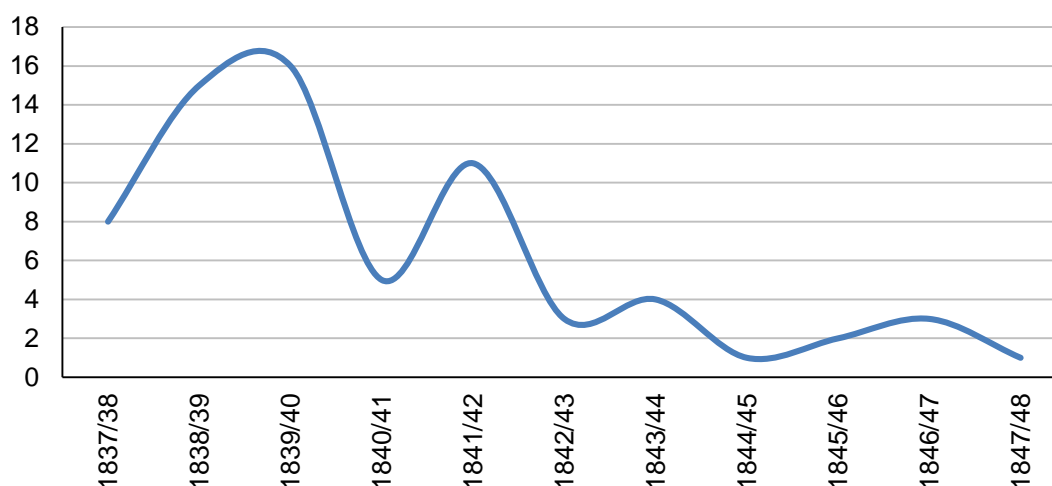
The impact that these shifts in medical education, both nationally and locally, might have had on the fortune of the Hall were never tested.

A College for Mining and Engineering

At first, Durham's ambitious course in Engineering was popular, but five years after it started recruitment declined and then stopped altogether. Eight students started the course in 1837/38, and a further 15 started the following year, but the last student was admitted in 1847/48.

⁴¹ Source: As listed in the University Calendar.

Figure 10: Entrants 1837/38 to 1847/48 (Durham Only, Engineering)⁴²



In May 1850 the Senate admitted that ‘the Class of Civil Engineers’ was ‘no longer existing’.⁴³ Completion rates were even worse: between June 1840 and June 1843 only ten students completed the course and achieved the Academical Rank of Civil Engineer. A further student obtained his award in January 1853. Four students admitted to study engineering instead graduated in Arts.

Despite this rapid demise, it is hard to conceive what more the University could have done to have ensured success. It engaged leading industrial figures to work as external examiners, it promoted the scheme in relevant national journals, the staff involved (Chevalier, Whitley, and Johnston) were well-known locally and respected in national scientific circles, and the course included a substantial practical element. Signs that the course would struggle, however, were visible early on. After the fulsome praise offered in its first edition, the preface to the second edition of *The Civil Engineer and Architect’s Journal* noted ominously that ‘an engineer would rather

⁴² Source: [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96.

⁴³ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 14 May 1850.

have in his employment a working man than a college diplomatist'.⁴⁴ Indeed, the profession was reluctant to embrace qualifications. Even in 1870, the Institution of Civil Engineers noted that it was 'not the custom in England to consider *theoretical* knowledge as absolutely essential'.⁴⁵

An opportunity arose to resurrect the idea of a course in engineering in the early 1850s. For, shortly after it was founded in 1852, the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers made just such an attempt. In April 1853, Nicholas Wood, the Institute's President and one of the University's external examiners, raised the possibility of founding a college of mining. Such colleges were by now almost commonplace elsewhere in Europe. The preeminent institution was the Freiberg Mining Academy, which had been founded in 1766. Situated in a major mining district, the Academy was government-funded and offered classes in mining and metallurgical processes.⁴⁶ The idea of such college in the north-east 'had for some time engaged the attention of the mining and manufacturing interests of this district', Wood noted.⁴⁷ Indeed, amongst those already advising Wood was Lyon Playfair, teacher of chemistry applied to the arts and agriculture in the Government School of Mines and of Science Applied to the Arts in Jermyn Street.⁴⁸ Playfair had just published a lecture

⁴⁴ *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, II (1839), p. v.

⁴⁵ *The Education and Status of Civil Engineers, in the United Kingdom and in Foreign Countries* (London, 1870), pp. viii-ix.

⁴⁶ Roderick and Stephens, 'Mining Education', p. 106.

⁴⁷ *Transactions Volume 1*, p. 217.

⁴⁸ The institution on Jermyn Street had a complex history. The Museum of Economic Geology opened in 1841 and moved from Craig's Court to Jermyn Street in May 1851 when it re-opened as the Museum of Practical Geology. Its resources were used for, and was co-located with, the new Government School of Mines and of Science Applied to the Arts which opened in November 1851. This title changed in 1857 to the Government School of Mines, and in 1863 to the Royal School of Mines. It eventually moved and become a constituent part of the Imperial College of Science and Technology. cf H.J.T. Ellingham, *Centenary of the Imperial College of Science and Technology: A short history of the College 1845-1945* (London, 1945), pp. 5-9.

on industrial education in Europe, and was considered the national authority.⁴⁹ Wood had also contacted Thorp to discuss 'the propriety of a connection with the University of Durham'. Although the College could be established without this relationship, such a connection, Wood argued, would lend the proposed institution a beneficial 'moral and religious character'. Thorp had supported the scheme entirely, Wood reported, and that included making awards to the students of the proposed College up to and including the Bachelor of Arts without reference to their religious principles.⁵⁰ Thorp reported just as positively to the Senate, noting that the scheme might also have the benefit of 'bringing all parties at Newcastle to act together for that purpose' and thus bring the medical school's disruption to an end.⁵¹

However, while the Institute regularly discussed the proposed college, little actual progress was made. In February 1854, Wood reported on a similar initiative in Cornwall: 'it was only necessary', he goaded the Institute's membership, 'for them to put their shoulders to the wheel in order to carry out the object successfully'.⁵²

Part of the reason for the delay was the medical school's disruption. As only one of the two colleges could be attached to the mining college, Wood thought this 'presented an obstacle in the outset'.⁵³ The impact of these quarrels surfaced during a meeting of the Institute in March 1854. Richard Burdon Sanderson, a teacher of Botany and Vegetable Physiology as well as Treasurer at the Rye Hill College, complained that insufficient attention had been given to 'the existence already in this town of a

⁴⁹ L. Playfair, *Industrial Instruction on the Continent* (London, 1852).

⁵⁰ *Transactions Volume 1*, pp. 220-1.

⁵¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 1 March 1853.

⁵² *Transactions Volume 2*, p. 51.

⁵³ *Transactions Volume 1*, p. 217.

College of Practical Science'. Sanderson complained that the proposed college could not 'assume the title of a College of Practical Science' since it would 'give rise to two institutions having the same name'. Sanderson also complained about the proposed connection with the University. The Rye Hill College was still freshly wounded from its competitor's connection with Durham; 'we felt and expected ... that we should be put ... upon the same footing' but had 'found the University quite indisposed to do so' he declared.⁵⁴ To have a new college in Newcastle which not only appropriated part of their name but also established the very connection with Durham which they had been denied was more than could be politely accommodated.

Wood remained adamant. While he conceded that adopting the name of College of Practical Science 'entrenched a little upon the title of another institution' he stated his expectation that the Practical Science element of Rye Hill College could be incorporated with the Institute's proposed college in some way. The main point which all desired, however, was for the disruption to end and for the colleges to re-unite so that, as another member present phrased it, 'they might go on harmoniously together, in conjunction with other institutions in the town, for the good of the public'.⁵⁵

Deliberations were proving glacial, but in January 1854 the Institute published *Suggestions for the Establishment of a College of Practical Mining and Manufacturing Science at Newcastle-upon-Tyne*. In this concise pamphlet the Institute argued for the creation of a degree-awarding college in Newcastle to teach students the principles of mining and manufacturing sciences. Although it was admitted that such knowledge had 'by

⁵⁴ *Transactions Volume 2*, pp. 79, 95-6; *The British Medical Directory for England, Wales, and Scotland for 1854*, p. 53; *The Medical Times and Gazette*, 25 September 1858.

⁵⁵ *Transactions Volume 2*, p. 98.

individual effort, and the stimulus of necessity been carried to a considerable pitch of perfection' it relied 'upon the energy and perseverance of isolated individuals' and so a more systematic approach was required. The College would be aimed at 'pupils intended to be managers of mines, and of the subordinate departments of mining, and also of those meant to be employed in the Mechanical, Chemical, or Manufacturing Works of the district or elsewhere'. Over two, or possibly three years (that was yet to be agreed), students would study theoretical subjects such as Mathematics alongside practical studies such as Applied Mechanics, Surveying, and the Working of Mines.⁵⁶

This pamphlet made no mention of the University, which must have been a deliberate act. It is possible the omission was out of sympathy for the Rye Hill College, or simply through fear that the University's religious affiliation would have put off potential supporters who may have anticipated the imposition of religious tests on students. Although it was not raised by Wood, despite his role as external examiner, the University's failed course in engineering may have also been felt to be a liability.

The Institute next printed 500 copies of a Prospectus, complete with an elevation and ground plan.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Suggestions for the Establishment of a College of Practical Mining and Manufacturing Science at Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1855).

⁵⁷ *Prospectus of a College of Practical Mining and Manufacturing Science, Proposed to be Established at Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1855). cf *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1855-6 Volume 4*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1856), p. xiii.

Illustration 15: Proposed Design of the Mining College, Newcastle



Despite the appearance of an architect's drawing, there was little additional information and the Prospectus in fact repeated much of what had been published in the Suggestions. It still did not, however, make any mention of the University.

Little further progress was made after the publication of this Prospectus. Wood was over-optimistic about the possibility of government funding, despite the well-meant warnings of influential individuals. Robert Stephenson urged caution as early as April 1853: he argued they should 'throw overboard entirely any consideration of Government aid'.⁵⁸ Without government funds or sufficient local support, in June 1859 the committee responsible for promoting the College reported 'that it was hopeless to expect to be able to raise the necessary funds to establish, endow, and support a College of an entirely independent character, and unconnected

⁵⁸ *Transactions Volume 1*, p. 223.

with any other institution'.⁵⁹

It was only once the attempt to found an independent college had been tried and failed that the Committee approached the authorities at Durham once again to see 'if it were practicable to engraft upon that University the proposed College'. The two medical colleges had also now reunited, and so that local rivalry was no longer an issue. The result was another pamphlet; published in 1859 around 6 years after the first discussions with the University. This proposal included one substantial compromise for the Institute, specifically that the proposed College would be established at Durham, even though its essential independence would be maintained. Nevertheless, the tone of the pamphlet was optimistic: 'looking at the manner in which the authorities of the University of Durham have met the subject', it recorded, 'there can be no apprehension that any difficulty will exist in the requisite details for completing the arrangement'.⁶⁰ Chevallier also accompanied Wood to London to seek the support of the Home Secretary, George Cornwall Lewis.⁶¹ But there was no progress for, as with the Institute's independent proposal, there was insufficient general support for the scheme. On a national level, there were other competing proposals, and several regions vied for attention too in the formation of such a college, including the Midlands and South Wales.⁶² There already was a college established in Cornwall, as well as the Government institute on Jermyn Street. Despite Thorp's

⁵⁹ *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1858-9 Volume 7*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1859), p. 169.

⁶⁰ *Proposed College of Mining, Engineering, and Manufacturing Science, in the North of England* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1859).

⁶¹ [TNA] GB-0066/HO 45/7196: Wood to Lewis, 12 March 1861.

⁶² *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1854-5 Volume 3*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1855), p. 342.

support, and the leadership of the most relevant local professional body, the College remained as out of reach as ever.

Conclusion

No longer attempting to establish new and professional courses entirely under its own aegis, Thorp was now working in partnership with local professional leaders and practitioners to support their own endeavours. Nevertheless, although he was doing so in a new way, Thorp was simply returning to his original ambition to bring useful professional education to the north of England.⁶³ 'Such an extension of the University is no new thought', the Warden reminded those gathered for the inauguration of the College of Medicine's connection with Durham in October 1852.⁶⁴ Thorp also worked closely with Wood and the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers to support their proposed college: his desire to ensure that the University proved beneficial to them extended even as far as waiving religious tests for the Bachelor of Arts. These attempts show highlight Thorp's creativity, something which historians have not previously been appreciated. Thorp's actions throughout the 1850s demonstrate he had not given up on developing the University, nor was he content to lead a second-rate institution focused on theology; rather, they show he was an experimenter, ready and willing to take opportunities, and, above all, someone who was as firmly fixed on the benefits of professional higher education as anyone else in the region. These developments presaged the eventual establishment of the College of Physical Science and an even closer union with the College of Medicine in the 1870s

⁶³ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, p. 51.

⁶⁴ C. Thorp, *An Address Delivered at the Inauguration of the New Building of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne College of Medicine in Connection with the University of Durham* (Gateshead, 1852), [NUL] GB-0186/University Archives/16/2/1, p. 3.

and would have, in effect, created a multi-campus university with faculties of Theology and Arts based in Durham (Education might be added to, in the form of the teacher training colleges which benefited from ties with University staff) and Physical Science and Medicine in Newcastle.⁶⁵

The timing, however, was inopportune: for the events of the disruption meant that in forming a connection with one of the rival colleges of medicine, the University was picking sides in a local dispute (whether that was Thorp's intention or not). This disruption also caused difficulties for the Mining Institute's own attempt to found a college of physical science. Thorp did want to reconcile the two colleges, and the University's regulations for medical students anticipated connecting other colleges (perhaps even the Rye Hill College) as they were framed in general and not specifically for the College of Medicine. Neville's Hall was even permitted to admit students from other colleges. However, the rival College vigorously opposed the University's connection with the College of Medicine, both in public and in private, and their own attempts at affiliation were rebuffed as Thorp urged them to reunite instead.⁶⁶ Perhaps without these local schisms the University might have developed both medicine and physical sciences in Newcastle, in co-operation with local professional interests, alongside the Arts and Theological provision in Durham. As has been seen, however, while local politics no doubt hindered these developments, progress elsewhere was also slow during the 1850s and so trends beyond the north-east also affected the ability of these schemes to flourish. Whatever the cause, the end result was that Durham

⁶⁵ Booth, *College of St Hild and St Bede*; A. Lawrence, *St Hild's College 1858 – 1958* (Darlington, 1958); Wilkinson, 'Durham Diocesan Training School'.

⁶⁶ Embleton, *History of the Medical School*, pp. 50-1; Turner, *The Newcastle-upon-Tyne School of Medicine*, pp. 54, 61.

faced the 1860s with a declining student population, with a connection to one medical college, but without an operational course in engineering either in Durham or Newcastle.

Chapter 8 – Royal Commission

When a man is sick, his friends usually call in the assistance of a physician; if he expires without such aid being sought, we accuse those around him of culpable neglect. ... Ought not Durham to have a commission?¹

Letter to The Guardian, December 1858

Introduction

'Limited, unambitious, and humble' was how Robert Lowe (MP, member of the Durham University Commission 1861-3, and later Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary) described the University of Durham in 1867:² a far cry from Thorp's call for a 'boldish flight'.³ Yet by the late 1850s Durham was on the brink of collapse and very far from achieving anything. And then, for four months from December 1858 the University, received a public scolding in the pages of *The Guardian*. One after another, anonymous correspondents contributed their own version of the University's decline. A tipping point had been reached. Something would have to happen to change the situation as clearly the University could not continue in the state it was in. Perceiving no way to achieve improvement from within the University, in November 1860 a petition calling for a Royal Commission to investigate the state of affairs was raised by 27 of Durham's current or former staff. In February 1861 information concerning the parlous state of the University was laid before Parliament,⁴ and the Durham University Act establishing a Royal Commission received Royal assent on 6 August 1861.

¹ *The Guardian*, 15 December 1858.

² *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 18 June 1867, vol. 188, c. 21.

³ [DUL] TC, 17: Thorp to Gaisford, 11 August 1831.

⁴ *Returns Relating to the University of Durham* (London, 1861).

From one perspective, the establishment of a Royal Commission was nothing unusual, as throughout the nineteenth century this was the Government's chosen vehicle for probing into the affairs of universities.⁵ These Commissions investigated the state of all the British universities during the course of the century, starting with the Scottish institutions in general in 1826-31, Glasgow in 1837-9, St Andrews in 1840-5, and including Oxford and Cambridge in 1850-2, and Dublin in 1851-3.

Yet Durham's Commission was different, in at least two important respects. First, there was the very real possibility that the Commissioners might recommend the University's closure, or that it be turned into something quite different. Durham's creation as a university had been contested from the very start and its continued existence had never been secure so the Commission raised many familiar old anxieties.

Second, while the Royal Commission at Durham was a review of the University it was also a very personal enquiry into the role, qualities, and abilities of its Warden. By the close of 1861 Thorp had presided over the institution he had fought to establish for three decades. He was now 78 years old and frequently bed-ridden. He had come to personify the University, and the institution's strengths and weaknesses were seen as almost indistinguishable from its powerful Warden. His position at Durham was of such immense significance, one of the Commissioners remarked, that the Warden's authority was 'tenfold that which belongs to any Master of a College by recent legislation at Oxford or Cambridge'.⁶ James Hornby, the Principal of Cosin's Hall, described Thorp as holding 'large and indefinite powers of

⁵ Sanderson, *The Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 12-3.

⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1059, p. 51. The reference to 'recent legislation' is important because the Oxford colleges had been going through their own, externally enforced, reform.

control and interference'.⁷ Criticism of Thorp's leadership had been growing, and amongst many former staff and students it had become a dictum that 'you can do nothing till the Warden goes'.⁸

Given the prevailing trends, Durham's Commission can be seen on the one hand as part of the common theme of higher education in the nineteenth century and on the other as something quite unique. It is similar because an institutional reluctance to change except in the face of external pressure, with that outside intervention often encouraged by frustrated internal forces seeking developments for which they were unable to secure approbation, is a prevailing aspect of reform at the ancient English universities. But on the other hand Durham was different. Different because Oxford and Cambridge were ancient institutions, linked to state and society as intimately as any organisation could be. Different because the University of London was a state-sanctioned, state-controlled, entity; and because the vital force of the Metropolis made activities there more significant. Different because other recently established colleges were limited in scope and ambition, so any fall they might suffer was from a lower height. Owens College, for example, had not yet become the senior partner of the Victoria University and so had neither university status nor degree awarding powers. Durham University's future position as an institution at all, let alone as an independent, unitary, degree-awarding University, was therefore a matter of real debate. It was fighting for its life.

Pivotal though this moment is, it has not been explored in any depth. Some historians have taken the Commissioners' verdict unquestioned, using it as absolute

⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 53.

⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 68.

evidence of Durham's embarrassing failure. Fowler barely records the Commission at all. Whiting provides more detail, but his passage on the Commission is dry and descriptive neither probing the eventual recommendations nor examining them in the context of the sector more generally. Yet it is the Commissioners that have sealed Durham's reputation over its first three decades, and hence it is right to scrutinise their motives, understanding the context in which they reached their views with the benefit of hindsight they lacked, and to determine whether the conclusions they reached still stand.

'Ought not Durham to have a commission?'

The University was never rid of its detractors, despite its growth until the mid-1850s, and as the years progressed the periodic public attacks continued. In 1848, for example, *The Satirist* accused the University of having been 'improvident and unwise; that the salaries given to its officers and professors are much too large, and that the endeavour to clothe it with a collegiate character is unsuited to our times, and involves an expenditure which might have had more useful objects than fellowships'. Thorp was singled out for particular criticism for receiving £500 a year as Warden 'in addition to his golden stall and his rectory of Ryton'.⁹

In 1855 *Punch* ran a story about the Chapter's appointment of Thorp's son to the wealthy parish of Ellingham in Northumberland which he acquired and held in addition to the perpetual curacy of Blanchland. The magazine contrasted the lot of this 'fortunate youth' with that of British soldiers in the Crimea, remarking sarcastically that 'agonised by the spectacle of so much heart-rending misery, it is a

⁹ *The Satirist*, 11 November 1848.

relief ... to contemplate at least one picture of human happiness'. The plurality of Thorp senior, who it was noted held 'preferments worth between £4,000 and £5,000 a year', was condemned too.¹⁰

This type of occasional disparagement in satirical newspapers evolved into a much more serious and sustained campaign in the pages of *The Guardian*. This new type of criticism was no longer external and unfriendly, but written by Durham staff and students in the pages of the leading Tractarian newspaper. In December 1858, an anonymous letter from 'Vindex' was published.¹¹

When a man is sick, his friends usually call in the assistance of a physician; if he expires without such aid being sought, we accuse those around him of culpable neglect. I should ask, if such a rule applies to individuals, why not to bodies corporate? ... Why is the University of Durham an exception to the general rule? Oxford and Cambridge have their Royal Commissions to inquire into the healthy or unhealthy state of their societies. Why has none been appointed for Durham? ... Wars, income-taxes, may have had something to do with [the University's decline]; but I know, from some years' observation, that they have not the entire blame. Ask any Durham men whom you happen to meet what is the cause of this, and nine out of ten will agree in their independent testimony. Ought not evils, of which the cause is known, to have a cure at least attempted. Ought not Durham to have a commission?¹²

Two replies appeared in the next edition. 'A Durham MA' congratulated Vindex; fault could not be found in the talents of the tutors, who were 'nearly all men whose learning and experience commanded the highest esteem', nor could the 'wealthy university' plead poverty, but he feared Durham was reaping 'the fruits of what those in power have earlier or later sown'.¹³ The second reply came from 'Alumnus' who

¹⁰ *Punch*, 10 February 1855.

¹¹ Vindex can be translated as champion or defender.

¹² *The Guardian*, 15 December 1858.

¹³ *The Guardian*, 22 December 1858.

declared the University was 'perishing from inanition', and 'that the University (by which I do not mean the governing body)' were 'most anxious for a Royal Commission'.¹⁴

This correspondence stretched until 30 March 1859, and throughout the series of letters much more was written against the University than in its favour. Most of the comments were submitted anonymously by individuals claiming some connection to the University. Numerous detailed and damning criticisms were made and a number of causes for the decline put forward: from Durham's relative lack of 'the position, prestige, education and social advantages' of the older English universities,¹⁵ to the 'cheap and expeditious travel' offered by the new network of railways,¹⁶ one contributor even laid part of the blame on 'the war with Russia, and more recently the Indian Mutiny' for diverting men from the universities to the army.¹⁷

But central to the general critique was a personal attack on Thorp. 'Scientia', for example, accused 'the Warden ... and the Professors' of neither perceiving nor adapting the University 'to the new and altered state of things'.¹⁸ 'Univ. Coll.' asserted that 'if the reform of Durham University depends on its Warden, it is likely to be delayed so long that no University will remain to be reformed', avowing it to be 'truly on its last legs'.¹⁹ Another unnamed correspondent, claimed that the two main causes of the University's decline were first 'its inability to provide for its clever men' through well-endowed and long-term Fellowships, and second 'its defective constitution and

¹⁴ *The Guardian*, 22 December 1858.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

¹⁷ *The Guardian*, 5 January 1859.

¹⁸ *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

¹⁹ *The Guardian*, 19 January 1859.

feebleness of the administrative body' and especially of the Warden. 'Everything at Durham centres in the Warden', he claimed, who was 'inefficient' and backed by 'alien Professors who have large stipends and do no work'.²⁰

A further contributor added unfairly that 'to graduate at Durham costs nearly as much as it does at Oxford or Cambridge', but more correctly that being a Durham graduate brought 'serious disadvantages' through lack of recognition. There was, he opined, 'no chance of competing for appointments in the Indian Civil Service' which all added up to a worthless degree.²¹

Only a limited number of contributors used their real name, and fewer still wrote in support of the University: one of these was Francis Hull. Hull had matriculated in 1847 as a student in Arts at University College. He was not strong academically, and was placed outside the honours, in the fifth class, in the final examinations for the BA. It was true that Oxford and Cambridge had been the subjects of Royal Commissions, he admitted, but 'a pretty mess they have made out of them'. The cause of the diminution in the number of students could be very easily accounted for, argued Hull; it was because Durham had become a place full of 'overgrown schoolboys' who were 'full of mischief and fond of playing practical jokes' and hence the University authorities had been forced 'to draw the reins of discipline tighter', which had caused many students to be 'restive and kick'.²²

A number of solutions to the University's precarious position were put forward. The remedy *Scientia* called for was to combine the University with St Bees

²⁰ *The Guardian*, 19 January 1859.

²¹ *The Guardian*, 9 February 1859.

²² *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

and to recreate it as a 'great Theological College' – an odd suggestion given that St Bees' own student numbers had been declining for a decade. Perplexingly, every theological student should also be required to study '*practical science*' to recognise Durham's position in the very centre of the 'hive of industry'.²³ Contrary to what other's had suggested, 'Alpha' argued that Durham had not followed Oxford 'closely enough' and the solution was to adopt a closer imitation of the older institution.²⁴

A substantial number of letters were submitted by James Skinner. He had spent a year at Marischal College in Aberdeen before he became the fourteenth student to matriculate at Durham, entering in Michaelmas Term 1833. After graduating BA in 1837 and MA in 1840, he held a Fellowship from 1844 to 1849. By 1859 Skinner had become a well-known supporter of the Tractarians, and more especially of ritualism. He was Senior Curate of the infamous new church of St Barnabas in Pimlico from 1851 to 1857.²⁵

Given his notoriety Skinner would have been well-known to *The Guardian's* High Church readership. Skinner did not like the anonymity adopted by most of the previous correspondents, as he argued that the matter was 'too serious to be disposed of adequately by an anonymous correspondence'.²⁶ He was a sympathetic but clumsy defender of the University who asserted it was unjust 'to the authorities of the University to circulate accusations ... without giving them an opportunity of speaking for themselves'.²⁷ This intervention did nothing to bring restraint to the public debate

²³ *The Guardian*, 29 December 1858.

²⁴ *The Guardian*, 2 February 1859.

²⁵ L.E. Ellsworth, *Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement* (London, 1982), pp. 13-20.

²⁶ *The Guardian*, 5 January 1859.

²⁷ *The Guardian*, 5 January 1859.

but it did bring Thorp into it. Probably meaning to be helpful Skinner now submitted for publication a lengthy correspondence between himself and the Warden. Skinner agreed that the University had 'all the evils of a narrow bureaucracy' and needed a 'thorough reform' but he deeply regretted the personal attack on the Warden and specifically the charge against Thorp of malversation which he considered to be 'very ungenerously made'. Skinner nevertheless commiserated over the parlous state of the University but noted that all Durham's 'endowments are powerless against the baits of completion, and distinction, and *prestige*, and *genius loci*, and other unspeakable charms which hang around the Isis and Cam'.²⁸ Skinner's proposal to reverse the decline was to make Durham a constituent part of Oxford University. Skinner himself became the subject of attack, and he was accused of knowing 'little of the real state of feeling at Durham'.²⁹

On 2 March a contribution from 'Censor' was published but the editor added that while 'an immense number of letters, almost all in the same strain' had been received 'the facts of the case appear to be sufficiently elicited by the correspondence already printed' that no further letters would be printed.³⁰ At the end of the month *The Guardian* did actually carry one more letter; quite why is unclear as the suggestions it contained were not new. It was essentially a call for a more proactive approach to publishing the real details of study at the University. This might 'be considered *infra dignitate*', the contributor wrote, 'but it must be remembered that the University unfortunately has not, in public estimation, very much dignity to lose'.³¹ And on that

²⁸ *The Guardian*, 23 February 1859.

²⁹ *The Guardian*, 2 March 1859.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ *The Guardian*, 30 March 1859.

pessimistic note, the correspondence ended.

'Catilines'

Irrespective of the fairness and balance of these accusations, an influential body of men were now determined to visit reform upon the University. Accordingly, on 22 November 1860 James Hornby, the Principal of Bishop Cosin's Hall, forwarded to Thorp a copy of a petition which had been sent to Parliament. It had been supported by 27 graduates, Fellows, and Tutors of the University.³² 'We have observed for some years with pain and regret the declension of the University', the petition declared, which had stirred them 'at last ... to make an effort to rescue it from its present depressed condition; and to this end we have signed a Petition to Parliament praying for a Commission similar to those granted to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge'.³³ No doubt, at least in private, many of the petitioners must also have hoped or expected that the Commission would unseat Thorp. Though Hornby acted as spokesman there is no record of who first proposed the petition, but it must be speculated that there were any number of private conversations after the idea was raised publicly in *The Guardian*. All of the petitioners had experience of working at the University, and though some had only had a brief sojourn in the north others, like Hornby, had stayed for many years and held senior positions. They may have felt their petition was necessary but Thorp was not the only member of senior staff to resent their presumption; Fowler recorded, for example, that Chevallier spoke of the petitioners as 'Catilines', after the Roman Senator Lucius Sergius Catilina who

³² [DUL] TC, 559: Hornby to Thorp, 22 November 1860.

³³ [DUL] TC, 679: Petitioners to Thorp, 22 November 1860.

attempted to overthrow the Republic in 63 BC.³⁴

The petitioners fell into two broad groups. The first contained senior figures, including many of the former Principals of Hatfield Hall or Vice-Masters of University College. They tended to be from a more liberal set than other University staff, almost exclusively Oxford educated, with many of them connected to Balliol or Brasenose and the Tutors' Association which had helped drive reform at Oxford in the 1850s.³⁵ They were well-connected, successful, and reform advocates. Hornby, for example, was a cousin of Edward Smith-Stanley, the Earl of Derby, who was Prime Minister three times between 1852 and 1868.³⁶ Another representative of this group was the fourth Principal of Hatfield Hall (1853-4), James Lonsdale. James was the son of John Lonsdale, who had been Principal of King's College London (1839-43) before he was raised to the See of Lichfield in 1843. John Lonsdale briefly served as Chair of the second Cambridge University Commission in 1857.³⁷ After Eton, in 1833, James Lonsdale had been elected open scholar at Balliol College. He became a Fellow in 1838, and counted Benjamin Jowett, William Lake (later to become the University's third Warden), and Arthur Stanley among his friends. Jowett, Professor of Greek at Oxford and later to be Master of Balliol was already known as a great university reformer.³⁸ In 1850, for example, he had petitioned Lord John Russell for a commission at Oxford in a letter that was also signed by Lake and Stanley.³⁹ Stanley was appointed secretary

³⁴ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 112.

³⁵ Engel, *From Clergyman to Don*, pp. 43-9.

³⁶ *The Illustrated London News*, 25 January 1868.

³⁷ E.B. Denison, *The Life of John Lonsdale Bishop of Lichfield* (London, 1868), p. 54.

³⁸ Anderson, *British Universities*, pp. 51-2; P.B. Hinchliff, *Benjamin Jowett and the Christian Religion* (Oxford, 1987), p. 26.

³⁹ E. Abbott and L. Campbell, *The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett* (2 vols., London, 1897), vol. 1, p. 178.

to the Oxford University Commission in August 1850, and hence was one of the principal authors of the Report published in March 1852. In 1851 Lonsdale became a Tutor at Durham, and quickly added roles as Junior Proctor and Censor in University College, before assuming the Principalship of Hatfield in 1853, in succession to Edward Brady (another of the petitioners). When Lonsdale was appointed, he was the third Principal of Hatfield Hall in as many years and it was said that no one else who was fit for the role would take it. He left Durham, ostensibly due to ill health but possibly also in protest at the refusal to throw all the scholarships open to competition, after only four years, and although he was generally well-liked and appreciated he described his attachment to the University as being 'very slight'.⁴⁰

The second group were graduates of the University. A few of these graduates also obtained senior positions in the University, while many others occupied livings or held teaching positions in minor public schools. They shared a common interest with the first group of signatories but generally held positions of much lower status. One example from this group was William Greenwell. He was born in Lanchester near Durham and his father was Deputy Lieutenant of the County. He entered University College in Michaelmas Term 1836 as a student in Arts and obtained a combined fifth class degree and graduated BA in 1840, before adding the LTh in 1842 and MA in 1843. After this unremarkable academic career, Greenwell held various positions in the University and the Cathedral and served on the Senate. Among these positions he was Bursar (1844-7) and Chaplain (1846-7) of University College, and the first Principal of the short-lived Neville Hall in Newcastle (1852-4). At the point he added his name to

⁴⁰ *Durham County Advertiser*, 23 June 1882; Duckworth, *James Lonsdale*, pp. 36-42, 185-95.

the petition he was Chaplain and Censor of Cosin's Hall (1855-63). Of all the petitioners his experience of the University was the most extensive, having an almost unbroken connection since his matriculation in 1836. The remaining graduates who signed the petition had much more recent connections, all of them having entered the University between 1848 and 1855. Indeed, there is an apparent generational shift as the petitioners all experienced Durham in the 1850s or late 1840s.

Hornby forwarded a copy of the petition to the new Bishop, the Evangelical Henry Villiers, who had been translated from Carlisle after his predecessor, Charles Longley, had been elevated to Canterbury.⁴¹ Villiers had only been installed in September 1860 and found himself launched into the centre of the intensifying maelstrom. He quite reasonably told Hornby that as he was 'so little acquainted with the constitution of the University or even with my own relationship to' it he was unable 'to give any pledge'. 'But this much I may fairly state' he continued, that 'having duly weighed all the circumstances' he would do everything in his power 'to assist those who are jealously desiring to make the University of Durham an efficient & honoured instrument of good to the cause of education in the North of England'.⁴²

In reply, Hornby explained in detail the reasons why they felt a Commission was necessary, and he did not hold back in apportioning blame. There was a 'profound distrust of the willingness and ability' of the Chapter 'to introduce a really comprehensive scheme of reform' he told the Bishop. The Chapter 'on more than one occasion' had 'succeeded in stifling all attempts at enquiry' and, Hornby cautioned,

⁴¹ A.F. Munden, 'The First Palmerston Bishop: Henry Montagu Villiers', *Northern History*, 26/1 (1990), pp. 186-206.

⁴² [DUL] TC, 561: Villiers to Hornby, 24 November 1860.

'they are labouring to do so now'. In matters respecting the University they were 'practically lead' by Thorp, Jenkyns, and Edwards who were all members of the Chapter. Unless decisive action was taken soon to make the University more useful he feared 'violent attacks from without and attempts to abolish it'. It was imperative that Parliament intervened, not only because the entire Chapter effectively blocked all attempts at reform, but also because 'many of the most necessary changes' could 'only be effected by the authority of Parliament'.⁴³

'It would be impossible, I fear, to do full justice to our case without entering into the odious task of bringing forward personal charges' Hornby explained to the Bishop. Accordingly all three Professors and the Chapter were criticised but the clear focus of the petitioners' anger was Thorp. Hornby acknowledged 'we must seem to many persons unjustifiably severe upon the Warden' but he was confident 'that the opinion of the Tutors on this subject will be amply supported by the testimony of all who are intimately acquainted with the management of the University'.⁴⁴

Although Thorp received the petition on 22 November the minutes of the next meeting of Senate, held five days later, made no mention of it. The Senate in fact appeared to remain silent on the external perturbations which might have otherwise been expected to form a large portion of their discussions. The first mention of the Commission did not appear until April 1861, and even then the reference is merely a brief note that a memorial had been sent from the College of Medicine to the Home Secretary, George Cornwall Lewis 'respecting the intended Commission on the

⁴³ [DUL] DDR: Hornby to Villiers, 29 November 1860.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

University'.⁴⁵ It is unclear what Thorp may have been thinking. He might have been hoping that the moment would simply pass.

Given Thorp's inertia, the Dean, George Waddington, wrote to Villiers on 10 December 1860 setting out a plan by which at least some of the initiative could be seized back. On the same day Waddington wrote to Thorp. After speaking with his brother, Horatio Waddington, who was Permanent Under-Secretary in the Home Department, the Dean suggested to both men that they should propose their own Commission of Enquiry, rather than wait for a Royal Commission to be established, as this could be done more quietly. Such a Commission of Enquiry, he told the Bishop, could 'be issued by the Home Office at once without any parliamentary prelude & thus we shall have a very much better chance of a good commission. Any alteration that it may recommend must, of course, receive parliamentary sanction – but that would come quietly & almost as a matter of course'.⁴⁶ To Thorp he added 'if you approve of it let me set to work at once, so as to get our Commission before Parliament' but to Villiers he remarked 'if you approve of it, let us set to work at once' (emphasis added).⁴⁷ Waddington clearly did not trust Thorp to act with the urgency the situation warranted, and so three days later he sent the Warden a proposed petition. Waddington urged Thorp to consider this proposal quickly, consult with the Professors, and reply with his suggestions as soon as he could.⁴⁸ It was Waddington's hope that the petition could be made by the Warden, the Governors (i.e. the Dean and

⁴⁵ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 April 1861.

⁴⁶ [DUL] DDR: Waddington to Villiers, 10 December 1860.

⁴⁷ [DUL] TC, 562: Waddington to Thorp, 10 December 1860; [DUL] DDR: Waddington to Villiers, 10 December 1860.

⁴⁸ [DUL] TC, 563: Waddington to Thorp, 13 December 1860.

Chapter), and the Visitor (i.e. the Bishop), as a show of unity and desire to make improvements to the ailing institution. Agreement was eventually reached and a petition submitted, but Waddington's original draft received short shrift from the senior members of Senate.⁴⁹ 'I do not think it [would] do at all - nor does Edwards', Jenkyns told Thorp.⁵⁰

In February 1861 information concerning the state of the University was laid before Parliament.⁵¹ Not only did these details demonstrate the rapidly dwindling student population, but the paltry scale of the University was laid bare in other ways too. For example, the Return enumerated that Chevallier had delivered six lectures per week during term in 1859-60 but that only four students attended. In return for this work Chevallier received a stipend of £700 and the student fees of £57 (this was exclusive of his salary and fees as Registrar and Reader in Hebrew). Although an initial Commission of Enquiry had at first been envisaged such was the state of the University portrayed by the Return that this stage was abandoned.⁵² A Bill dated 7 June 1861 was introduced to Parliament by the Home Secretary for 'Making Provision for the Good Government and Extension of the University of Durham'. It was, he asserted, based on the model of the Commissions at Oxford and Cambridge. The Bill received Royal assent on 6 August. 'The agitation which led to the bill', noted an editorial in *The Standard*, 'was partly of a private and partly of a partisan character, partly prompted by hostility to the present warden and partly by a wish to destroy the

⁴⁹ [DUL] TC, 568: Horatio Waddington to Visitor, Warden and Governors of the University of Durham, 22 December 1860.

⁵⁰ [DUL] TC, 564: Jenkyns to Thorp, 14 December 1860.

⁵¹ *Returns Relating to the University of Durham* (London, 1861).

⁵² Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 97.

Church character of the University. ... No one can dream that this is proposed with a view to the welfare of the University.⁵³ Only time would tell what its impact would be.

The Royal Commission

Six Commissioners were appointed by the Durham University Act 1861, with the Bishop of Durham in the Chair. As Villiers died unexpectedly only three days after the Act received Royal assent, the Bishop by the time the Commission started work was another Evangelical, Charles Baring. The appointment of the six Commissioners was controversial, with particular concern expressed about the Bishop's role. The MP for Sunderland, Henry Fenwick, complained that 'the right rev. Prelate was not only Visitor of the University, but he had the appointment of the whole of the governing body, and being deeply interested in the existing state of things, he was not a proper person to be named one of the Commissioners'.⁵⁴ The Home Secretary defended the appointment: the University had been constituted by an Act of the Bishop and Chapter of Durham, Lewis remarked, and so a Church representative was vital given that the Commission was being granted authority to remodel the University. The Bishop of Durham was not in fact the first choice for the role. It emerged that an application had been made originally to the Archbishop of York, Charles Longley, the former Bishop of Durham and future Archbishop of Canterbury. Although he had opposed the Oxford University Bill of 1854, Longley had served as a member of the generally well-regarded executive commission established to consider revised College statutes at

⁵³ *The Standard*, 16 August 1861.

⁵⁴ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 22 July 1861, vol. 164, c. 1337.

Oxford.⁵⁵ This background made him an ideal candidate for Chair but Lewis regretted that 'the numerous avocations of his Grace unfortunately prevented him from serving on the Commission'.⁵⁶ A vote was taken to remove the Bishop of Durham from the Commission but it failed to pass, with 30 votes against to 75 in favour of retaining Baring.⁵⁷

Charles John Vaughan, the Vicar of Doncaster since 1860, was also named by the Act. Vaughan had been highly successful as Headmaster of Harrow from 1844 to 1860, putting into practice what he had learned under Thomas Arnold while a student at Rugby School, though his departure is tinged with scandal as he was forced to resign following threats to reveal his affair with one of the students.⁵⁸ At Rugby, Vaughan formed lifelong friendships with Arthur Stanley and William Lake. In 1850 Vaughan had married Stanley's sister, Catherine. In 1856, after his contribution as Secretary to the Oxford University Commission, Stanley had been appointed Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History. These three men retained close life-long friendships, though Lake followed Stanley to Oxford, rather than Vaughan to Cambridge.⁵⁹ Although he was a Cambridge man, these friendships placed Vaughan in the same circle of men as James Lonsdale and Benjamin Jowett. Vaughan had at least one further Durham connection. Towards the end of his time at Harrow, Vaughan employed one of the Petitioners as mathematical tutor: Robert Baldwin Hayward. Hayward had been the

⁵⁵ J. R. Garrard, 'Longley, Charles Thomas (1794–1868)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004); Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, pp. 206-9.

⁵⁶ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 22 July 1861, vol. 164, c. 1337.

⁵⁷ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 22 July 1861, vol. 164, c. 1337.

⁵⁸ C. Tyerman, *A History of Harrow School 1324–1991* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 245-83.

⁵⁹ *Memorials of William Charles Lake, Dean of Durham 1869-94*, ed. Lake, K., (London, 1901), pp. v-vii.

University's mathematical tutor and Reader in Natural Philosophy from 1855 to 1859, as well as Vice-Master of University College in 1857/58.

The four remaining members of the Commission were MPs: Henry George Liddell, Robert Lowe, Charles Bowyer Adderley, and Robert Ingham. The Whig MP, Robert Lowe, was the most well-known of these Parliamentarians. He was a man of strong opinions which he could express with devastating articulation. He was a 'great friend' of David Melville.⁶⁰ Their relationship extended 'from Oxford days to the last months of his life', and Melville even supplied the introduction which first enabled Lowe to enter Parliament.⁶¹ Lowe was a successful student, then tutor, and eventually (in 1835) Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. He was, however, frustrated in his attempt to become Professor of Greek at the University of Glasgow; although if his attitude to the role is summed-up by the way he asked Whitley for a testimonial to support his 'fitness to teach the elements of Greek to Scotch laddies who do not want to learn' his failure to get the role is hardly surprising.⁶² Lowe was also a staunch proponent of the University of London, and served as its first MP from 1868.⁶³ For Lowe, Durham was an 'abortive University' while in London the very idea of modern higher education reached its apotheosis.⁶⁴

The other MPs played seemingly minor roles in the Commission. Liddell (1821-1903) is not to be confused with his cousin the Dean of Christ Church, also Henry George Liddell (1811-98), who had served on the Commission of Enquiry into Oxford

⁶⁰ *The Guardian*, 16 March 1904, p. 445.

⁶¹ A. Patchett Martin, *Life and letters of the Right Honourable Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke* (2 vols., London, 1893), vol. 1, p. viii; vol. 2, pp. 43-4.

⁶² [DUL] WC, 13: Lowe to Whitley, 28 May 1838.

⁶³ Willson, *University of London*, pp. 155-68.

⁶⁴ *The Times*, 15 May 1879.

University in the early 1850s, and was popular with leading liberals in that University such as Benjamin Jowett.⁶⁵ The Liddells were a noble northern family, and the younger cousin held the Northumberland Southern constituency for the Conservatives from 1852 to 1878.⁶⁶ Robert Ingham was a QC on the Northern Circuit and a Whig MP who favoured Parliamentary reform. He represented South Shields from 1832 to 1841 and again from 1852 to 1868.⁶⁷ Charles Bowyer Adderley, the Conservative MP for Staffordshire North, was a descendant of Oliver Cromwell and of firm evangelical beliefs. He preceded Lowe as Vice-President of the Committee of Council for Education, having been appointed on the formation of Lord Derby's second ministry in February 1858. He advocated compulsory elementary education, but was little involved with universities and himself passed unexceptionally through Christ Church, Oxford.⁶⁸

In addition to the written evidence received from three individuals, the Commissioners proceeded to interview eleven witnesses between 21 February and 7 March 1862. The interviewees were current or former senior staff of the University, plus a few external individuals with clear related interests such as Jowett who had been an external examiner. No current students were interviewed and while three graduates were interviewed,⁶⁹ and a further graduate submitted written evidence,⁷⁰

⁶⁵ J.F.A. Mason, 'Liddell, Henry George (1811-1898)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

⁶⁶ M. Stenton, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament: Volume 1, 1832-1885* (Hassocks, 1976), pp. 129-30.

⁶⁷ Stenton, *British Members of Parliament*, p. 207.

⁶⁸ J.E.G. de Montmorency, 'Adderley, Charles Bowyer (1814-1905)', rev. H.C.G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2006).

⁶⁹ John Cundill, Charles Butcher, and Arthur Beanlands.

⁷⁰ Joseph Waite.

these individuals had all held office in the University and their comments were sought in that capacity. The absence of a contribution from existing students was not, however, unique as students were not interviewed by the Commissioners at Oxford or Cambridge either.⁷¹ One notable omission was Thorp, who was unable to appear before the Commission.⁷² In a letter he wrote to Baring in his capacity as Chairman, Thorp declined the summons apologising that he was 'still in bed prostrate; unable to stand or bear any other than a reclining position' and that therefore it was 'impossible to present myself to your Commissioners'.⁷³ Given that Thorp would be dead before the end of the year, it would be inequitable to take his statement at anything other than face value.

It is, however, noteworthy that there were as few as only 14 witnesses. There were a number of Commissions in the nineteenth century to compare: the London University Commission of 1889 met with 45 witnesses, for example, and the Oxford University Commission of 1850-2 decided not to interview witnesses orally, but instead issued printed questions, and received opinions 'from the great majority of the Professors, and from many persons of note resident in Oxford, or closely connected with it, though not resident'.⁷⁴ London was a far larger and more diverse institution in the late 1880s than Durham was in the early 1860s, as too was Oxford in the 1850s, which explains the number of witnesses to a certain extent. Thorp's absence as a witness is explained by his illness, as (presumably) is that of John Edwards, the

⁷¹ E. Ashby and M. Anderson, *The Rise of the Student Estate in Britain* (London, 1970), p. 10.

⁷² Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 111.

⁷³ [DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 31 March 1862.

⁷⁴ *Report of Her Majesty's commissioners appointed to inquire into the state, discipline, studies, and revenues of the university and colleges of Oxford: together with the evidence, and an appendix* (London, 1852), p. 1.

Professor of Greek and Classical Literature, who died on 1 April 1862. The Senior Proctor, Joseph Waite, and the Junior Proctor, James Barmby (who was also the incumbent Principal of Hatfield Hall) submitted their views in writing. The absence of any current students is more a reflection of the times than of any direct intent of the Commissioners to exclude their voice. And then, after all, who was left to be interviewed? More Fellows could have been approached, perhaps, but the small number of people seen by the Commissioners reflected the equally diminutive scale of the University.

Benjamin Jowett was one of the most influential men to give evidence. He had served as the external examiner in 1852. On that occasion half the men were failed,⁷⁵ but on his second visit a year later he found the quality of the BA pass-men 'very much improved' though he still felt that a first class degree at Durham was equal only to a second class degree at Oxford and the standard for an MA was even lower than that for the BA.⁷⁶ In his evidence, Jowett went on to criticise low matriculation standards at the University and the impact of its small scale – 'you cannot have the life or mind of an University when there are only about a hundred students' – but he saved some of his greatest criticism for the administration. He was critical of the role of the Dean and Chapter, and he urged that the connection 'should be broken off'. In the government of the University, he reported, there had been 'a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed'; the fault, he stated was that 'while there was one set of persons who were working hard, and upon whom almost the whole success of the place rested, there was another set of persons who had all the power and the greater

⁷⁵ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1861, p. 91.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, q. 1855, p. 91.

part of the emoluments'.⁷⁷ In later questioning he supported Jenkyns and Edwards.⁷⁸ Thorp is the obvious target of Jowett's invective, though when directly questioned about the Warden's powers, he refused to be drawn too deeply into criticism. 'Do you consider that the Warden's power is too autocratic?', he was asked by Adderley, but he did not answer directly, instead he simply reiterated his main theme that 'the affairs of the University should be administered by a body of which the Tutors are members, and in which they have a free power to move anything to be decided by the majority of the body'.⁷⁹

Hornby had led the petition calling for a commission and his evidence was as damning as might therefore have been expected. He explained how he had felt compromised in his position as Vice-Master: 'we can do nothing in the College', he explained, 'without the Warden'.⁸⁰ This undermined the authority of the Vice-Master, Hornby complained, which affected how he was viewed by 'the servants and others' as they were aware that he had 'not the complete control over them which we otherwise should have'.⁸¹ Although he retained control, Thorp was aloof from the College, the result of 'his different social position, and from his living at some little distance' meant that there was 'a good deal of waste occurring'.⁸²

Hornby also felt that part of the cause of the drop in student numbers was because it was 'doubtful whether there is any sufficient demand for what we now

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, q. 1871, pp. 91-2.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, q. 1877, p. 92.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, q. 1924, p. 95.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, q. 1006, p. 47.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, q. 1008, p. 48.

⁸² *ibid.*, q. 1006, p. 47.

supply'.⁸³ The education offered by Durham was very similar to that of Oxford and Cambridge but as the expenses were not sufficiently lower to make a substantial difference, there was no compelling reason for students to choose Durham. 'With a little improvement in the management' to make attending the University 'as economical as possible' there might be a chance of success.⁸⁴ He made more radical suggestions 'to change the character of it altogether' by making it either a 'mining or engineering college' and perhaps even 'removing it to Newcastle' (a suggestion that Jowett made as well)⁸⁵ though he doubted whether an engineering course could ever work and preferred the option to transform the University into a theological college.⁸⁶

For most of those who gave evidence the cause of the University's drop in recruitment was clear: all the ills that beset the institution were linked inseparably with Thorp. 'He and the University have become convertible terms',⁸⁷ argued Melville, who displayed the greatest level of animosity for the ageing Warden. 'All the time I was there', he told the Commissioners, 'one always felt that it was a thing that would fall to pieces some day'.⁸⁸

Other than the foundation of the University itself, Melville's establishment of Hatfield Hall was arguably the single most successful and influential undertaking at Durham throughout the nineteenth century. Melville was frequently cited in the Oxford Commissioners' report and labelled the 'chief advocate' of the hall scheme, which had 'found much favour in the University' due to 'the success which has

⁸³ *ibid.*, q. 906, p. 44.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, q. 912-3, p. 44.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, q. 1901-15, pp. 94-5.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, q. 1016, p. 49.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 68.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, q. 1354, p. 65.

attended ... Hatfield Hall at Durham'.⁸⁹ Economy had been important to all the University's efforts since 1831 onwards, but with little success, and it was only Melville's Hatfield that achieved substantially lower costs, while still generating a surplus.⁹⁰ But it had also changed the tone of the institution by bringing in men who might well never have considered University College. Melville clashed with Thorp and eventually left. The ostensible reason for his departure was that Thorp insisted on enforcing the terms of his Licence as Principal which prevented Melville from holding ecclesiastical preferment or from marrying, and he had done both. Thorp had, however, originally waived these terms. At the end of the 1851/52 academic year he left. It is possible that the final severance of relations was the decision of Senate, originally taken in June 1851, to open a new Hall to accommodate the increasing number of applicants to Hatfield rather than expand Hatfield itself.⁹¹

Melville had long harboured a strong resentment at this treatment, and railed against the power of the Warden when given an opportunity to do so by the Commissioners.

The constitution [of the University] is a most absolute despotism, and you depend upon the character and enlightenment of the individual who is the despot; it might have been the best thing for the University in its earlier stage, but I do not think it was ever meant to work very true. The constitution is, your Lordship, the Dean and Chapter, Convocation, and the Senate, all of them supposed to be co-operative bodies, all of them, in fact, practically being dead-locked by the supreme will of one who is President in two of them, and a member of the other.⁹²

⁸⁹ *Report of the Oxford Commissioners*, p. 41.

⁹⁰ By June 1851 there was a 'balance of £543.17.4½ of income over expenditure'. [DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 June 1851.

⁹¹ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 27 June 1851.

⁹² *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1299, p. 63.

It was first intended that the Dean should be the Warden, argued Melville, and though Jenkinson was 'ready and willing to assume the place' he was 'only allowed to be in inferior position' as leader of the Chapter and not the University also.⁹³ 'The consequence is that you have two authorities', Melville explained, that is the Dean and the Warden, and the Warden was unlikely to want to submit his decisions to the Dean for approbation as the Dean was the senior party. It was therefore to get around this imbalance of authority 'that during the whole of my experience there ... the Dean and Chapter were simply managed, the Convocation was simply dictated to, and the Senate simply checkmated' by the Warden: 'that is the constitution of the University of Durham'.⁹⁴

Lowe put the question about the University's constitution bluntly: 'Does not the constitution of the University resolve itself into something like a monarchy in the hands of the Warden?' to which even Chevallier, supportive of Thorp as he was, replied 'it is very monarchical'.⁹⁵ The same question was put by Vaughan to John Cundill, the first entrant to the University who had held numerous positions in Durham since graduating. Did he find 'any defects to point out' such as the constitution of the University 'being too monarchical'?⁹⁶ As he had never been a member of Senate, Cundill evaded the question. Hornby had been a member of Senate, and he argued that the Warden's power should be reduced and the membership of the Senate made more representative. Even members of Senate could feel powerless: 'it would be difficult for a University officer, unless in the independent

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 68.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, q. 1299, p. 63.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, q. 202, p. 10.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, q. 523, p. 24.

position of a Professor, to speak in Senate of the Warden's power, and of its being excessive'.⁹⁷ Edward Parry described 'a sort of moral pressure exercised upon those who would like to have made alterations' that prevented them from doing so.⁹⁸ In his written submission, Hornby wrote of the need to curtail 'the large and indefinite powers of control and interference possessed by the Warden',⁹⁹ and Parry put it by saying that 'the real evil' was that 'power centres too much in one person, namely, the Warden of the University'.¹⁰⁰ Jowett suggested that the University should look to Scotland to reform its constitution, and copy 'a Scotch University, where the principal persons are the Professors'.¹⁰¹ Unlike other witnesses, Jowett did not take the opportunity to pull apart Thorp's tenure as Warden when asked to consider whether the exercise of his power had been 'too autocratic'¹⁰² but even more measured responses to the Commissioners' questions than those given by Melville, Hornby, or Parry still recognised the same fault. Waddington, for example, admitted in his answer that 'the office of the Warden is, perhaps, too despotic'.¹⁰³

The Sixteen Ordinances

On 13 June 1862, having received and deliberated upon the evidence provided by the witnesses, the Commissioners' sealed sixteen Ordinances for the future of the University. What was offered was a programme of radical reform: the governance of the University was to be significantly revised, all financial matters reconfigured, and

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, q. 1064, p. 51.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, q. 1425-7, p. 70.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, q. 1461, p. 72.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, q. 1887, p. 92.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, q. 1924, p. 95.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 109.

the academic structures remodelled around three Schools offering Bachelor's courses taught over two years in Arts, Theology, and Physical Sciences. Sweeping reform of the University had been anticipated but, as the Commissioners soon discovered, the Ordinances roused a powerful resistance from the University authorities.

The overwhelming majority of those who had called for the Commission had directed their ire against Thorp. In step with these criticisms the Commissioners directed their attention to the Warden and damned him: his power, they found, using almost the same words as given by Melville in his evidence had been 'almost absolute'. 'In discussing ... the practical workings of the University', the Commissioners concluded, 'the Warden ... has been supreme; the discipline has been confided to him alone ... the management of the property has been conducted by him' and he 'has had and exercised the power of removing at his pleasure the Principals of the Halls'.¹⁰⁴ 'So far as we know', the Commissioner's concluded, the Warden 'possessed an extent of power, for which ... there is no precedent in any other University'.¹⁰⁵ The Senate had offered no counter-balance to the Warden. Not only did Thorp exercise effective control over the Senate, but compared to other institutions it was a small group. The original Senate of the University of London, for example, contained 36 Fellows in addition to the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor.¹⁰⁶ At first membership of Durham's Senate, which had been fixed in 1835, included only the Warden, the three Professors, the two Proctors, and one member of Convocation.¹⁰⁷ The representation from

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the Commissioners, 1863*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Willson, *Our Minerva*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁷ *A Statute of Chapter enacted by the Dean and Chapter, with the Consent of the Bishop, for the University established in connexion with the Cathedral Church of Durham*, 20 July 1835.

Convocation had been increased to three in 1857.¹⁰⁸

Convocation was much larger than Senate but it was arguably even more in the grip of the Warden. It was composed of the officers of the University, those admitted members of the University, and of all graduates at least of the standing of MA – potentially a large group but in practice attendance ranged from 60 or 70 to as few as ten members.¹⁰⁹ The Warden controlled the Convocation as surely as he controlled the Senate: it could only confirm or reject what was put to it by the Senate; it could neither originate nor amend a motion, and the Warden had a casting vote in both bodies and could veto a decision of the Convocation. In March 1862, just after the Commissioners had interviewed their witnesses, Thorp wrote to Baring in defence of his powers. ‘In Oxford’ the power of veto ‘rests with the Proctors’ he argued, but at Durham it was ‘placed in the most responsible Officer, subject to immediate appeal, which brings its exercise under the higher authority of the Dean & Chapter and Visitor’.¹¹⁰

The solution the Commissioners put forward started with removing entirely the Dean and Chapter from the governance of the University and to vest in the Senate the greater part of authority. The Dean would still be the Warden, and the two canon professors would be retained, but the connection would go no further. While none of the witnesses had been able to provide examples of interference or difficulties caused by the Dean and Chapter acting as Governors it seemed that the Commissioners were swayed by Jowett’s argument that ‘the Dean and Chapter of a Cathedral’ were not ‘the

¹⁰⁸ *A Statute enacted by the Dean and Chapter, with consent of the Bishop, for increasing the Senate of the University by electing annually two additional members*, 28 September 1857.

¹⁰⁹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 123, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ [DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 31 March 1862.

fittest persons to have the superior control of a University'.¹¹¹

Further, to ensure a remedy for the University's 'defective constitution', the Commissioners proposed increasing the membership of Senate to include all of the Tutors.¹¹² These very Tutors, men like Melville, being the hardworking friends of the leading Commissioners who had complained of their inability to effect change and reverse the University's decay. The number of meetings would increase too: from every other week up to at least once per week during term. The Warden retained a casting vote in the event of tied decisions but his power of veto in Convocation was to be removed.

The University's finances were scrutinised too, though the Commissioners complained that they had 'experienced much difficulty' in understanding Durham's 'intricate accounts' despite the support of 'an experienced accountant' from the Audit Office, who had been recommended by the Treasury.¹¹³ Indeed, the question of finance was a complex one but seemed in essence to reduce to this: was there too little money, or was there enough money but badly used? The University authorities clearly felt their income was insufficient, and this is the line largely adopted in the University's histories. Whiting, for example, explains:

The poverty of the University was obviously one of its greatest drawbacks. It was very insufficiently endowed in the first place, and the wealthy people of the north who had been expected to contribute liberally had done practically nothing.¹¹⁴

One anonymous graduate of the University contributing to *The Standard* felt it was

¹¹¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1956, p. 97.

¹¹² *Report of the Commissioners, 1863*, p. 7.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 98.

wrong to characterise Durham as 'a miserable failure through mismanagement and wasted funds' and pleaded instead: 'give us more funds and there is no doubt we should have more men'.¹¹⁵

Yet this perception was not widely shared. A more common view was that the University was cash-rich but that its resources were applied inefficiently (perhaps incompetently) and used to feather a few nests rather than ensure that the benefits of the University were opened to as wide a potential audience as possible. The *Newcastle Courant* expressed the popular opinion that the University's 'income was considerable, its fellowships were many, its students were few'.¹¹⁶ According to Parry, the distribution of scholarships was 'very partial, and, in many cases, without reference to the ability of the students'¹¹⁷ and opening them up had not helped.¹¹⁸ Butcher agreed with Parry in his testimony: he agreed that the scholarships were affected by favouritism and when they were opened it was too late as this was only done 'after the students ceased to come up'.¹¹⁹

The Commissioners concurred: they noted, for example, that in 1862 'the Officers and Fellows ... received ten times the amount awarded ... to the students engaged in the actual course or study' and yet that over the three years from 1860 to 1862 the average deficit had been £1,647. The cost of living in University College had been too high as well, ranging from £100 to £140 per year (still cheaper than Oxford or Cambridge), compared with £60 to £75 in the Halls.¹²⁰ As neither the College nor the

¹¹⁵ *The Standard*, 12 September 1861.

¹¹⁶ *The Newcastle Courant*, 22 August 1862.

¹¹⁷ *Minutes of Evidence*, q. 1433, p. 71.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, q. 1434, p. 71

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, q. 1116, p. 55.

¹²⁰ *Report of the Commissioners, 1863*, p. 3.

Halls were independent, the University bore the losses they incurred while they retained surpluses should any be generated. All told the finances were a mess: the cost of living was too high; the Scholarships were inadequate and poorly distributed; and the endowments that existed were 'mainly devoted to the payment of Professors and Fellows' so that 'the Tutors have had the greater portion of the labour, and the Professors the greater part of the emoluments'.¹²¹

The 'financial embarrassment' of the University required decisive action to restore 'equilibrium in the accounts'.¹²² So to resolve these various issues, the Commissioners proposed axing a range of the existing University Offices, including the Registrar and Proctors, as well as all of the Readerships, Scholarships, and Fellowships. The funds released would be placed in the general account and used to support 80 open scholarships awarded by examination to matriculated students. Half of the awards would be worth £30 a year, and half £50, even though the proposed costs amounted to almost £70 per year. They would be distributed pro rata to the number of students in each School. All the scholarships that had been privately founded would likewise be merged into one account, and distributed as 14 awards according to a scheme of the Commissioner's devising. The existing College and Halls would be merged and the Hatfield system of living applied to the new body. Staff salaries would be rationalised too: all Professors, other than those to which Canonries were annexed, would receive a fixed salary of £300 per year and Tutors £250.

While considering the financial and administrative management of the University, the Commissioners had not neglected academic matters. Out would have

¹²¹ *ibid.*, 1863, p. 7.

¹²² *ibid.*, 1863, p. 14.

gone the existing structure of degrees and licences, to be replaced by a system of two-year degrees leading to the Bachelor of Arts (BA), of Theology (BT), and of Physical Science (BS). In one further year, a student could proceed to a Master's degree in the same three Schools (MA, MT, and MS). Each academic year would consist of two terms, when combined lasting not less than nine months, thus ensuring that the total time in residence was not reduced. All religious tests were to be abandoned except for students proceeding to a degree in the School of Theology who would be required to declare that they were bona fide members of the Church of England. This would make the religious tests at Durham looser than those which at that time still existed at Oxford and Cambridge but not as liberal as at Trinity College, Dublin.¹²³

It is hard to overstate the sweeping nature of these proposals: it was a staggering revisionist programme. The Dean and Chapter were to be stripped of their role, several Offices scrapped, the Tutors given more of a say in governance, the Halls and College merged, and the degrees condensed into two years. The Commissioners had not recommended closing the University, but these reforms would have created a radically different institution.

Thorp's Departure

Amidst the proposals for far-reaching reform the most personal aspect of the Ordinances concerned Thorp. The Commissioners allowed for Thorp's resignation and offered him a pension of £400 per year in return. He was given until the start of the Michaelmas Term 1862 to decide whether to accept the deal, or one month from the date on which the Ordinances were given Royal approbation, whichever was later.

¹²³ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 43.

There was no doubt in most public or private circles that this was an insult to the old Warden and a clear condemnation of his leadership. One anonymous former Fellow labelled the treatment of Thorp 'rude and undignified'.¹²⁴ There were others, however, who felt the pension was an atrocious waste of funds; or, as another anonymous letter-writer described it: a 'monstrous iniquity and mischievous precedent'.¹²⁵

Despite the rancour which ensued, the original suggestion that a pension should be afforded to the Warden came from Thorp. Writing from his bed to Baring in March 1862, Thorp noted that provision had been made to accommodate a suspension of the Warden's duties 'but nothing has been done for the retirement'. 'Provision should obviously be afforded for such a purpose' he continued, and suggested a pension based on 'long service & a fixed age'.¹²⁶ Though Thorp was talking generally, Baring took this as a direct signal that he would be prepared to retire if he were offered a suitable pension. In consequence, the Bishop offered Thorp an annual pension of £400 for life. However, it rankled with him that Thorp even considered a pension, given that he 'would still be receiving an income of some 4,000*l.* from Church funds' but Baring went ahead despite his misgivings as he was convinced 'it was essential to the success of any plans for the improvement of the University, that the Warden should retire'.¹²⁷

Thorp accepted the pension and agreed to resign, but unexpectedly suggested that it might be possible for him to 'retain the title of Warden, as an honorary

¹²⁴ Anon. [A Quondam Fellow], *The University of Durham: What Shall We Do With It?* (London, 1863), p. 7.

¹²⁵ *The Examiner*, 30 August 1862.

¹²⁶ [DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 31 March 1862.

¹²⁷ *The Guardian*, 22 October 1862.

distinction only'.¹²⁸ Such a request was clearly outrageous: 'the name is connected inseparably with the Office & duties & as soon as the Office is resigned, the title must also cease', the Bishop made clear.¹²⁹ On 19 June 1862, Thorp wrote to Joseph Waite, the current Senior Proctor, to confirm his resignation to the Senate: 'I do not know that this separation from you, to which I am necessarily a party consenting under external pressure, will be immediate'.¹³⁰ On 10 October 1862, three days before his 79th birthday, Thorp finally succumbed to his long battle against illness. He was buried five days later in the family vault at his beloved Ryton.

The Ordinances Disallowed

In August 1862, the month following their publication, the Privy Council received formal petitions against the Ordinances. These included petitions from Thorp, and collectively from the Warden, Master, and Scholars of the University, the Dean and Chapter, Thomas Evans (the new Professor of Greek, who had only been installed by Baring on 11 June 1862), James Barmby (the Principal of Hatfield Hall), Mary Pemberton, the lecturers of the Newcastle College of Medicine, and James Skinner. Others still, though they may not have petitioned against the Ordinances, considered them to be insufficiently radical.

The Ordinances exploded in the heart of the University, creating a 'considerable sensation' in the words of the *Morning Post*.¹³¹ *The Times* later noted that they had given 'mortal offence to the Dean and Chapter':

They cancelled their statutes, they took away their powers, they threw open the emoluments of the University to Dissenters, they founded a

¹²⁸ [DUL] DDR: Thorp to Baring, 30 May 1862.

¹²⁹ [DUL] DDR: Baring to Thorp, 31 May 1862.

¹³⁰ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 24 June 1862.

¹³¹ *The Morning Post*, 22 August 1862.

school of physical science with corresponding degrees, and, what was perhaps still more offensive, a school of divinity, in which students might obtain degrees without any very profound knowledge of Greek, Latin, or mathematics.¹³²

Indignant at the Commissioners' proposed 'crime of spoliation', the *Christian Remembrancer* complained that it was 'an utter mistake' to assume Durham could be made successful by 'the cheapness and rapidity with which' her degrees might be obtained.¹³³

Adderley, however, one of the MPs on the Commission, dismissed the complaints. 'It is the outcry of Durham Officials who would prefer continuing the nominal Offices of a non-existent University to having its death proclaimed, or the humbling process of restoration attempted', he reassured Baring.¹³⁴ Neither was the response to the Ordinances universally negative. Importantly, Waddington, who had been destined to be Warden since an Order in Council of 1841 attached the Wardenship to the Deanery, was not disinclined to favour them.¹³⁵ 'For my own part', he told Baring, 'I find much good in the Ordinances, with some points which might perhaps be improved' he added diplomatically.¹³⁶ There was public support too. The *Birmingham Daily Post* felt the Ordinances were 'specially to be admired' and judged them capable of making the University 'extremely well adapted to the numerous and increasing body of middle-class students'.¹³⁷ The *London Review* considered it 'impossible not to do justice to the liberal spirit by which [the Ordinances] are

¹³² *The Times*, 25 May 1863.

¹³³ *The Christian Remembrancer*, XLV/CXX (April 1863), p. 510.

¹³⁴ [DUL] DDR: Adderley to Baring, 6 October 1862.

¹³⁵ *An Order in Council respecting the further endowment of the University of Durham*, gazetted 8 June 1841; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 112.

¹³⁶ [DUL] DDR: Waddington to Baring, 31 July 1862.

¹³⁷ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 27 August 1862.

pervaded', and added that 'whatever could be done has, in most instances, been done boldly and well'.¹³⁸ But the paper's editors would have given the appointment of all the Professors to the Crown, removed the Bishop as the sole Visitor, and transported the University to Newcastle.

Convocation met on 16 August 1862, presided over by Chevallier as Sub-Warden following Thorp's resignation, and agreed a petition against the Ordinances which had been prepared by the Senate. Some members wanted to go further, and raised more objections 'against the insult which had been offered to the University' by the 'obnoxious Ordinances' that left them 'personally aggrieved'.¹³⁹ But the Durham University Act had given only a month for petitions to be raised so there was no time for further work.

These petitions prevented Royal assent being given to the Ordinances, because the Government could not advise the Queen to give her sanction until the petitions before the Privy Council had been resolved. The issue came down to a restrictive clause in the Act of 1861: section 7(2). This clause ruled out any Ordinances which would be inconsistent with the Durham University Act of 1832 or the Charter of 1837 (except that 'the admission of persons other than those belonging to the Established Church to the emoluments of the University shall not be deemed inconsistent'). The core complaint in the petitions was that the Ordinances would in many respects be inconsistent with the Act and Charter, particularly by removing the Dean and Chapter as governors, and hence that clause 7(2) ruled them illegitimate.

The Commissioners argued that the entire context of their mandate should take

¹³⁸ Carried in *The Newcastle Courant*, 22 August 1862.

¹³⁹ *The Newcastle Courant*, 22 August 1862.

precedence over the specific restrictive clause 7(2), otherwise they were entirely under the power of the Dean and Chapter.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, a special committee of the Privy Council decided that the Ordinances were indeed illegitimate. The Commissioners were invited to bring forward revised Ordinances but, they declared, the Privy Council's decision 'was fatal to any plan' they could form which had 'the least hope of restoring efficiency to the University'.¹⁴¹ The Commissioners therefore re-issued their original Ordinances as part of a final report in June 1863.¹⁴² The insufficiency of their powers, they argued, had 'compelled us to retire from the task confided to us'.¹⁴³ 'We can imagine well enough', noted a leading article in *The Guardian*, 'that Bishop Baring and Mr. Lowe are not in the most amiable mood at the miscarriage of their pet scheme, and will have nothing to do with the University if they cannot have their own way about it in everything'.¹⁴⁴

Robert Lowe, forever biting in his public remarks about the University, harboured a strong resentment that he had failed to force through on Durham the reform he so strongly desired. In the aftermath of the Ordinances being disallowed, Adderley suspected that 'Lowe had in his mind to revise them with a vengeance next session if his friends would back him'.¹⁴⁵ This never happened, but many years later, in May 1879, Lowe addressed the Convocation of the University of London about a proposal for a new northern university (the Victoria University) and 'what he might

¹⁴⁰ [TNA] Commissioners' notes on the petitions against the Ordinances, PC 1/2729, *Argument as to the Construction of the Restrictive Clause (Section 7. (2)) in the Durham University Act, 1861*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴¹ *Report of the Commissioners, 1863*, p. 13.

¹⁴² [DUL] Senate Minutes: 9 May 1863.

¹⁴³ *Report of the Commissioners, 1863*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ *The Guardian*, 20 May 1863.

¹⁴⁵ [DUL] DDR: Adderley to Baring, 1 January 1864.

call the abortive University of Durham', a remark which drew out laughter and agreement from his audience. He noted that Durham 'had succeeded in setting up a legal impediment which entirely prevented anything being done' to implement the Ordinances, and added condescendingly that this 'was the only thing the University ever had succeeded in'.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

George Bland, Archdeacon of Northumberland and a member of Chapter since 1853, wrote to Baring in March 1862. 'The evil report made of the University by former Tutors or new, who have been displeased with the Warden' had been 'among the causes of the falling off' of the University, he felt. Whether these complaints were 'well or ill founded' they had been 'a serious drawback'.¹⁴⁷ The Commission was in some respects a very personal attack on Thorp that built on these 'evil reports'. Although the Ordinances were disallowed, which clearly indicated a failure for the Commissioners, if their prime purpose had been to remove Thorp that at least was achieved with great success.

Nevertheless, it is hard to identify anyone who came out of the Commission unscathed. Thorp was forced into retirement, Bishop Baring was accused of trying to destroy the institution over which he was Visitor, and the remaining Commissioners faced the embarrassment of their Ordinances being disallowed. But perhaps the greatest long term consequence was the destruction of the University's reputation by the intimate deconstruction it suffered in the glare of publicity. For more than five years, the University had been the subject of open accusations of poor standards,

¹⁴⁶ *The Times*, 15 May 1879.

¹⁴⁷ [DUL] DDR: Bland to Baring, 4 March 1862.

excessive expense, financial waste, maladministration, and decline; any institution, even one much less fragile than Durham, would take time to rebuild from such an episode. The nature of the negative publicity which Durham received could easily have proved fatal. Comments in *The Times*, where it is worth noting that Lowe was a leader writer, summed up the new view of the University.¹⁴⁸

For any one with a taste for reforming abuses we can imagine no more tempting subject than the University of Durham. It was all salaries and no work, all teachers and no taught, a place where everything was provided except pupils, an educational establishment with hardly anybody to educate.¹⁴⁹

This type of criticism, plus the copious evidence presented to the Commissioners, left a rich and easily accessible source of material for historians that sealed the University's early reputation. This ensured that the reforming nature of the University's early years, and Thorp's repeated attempts to address professional education, at first in Durham and then with partners in Newcastle, has been largely lost under the well-documented criticisms of those who harboured personal grudges against the Warden.

¹⁴⁸ Adamson, *English Education*, p. 227.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times*, 25 May 1863.

*Altogether the shaking the Commission gave the University has done them much good. And I fully expect you will know the satisfaction of having got them to make good use of the temper they have been shaken into, if not too late.*¹

Adderley to Baring, January 1864

Introduction

Durham's Chapter might have petitioned successfully for the Ordinances to be disallowed but it was a pyrrhic victory: the future prospects for the University remained resolutely bleak. *The Times* argued that the Dean and Chapter had 'an undivided responsibility for the ruinous state of the University' not only because they were the University's governors but now also because they had prevented the Commissioners' reforms.² If the University was to survive it needed to reform, and quickly too.

But what reform was appropriate? As in the early 1830s, there were in the 1860s competing notions of reform. Upon Thorp's death, the Wardenship passed to the Dean, George Waddington. He forced through a number of changes, but none which seemed to improve the University's prospects. More substantial and lasting change was to come with the next Warden: William Lake, Prebendary of Wells (1860-9) and formerly Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford (1838-59). Lake brought with him a concept of reform forged in debates at Oxford during the 1850s. Lake's greatest personal satisfaction was in the establishment of The College of Physical Science in Newcastle, and there were clear parallels between the way in which Lake nurtured

¹ [DUL] DDR: Adderley to Baring, 1 January 1864.

² *The Times*, 25 May 1863.

this venture and the contemporaneous work of Jowett (also of Balliol) in supporting the foundation of University College, Bristol.³ Lake's work gave the University a more secure future, but the great irony is that it also moulded that future more as a pale imitation of Oxford than ever before.

Developments in the Higher Education Sector from 1860

As demonstrated in chapter 6, the higher education sector to about 1860 had failed to grow as its supporters felt it should. The influences behind this lack of progress started to change during the 1860s and more especially from 1870.⁴ Until the latter part of the century there was, first of all, no agreement over what higher education was. The boundaries between secondary and higher education were not well-defined in the early nineteenth century, and indeed the terms *secondary education* and *higher education* were not used during the period. At the start of the century secondary education, as we now understand it, was largely undeveloped in England save for the limited and often exclusive provision of the grammar and public schools. There were no independent examinations in secondary schools until Oxford and Cambridge established the Local Examinations in 1857-8, with Durham itself swiftly following in 1858.⁵

For the new post-secondary institutions this lack of secondary education meant that there were simply insufficient qualified students to fill their new courses. The lack of definition also meant that the boundary with the better secondary schools was

³ Anderson, *British Universities*, pp. 73-4; Carleton, D., *A University for Bristol* (Bristol, 1984), pp. 2-5; J. Jones, *Balliol College: A History 1263-1939* (Oxford, 1988), p. 218; J.W. Sherborne, *University College, Bristol: 1876-1909* (Bristol, 1977), pp. 5-6.

⁴ Lowe, 'The Expansion of Higher Education in England', pp. 37-56.

⁵ J. Roach, *Public Examinations in England, 1850-1900* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 64-76, 89; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 256-7.

blurred. Similar issues persisted in the Scottish university system, with the non-professional education of institutions north of the border being accused of offering little more than the same instruction as could be found in a school. In 1823, for example, the combative Tory journal *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* carried scathing comments on Glasgow University.

The 'University' of Glasgow is composed of two things; first, a school where boys from *twelve years of age*, up to *sixteen* or *seventeen*, are instructed in the first elements of Classical learning ... and also, in the first elements of Mathematics, Law, Ethics, &c; and secondly, of an institution in which lectures are delivered on Medicine, Law, and Theology, for the benefit of those of rather riper years. To dream of comparing [the boys at Glasgow] with the boys of Eton, or Westminster, or Winchester, or Harrow ... would be about as absurd, as it would be to compare a Spouting Club in Cheapside with the British House of Commons.⁶

Both King's College and University College had schools which were at first far more successful than their higher departments.⁷ In some respects, the schools of the two London colleges were part of the broader appearance of new secondary schools for the middle-classes which accelerated from the 1830s onwards.⁸ However, their existence was also testimony to the lack of qualified candidates for the higher departments; and faced with this shortfall the colleges took matters into their own hands and founded schools to prepare their own students.⁹ When, in 1856, Alexander Scott suggested Owens College should establish a school to prepare students for entry to their higher courses he was following a familiar pattern. Secondary education remained ineffective until the Clarendon Commission of 1863 and the Schools Inquiry Commission of 1868.

⁶ 'Vindiciae Gaelicae', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 13/72 (January 1823), pp. 93-99, p. 94.

⁷ Whyte, *Redbrick*, p. 47.

⁸ Armytage, *English Education*, pp. 104-6.

⁹ Rothblatt, 'Federal principle in higher education', p. 166.

Even then the situation was patchy, divided by class, and the school leaving age was not raised to 14 until the Fisher Act of 1918.¹⁰ An inadequate supply of suitable students accounted for a large measure of the difficulties of the new institutions. There was also a second impact: for at first an invigorated secondary sector took students away from the universities.¹¹

If a lack of qualified students led to difficulties maintaining the intended level of the general courses at the new colleges, it also forced them into the position of being feeders of students into Oxford and Cambridge. This further depressed their status in the slowly developing higher education sector as they were used as springboards to the ancient English universities. The same trend was not uncommon in the Scottish universities, where students might also migrate to Oxford or Cambridge. And when the secondary sector did develop there was a tendency to encourage students to enter the ancient institutions over the new if possible. The recently founded schools were as concerned about their own prestige as any new college or university and so directed their students to the old universities in order to bolster their own reputations.¹²

To make matters even worse there was insufficient demand for the graduates the new colleges did produce. The purpose of higher education has perhaps always been a topic of contested debate, but this was especially true during the nineteenth century when universities underwent a radical transformation as they slowly evolved strong connections with the old, new, and developing professions. Rather than being established to satisfy a clear demand, therefore, Durham and other new institutions

¹⁰ M. Sanderson, *Educational Opportunity and Social Change in England* (London, 1987), p. 25.

¹¹ Anderson, *European Universities*, p. 125.

¹² Rothblatt, 'Federal principle in higher education', p. 166.

were largely established on the basis of ideals, philosophies, and conceptions of higher education. The motivation behind the foundation of King's College, London, for example, was not that London University was an astounding success but because it posed a threat and the Establishment of Church and State wished to promote its own institution which would compete with it on equal terms.

A pedagogic principle or educational ideal, however, could not give a graduate a job. Even in nineteenth-century England students wanted to know that the investment in their higher education (which was still expensive even at the new foundations) would bring some financial benefit upon graduation. The problem, then, was that most of the professions were still far from convinced of the value of the courses that the new institutions offered and until the middle of the nineteenth century the links between industry and the universities were negligible.¹³ The earliest profession to recognise the need and importance of higher education were the medics – but they were driven to do so at least in part by successive governments legislating in this area. Nevertheless, it was in the 1870s that a combination of increased requirements for formal qualifications and a full acceptance of the scientific ideal led to the amalgamation of local medical schools and nascent universities.¹⁴ It is therefore unsurprising that medical schools often proved vital – even perhaps the most important part – of the new institutions. While the medical school in Newcastle was founded at about the same time as the University in Durham, and did not affiliate with the University until the 1850s, it had been conspicuously more successful than the institution it connected with as it benefitted from these changes. What made Durham

¹³ Sanderson, *Universities and British Industry*, p. 3.

¹⁴ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, pp. 259-64.

the senior partner was its ability to award degrees, not its relative vibrancy or achievement.

Similarly, the Church needed more clergy, and the demand was met by the creation of new theological colleges to produce them: starting with St Bees, St David's and progressing with new foundations throughout the century. The training of teachers was invigorated by the Education Act of 1870, which saw the expansion of the education colleges in Durham and elsewhere to meet the staffing needs of new and expanded schools.¹⁵ Other professions, such as architecture and law, moved more slowly in integrating their professional education needs with the provision of the universities and colleges.

Early on in the century engineering was one profession that the new institutions expected to be able to contribute to, and they felt they were acting not only to meet a general demand for better trained professionals but alongside leading industrialists. Unfortunately for the colleges, most engineering firms preferred the traditional model of paid apprenticeships, which meant the college graduate gained little or no benefit from their studies.¹⁶ This was one of the most important causes of the collapse of Durham's course in civil engineering. Other engineering courses, such as that at King's College, might have survived but they hardly prospered. The professional education supplied by courses aimed at specific vocations or trades – no matter how lucrative or intellectually demanding the occupation might be – also paled in prestige next to the liberal arts which remained at the pinnacle of learning. For

¹⁵ Armytage, *English Education*, pp. 156-9; Lawrence, *St Hild's College*, pp. 26-8; G.J. White, *On Chester On: A History of Chester College and the University of Chester* (Chester, 2014), pp. 3-4, 23-4; Wilkinson, 'Durham Diocesan Training School', pp. 217-8.

¹⁶ Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 117-8.

while it may have been desirable for a medic to be skilled in their profession, for example, they could not be a gentleman without the intellectual training of the liberal arts. Until late into the nineteenth century it remained the case that the traditional or liberal professions of medicine, law, and the Church were united by their common acceptance of the vital importance of a unifying liberal education.¹⁷

In general, and in addition to these concerns, it was also crucial to the new institutions' disadvantage that English society still operated by patronage and that such support remained important until well into the nineteenth century, with change only starting about the 1850s.¹⁸ The implication of this was that for as long as the support of a prominent patron remained more important than qualifications (and even ability) in order to gain entry to the more desirable careers and professions, the practical value of the system of certificates, degrees, and other awards being developed in the new universities and colleges would be minimal. It was only when competition triumphed that the type of education which the new universities and colleges had been created to provide became a desirable route into well-remunerated and respectable occupations. This change happened towards the latter part of the century, when examinations for key professions gave a new impetus for students to resort to the universities when they had not hitherto felt any need to do so: a key example was the establishment of examinations for entry to the Indian Civil Service from 1858, followed by individual departments of the Home Civil Service, until 1870 when almost all branches of the Home Civil Service appointed by competitive entry.¹⁹

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 10-1, 16-23.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 4-6; Runciman, *Very Different, But Much the Same*, pp. 35-40.

¹⁹ Armytage, *English Education*, p. 121; Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 90-6; Roach, *Public Examinations*, pp. 191-228; Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 47.

There was a distinction between a belief in the type of competitive test of a general and liberal education that drove men like Charles Trevelyan and Stafford Northcote (heavily influenced by Benjamin Jowett) and the reform of the civil service entrance examinations on the one hand, and the specialised qualifying examinations that developed in medicine and later in other professions on the other.²⁰ But where there was a connection between these two approaches was the desire for some form of learning to be assessed impartially and for that test to become the gate keeper to professional preferment, rather than connections and patronage.²¹ The alignment of a liberal education with the tests required of entry to the civil service nevertheless served to increase the relevance of the universities, and especially of Oxford and Cambridge. Ironically, it also served to make a liberal education also a vocational training in the specific case of the civil service.²² Between 1855 and 1864, for example, of the 458 men who entered the Indian Civil Service through competitive examination 22% came from Oxford and 18% from Cambridge, only 17% came from no university at all.²³ Between 1892 and 1894 the majority of entrants, 52%, came from Oxford while a further 20% came from Cambridge.²⁴ The demand for relevant educational preparation also went hand in hand with the growth of the emerging professions. There were, for example, estimated to be only 853 civil engineers in 1841, but by 1881 this had risen to 7,124. The number of civil engineers rose by 183% between 1841 and 1851 alone, and again

²⁰ *Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service Together with a Letter from the Rev B Jowett* (London, 1854).

²¹ Reader, *Professional Men*, p. 86.

²² Sanderson, *Universities and British Industry*, p. 6.

²³ Reader, *Professional Men*, p. 93.

²⁴ Vernon, *Universities and the State in England*, p. 47.

by 57% between 1861 and 1871.²⁵ Although even by 1900 formal qualifications were still unnecessary to serve as an engineer, it was the new universities and colleges, and the universities of Scotland, which embraced technologically relevant studies, as well as medicine, and the sciences. Progress with such modern and professional studies remained painfully slow at the ancient English universities. Alongside the more general entrance examination for the civil service, this tended to reinforce the distinction between Oxford and Cambridge as more prestigious, glamorous, and powerful than the new universities and colleges.²⁶

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a convergence of factors created a significantly more benign environment for expansion in the new universities and colleges: the growth in secondary education created a larger pool of potential applicants and the ability to concentrate on higher (rather than secondary) education; patronage declined in favour of more meritocratic means of gaining professional preferment; the professions gradually formalised and although reluctant at first started to align themselves with higher education. By about the 1870s, therefore, there was a need for the increased provision of higher education in England (especially from the growing middle classes) that had not existed at the start of the century.²⁷ Writing in 1878, Adolphus Ward, Professor of History and English Literature at Owens College, argued that there was a 'growing demand for academical instruction' which had been brought about as the 'old studies' had 'become wider and fuller'. The demand had also been fed by the development of 'New Learning, like the Renaissance

²⁵ Reader, *Professional Men*, pp. 208-11.

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 127-45.

²⁷ Anderson, *Universities and Elites*, pp. 31-41.

Age ... such as medicine, and various branches of physical and mechanical science'. Although he was far from impartial, still Ward could argue with conviction that 'a carefully considered and prudently carried-out increase in the number of English universities is expedient and indeed necessary'.²⁸ Such an argument made 20 years earlier would have been unsustainable given the parlous state of the new universities then struggling for existence.

Yet even all these advantages only served to make the task of the new institutions more viable, it did not remove all the barriers they faced. Perhaps the greatest of those barriers was the resurgence of Oxford and Cambridge. Although both institutions seemed constantly behind when it came to reform and the advancement of new and professional studies, still they managed to secure and retain the greatest amount of prestige in higher education. The transformation they went through is also easy to underestimate.²⁹ Writing in 1898, for example, the author of the history of Trinity College, Oxford, noted that the changes were 'so great that the first half of the century is almost ancient history, though some of it is within living memory'.³⁰ The creation of the new colleges and universities actually encouraged reform at Oxford and Cambridge: without competition for several centuries they had fallen into some measure of complacency but the new institutions threatened to overtake them if they did not reform.³¹ Even the 1861 Commissioners noted: 'we are not insensible to the operation of recent changes in the Universities of Oxford and

²⁸ A.W. Ward, 'Is it Expedient to Increase the Number of Universities in England?', *Macmillans' Magazine*, 39/229 (1878), 12-6, p. 13.

²⁹ Winstanley, *Early Victorian Cambridge*, pp. 174-5.

³⁰ Blakiston, *Trinity College*, p. 213.

³¹ Whyte, 'Redbrick's unlovely quadrangles', p. 161.

Cambridge in drawing away students from the School of Arts at Durham. The emoluments of the Colleges in those Universities have largely increased, the expenses of the students have been diminished, and various restrictions have been removed which formerly fettered the freedom of competition'.³²

Durham was therefore founded in the brief period between the indulgences of the eighteenth century and the reforms which would secure the prominence of Oxford and Cambridge into the twentieth century and beyond. By 1831, reform of the ancient universities had commenced but the outcome of those reforms was far from realised. The resurgence of the ancient English universities following the Commissions of the 1850s therefore further diminished the prospects of the new institutions, as the social status they conferred far outstripped any advantages the new institutions could offer.

The Chapter's Reforms of 1863-5

It was to George Waddington that the challenge passed of trying to breathe new life into the University after the Ordinances were disallowed. Born in 1793, and so ten years Thorp's junior, Waddington had been installed in the Deanery on 26 September 1840. He maintained the tradition of dining during hospitality residence and was known as a convivial gourmet who refused to observe fast days. This became something of an anathema to Tractarian students, whom he would invite to dinner on Ash Wednesday.³³

Waddington recognised the scale of the work before him and was not convinced he was equal to the task. 'At the age of 68 one may perform well enough

³² *Report of the Commissioners, 1863*, p. 7.

³³ A. Klottrup, *George Waddington Dean of Durham 1840 – 1869* (Durham, 1990), p. 4; Stranks, *This Sumptuous Church*, p. 33.

old & accustomed duties – but not those which are new’ he urged the Bishop. ‘In less than a year you will discover that the interests of the University require a younger Warden’, and he suggested that a separate Warden should be appointed and paid for from the Deanery funds.³⁴

Although new to his role as Warden, in many respects Waddington’s appointment represented continuity because he had presided as the head of the governing body for 22 of the 30 years the University had existed. Waddington needed to strike a balance between recognising the difficulties the University faced while not entirely shirking any responsibility for past mistakes. In his evidence to the Commissioners, Waddington had argued that the causes of the University’s decline were mostly external. ‘It opened with acclamation’, he noted, but the University’s fortunes waned as the older universities paid ‘greater attention to economy’, new theological colleges opened, and the predicted ‘increased general demand for Academical Education’ failed to materialise (Waddington felt the current was actually ‘rather running in the opposite direction’). As has just been seen, Waddington’s analysis was highly perceptive. With such difficult conditions and strong rivals, when ‘it was discovered, that an “honour from Durham,” however well deserved, carried no weight in the world, compared with those at the large Universities’ the falling-off was inevitable. The disparity between expectations and reality was exaggerated by ‘the caprice of the public, which, having raised a promising young institution too high for its power and means, has made the usual amends by reducing it below its deserts’. ‘I am strongly of the opinion that, on so short a trial’, Waddington concluded, that ‘it

³⁴ [DUL] DDR: Waddington to Baring, 18 June 1862.

would be quite premature now to introduce any fundamental change into the Constitution of the University'.³⁵

Now in charge of both the Chapter and the Senate, Waddington's position was even more powerful than Thorp's before him – it is clearly ironic that far from being reduced, the Warden's position was now even more dominant, and that this was one of the changes supported by the Commissioners. Nevertheless, the minutes of Senate, normally the quintessence of reserved understatement, suggest that the burden of attempting even measured reform created considerable tension between Waddington and its other members.³⁶ By as early as 1864 Waddington had agreed to pay Chevallier the diminutive salary of £50 to undertake the responsibilities of Warden.³⁷ No doubt age played some part in this decision, but it should not be forgotten that Chevallier was only a year younger than Waddington.

In December 1862 Waddington counselled the Senate and the Chapter on how they should respond to the Ordinances and he did not fail to be bold. Although he agreed that the Commission was 'not empowered by the Act which constitutes it to deprive the Dean and Chapter of their role as governors still, he said, he would 'advise the Dean and Chapter to cede office' in favour of the Senate. This he felt would be more appropriate for 'a young and liberal institution'. The Senate concurred on a few of the points Waddington raised. On several they objected strongly. One interesting variance concerned fees: Waddington suggested raising the matriculation fee put forward in the Ordinances from £2 to £3, the rent from £5 per term to £7,10, and battels

³⁵ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 109.

³⁶ Examples include the disagreement over how to handle E.H. Stott's request to receive back his Fellowship (2 Feb 1864) or concerning amendments to the Bill of 1864 (24 May 1864).

³⁷ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 21 June 1864.

from £1,5 to £1,10 per term. 'It is not by making the institution cheap that we shall make it great', he argued, 'but spread the money thus raised in securing very distinguished Professors, and we shall probably succeed'. The Senate were not convinced: 'we doubt the expediency of increasing the cost of Education here', they replied, adding that 'we think that the success of the University will very much depend upon its cheapness'.³⁸

So it was, later in 1863, after continued wrangling and hammering out of compromises, that the Chapter agreed a scheme for the future development of the University. While not as radical as the Ordinances there was a clear connection to them. The Chapter remained the Governing Body. The Senate continued too, though with a slightly enhanced role and an enlarged membership that included all the Tutors. It still remained the only body that could originate legislation for confirmation or rejection by Convocation. Despite all the concerns about the over-concentration of power in Thorp's hands, the Decanal Warden retained his role as the Chair of all three governing and managing bodies: Chapter, Senate and Convocation. The Chapter's grip was loosened in other areas and importantly their consent would no longer be required before a degree could be conferred. In addition, only those students proceeding to a degree in Theology (including the Licence in Theology), or any person entitled to become a member of Senate or Convocation, would be required to declare in writing that they were a 'bona fide member of the United Church of England and Ireland, as by Law established'.³⁹ No other oath or subscription would be required of any person attached to the University be they student or staff. Of the remaining

³⁸ [DUL] Senate Minutes: 23 December 1862.

³⁹ *Scheme for the Extension of the University of Durham* (Durham, 1863), p. 9.

changes proposed, two were of particular significance: a move to allow students to proceed to the BA after two years' of study and the introduction of a School of Physical Science within the Faculty of Arts.

The proposals of 1863 were enshrined in the Durham University Act 1864, which received Royal assent on 14 July, and then in a series of Statutes of Chapter passed in February 1865.⁴⁰ Far from heralding a new era of confidence and growth, however, the changes did little if anything to improve Durham's faltering progress. Indeed, the move to two year degrees reduced the University's prospects and did much to harm its reputation, a fact Chevallier much deprecated.⁴¹ Although the general idea was to accommodate an equal amount of teaching in two years rather than three, and thereby reduce the expense of gaining a degree, the outcome was to devalue a Durham degree further. Even so, the scheme lasted for more than half a century and was only amended in 1919, when the BA course reverted to three years.⁴² During this period there were constant apologies for the policy and students were urged to reside for three years for the BA despite the option of graduating after only two. In 1879 the *Durham University Journal* argued that 'the year cut off' was designed 'to be spent elsewhere in labour, if not at the university'.⁴³ The *Student's Guide to the University of Durham* from 1880 could see advantages that the *Journal* could not. The Guide included the two-year degree as one of the distinctive features of the University. Though, for sure, this option was only encouraged for those who could not afford a

⁴⁰ 27 & 28 Victoria, cap. 168, known as the Durham University Act 1864.

⁴¹ *Durham County Advertiser*, 23 June 1882.

⁴² *Durham University Calendar 1918/19*, p. 252; Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 225-6; *Report of the Royal Commission on the University of Durham*, (London, 1935), p. 90.

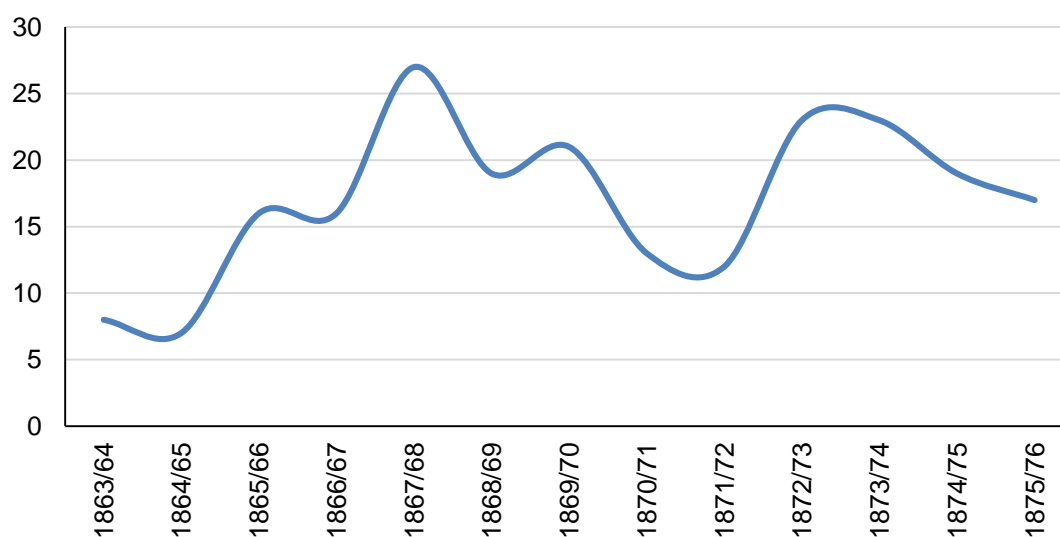
⁴³ *Durham University Journal*, 3/10 (June 1879), p. 2.

third year:

Every one who knows the older Universities, knows that a student derives more benefit from his third year of residence than from the two first years put together. A student at Durham who without necessity takes only the minimum of residence is voluntarily rejecting the most valuable part of a University career: he is withdrawing his capital just when heavy interest is about to be paid.⁴⁴

Neither did the price paid for the University's reputation purchase any sustained improvement in the number of students in Arts.

Figure 11: Entrants 1863/64 to 1875/76 (Durham Only, Arts Course)⁴⁵



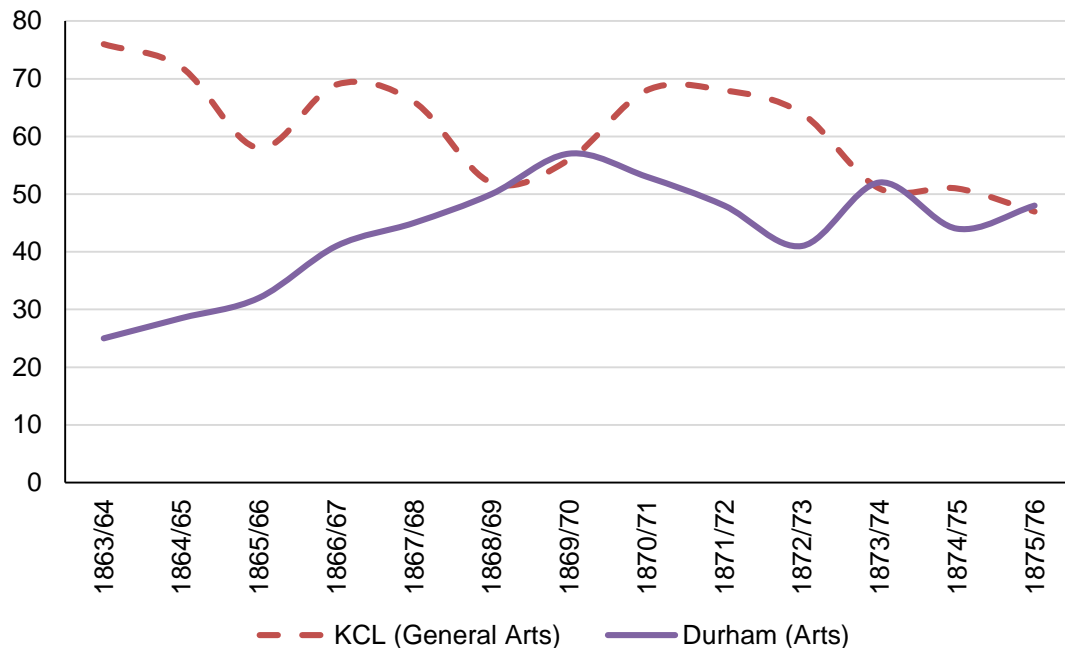
The number of entrants to the Arts course, which had not exceeded 10 since 1857/58, did rise in 1865/56 to 16 and jump to 28 in 1867/68 but that level of recruitment was inconsistent and the number of students resorting to Durham dipped significantly again around the end of the decade. This is, perhaps, a success: the average number of entrants in the decade starting in 1865/66 was 18.5, almost double the average of ten entrants per year in the preceding decade. Durham too made progress in once again narrowing the gap with the General Arts course at King's College, London – where

⁴⁴ *The Student's Guide to the University of Durham* (Durham, 1880), pp. 1, 12-3.

⁴⁵ Source: [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96.

the number of students declined in peaks and troughs until a low of only 22 was reached in 1888/89.

Figure 12: Students 1863/64 to 1875/76, Durham and KCL (Arts Course)⁴⁶



Yet the heights Durham reached were so meagre as to make celebration redundant. Could peaking at 28 new entrants to the Arts course really be considered a success? Even if this was the highest intake achieved since 1852/53? And even if it compared favourably with King’s College? Durham was a University after all, not a college. So, given that in 1865 Oxford admitted 524 students and Cambridge 530, it is not hard to see why some of Durham’s ardent critics continued to view it as little more than a parody of a university.⁴⁷ If Durham were a college it might have been spared some of the harsh criticism it received, but it was not a college it was a university: and the two benchmarks for being a university in England were simply incomparable.

⁴⁶ Source: ‘Durham (Arts)’ as listed in the University Calendar. ‘KCL (General Arts)’ taken from tables in Hearnshaw, *King’s College London*.

⁴⁷ Greenwood, ‘University Education’, p. 6

The School of Physical Science at Durham proved even less successful: it opened for Michaelmas Term 1865 and was an instant and absolute failure. Arthur Beanlands, one of the first students in engineering, who had served the University in a range of different capacities since graduating, was appointed to offer classes in civil engineering in March 1865. After only three years his appointment was not renewed.⁴⁸ During this period it seems only one student registered to study engineering, and none for the two year course leading to the award of Associate in Physical Science. The one engineering student, Thomas Marley, despite spending 6 years at Durham from 1868/69 to 1873/74, never managed to graduate. For the School of Physical Science, and poor Thomas Marley, failure hardly comes in more absolute form.

Breathing Life into Dry Bones

Waddington died in July 1869 and William Lake became Dean and Warden on 2 October. Reflecting in his memoirs he mused that the University's existence until that point 'had been a fluctuating and rather disappointing one'.⁴⁹ This was a considerable understatement. While he acknowledged a number of causes for this, Lake reserved his strongest criticism for Thorp. 'Undoubtedly there had been great mismanagement', he judged.

The first Warden, Dr. Thorp ... had the power of inspiring great attachment among his friends, but his judgment in directing a University was in many respects deficient, whilst his unwillingness to give his Tutors a sufficiently free hand resulted in his retaining hardly any of them for very long.

It was Jenkyns who, according to Lake, had kept the flickering hopes of the University burning and it was his retirement in 1864, at the age of 69, which caused the real

⁴⁸ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 117.

⁴⁹ Lake, *Memorials*, p. 114.

disaster.⁵⁰

Lake was a representative of a very different generation to his two predecessors, and politically very different too. Born on 9 January 1817 to a retired hero of Waterloo, he attended Rugby School under Thomas Arnold and was heavily influenced by him and the friendships he developed there. The relationships Lake formed and maintained throughout his life with Arthur Stanley and Charles Vaughan (a member of the Durham University Commission) were especially important to him. But Lake's reforming credentials were not only formed at school. After a glittering career at Rugby, Lake and Stanley proceeded to Balliol College, Oxford.⁵¹ Matriculating in November 1834, the future Warden gained his BA in 1838 with first class honours *In Literis Humanioribus*, followed the same year by a Fellowship, and his MA in 1841. At Oxford as a student and then Fellow he widened his circle of friends with James Lonsdale (Principal of Hatfield Hall in 1853/54 and one of the petitioners for a Commission) and Benjamin Jowett (who gave evidence to the Commission); all three men were elected Fellows of Balliol in the same contest in 1838.⁵² All three had also been involved deeply in the reforms at Oxford around the middle of the century. Lake was an influential member of the 'Tutors Association',⁵³ active from around 1848 to 1855, though he considered his own views to be part of the moderate majority compared to those of the more 'advanced party' which included Stanley and Jowett.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Lake, *Memorials*, pp. 114-5. NB Jenkyns' brother was Richard Jenkyns, the Master of Balliol College 1819-54, and hence was well acquainted with Lake.

⁵¹ Lake, *Memorials*, pp. v-vii.

⁵² Duckworth, *James Lonsdale*, p. 21.

⁵³ Engel, 'Emerging Concept of the Academic Profession', pp. 335-41; Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, p. 181.

⁵⁴ Lake, *Memorials*, pp. 76-7.

Jowett and Lake played an influential role, advising the Oxford Commissioners on the newly developed tutorial practices at Balliol.⁵⁵ Lake felt Gladstone's support for moderate reform had been an 'enormous advantage' in securing the reforming Oxford University Act of 1854. The two men retained close links for the rest of their lives including when, in 1881, Lake married Katherine, the daughter of the Prime Minister's brother.⁵⁶

Lake's clerical career commenced with his ordination in 1842. In October 1858 he left academic life at Oxford for the Balliol living of Huntspill in Somerset. In 1860 he became a canon at Wells Cathedral. Through Gladstone he was appointed to the Deanery of Durham to succeed Waddington. When Gladstone offered the role to Lake, he had the attached position of Warden very much in mind: 'much will be expected from you' as both Dean and Warden, the Prime Minister warned him.

The university, if I am rightly informed, wants nothing less than life infused into its dry bones. In grappling with its difficulties, you, as a theological student yourself, will not be likely to abet any disparagement of theology, while you labour to supply what ought to be a great institution with a comprehensive and powerful equipment.⁵⁷

The position of Warden, and with it the explicit commission to reform the University, was highly influential in Lake's decision to accept the Deanery. 'My old Oxford work', he told Gladstone, 'may enable me to be of some service to the University'.⁵⁸

For Thorp, the University was like his own child: he had caused it to be brought into the world and he was fiercely protective of it. For Waddington, the University was something he had lived alongside throughout his time as Dean and when he

⁵⁵ Jones, *Balliol College*, p. 199.

⁵⁶ Lake, *Memorials*, p. 77.

⁵⁷ W.E. Gladstone to W.C. Lake, 28 July 1869, quoted in Lake, *Memorials*, p. 214.

⁵⁸ W.C. Lake to W.E. Gladstone, 2 August 1869, quoted in Lake, *Memorials*, p. 214.

eventually became Warden he was an old man and lacked a reformer's energy even if he retained something of the edge that was necessary and was certainly insightful. Lake, however, was an outsider and powerfully connected with men of national eminence. He was 52 when he entered into his new duties, 17 years younger than Waddington had been when he became Warden. Lake's approach to the problems Durham faced would be radically different but it was precisely for that purpose that he had been appointed: as a new style of reformer, with a track record of tackling deep-rooted issues at Oxford.

Only a month after Lake had been appointed, the University suffered stinging criticism in *The Times*. 'Very few of our readers, we suspect, have ever heard of Durham University', the paper proclaimed pompously: 'tried by any test of ability, [the University] can give no sufficient reason for its existence' and was nothing but an expensive yet pale imitation of Oxford and Cambridge. The University was even accused, quite incorrectly, of having failed from 'inability and reluctance' to support the scheme for a School of Physical Science put forward by the Mining Institute in the mid-1850s. Could Lake do something? 'The new Dean is an educational reformer, and has work here ready to his hand', the paper noted.⁵⁹

Lake responded the following week. He defended Thorp over the School of Physical Science, clarifying that he had in fact embraced the scheme, enthusiastically making every allowance requested, but that its failure lay with the squabbling of the professional and industrial community in Newcastle. Lake asked for an end to this kind of unfounded criticism: 'if the public will give us fair play for a time', he pleaded,

⁵⁹ *The Times*, 9 November 1869.

then 'we shall be able to get some fresh reasons for our existence by a real extension of our practical studies'.⁶⁰

In addition to his connection through marriage with the Prime Minister, Lake was a close friend of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Tait. Tait had also been a Fellow of Balliol College and had befriended Lake while he was an undergraduate.⁶¹ He shared the Warden's interest in University reform, including as a member of the Oxford University Commission in the 1850s.⁶² Shortly after his appointment, Lake set out his intentions for the University in a letter to the Archbishop. First, he would make 'an extension of this University to Newcastle, in the form of the college of physical science for miners and engineers'. But that was not all, for he hoped 'that in a short time this may become the nucleus of a University on something of the Scotch model, which suits our North of England better than the Oxford and Cambridge types'. The favourable comments on the 'Scotch model' no doubt flattered Tait as a Scotsman, and a former student of the University of Glasgow, but also reflected wider use of the term by reformers at Oxford.⁶³ As for 'Durham itself', Lake concluded, there was 'little to be made, except as a college for educating clergymen' – which is an oddly dismissive comment for the Dean of Durham to make in writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury.⁶⁴

The College of Physical Science

The key developments for the remainder of the nineteenth century, therefore,

⁶⁰ *The Times*, 15 November 1869.

⁶¹ Jones, *Balliol College*, p. 190.

⁶² Jones, *Balliol College*, p. 187.

⁶³ Anderson, *British Universities*, p. 58.

⁶⁴ W.C. Lake to A.C. Tait, 1870-1?, quoted in Lake, *Memorials*, pp. 218-9.

took place in Newcastle, not Durham. On 6 November 1869, at a general meeting of the Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, it was resolved to work with the University on creating 'a system of Scientific Education in the North of England for the instruction of young men destined for the mining or manufacturing professions' and creating a college with similar privileges from the University to those 'already extended to the medical profession in this town'.⁶⁵ Such an attempt was not new, as we have seen. But Newcastle had changed: its industry had grown more complex and the population had continued to expand at a dramatic rate. In 1801, Newcastle had 28,000 residents. This had increased to 88,000 in 1851 and 128,000 in 1871. The greater area of Tyneside had increased from 201,000 people in 1851 to 314,000 in 1871.⁶⁶ The University had changed too. Although Thorp had always engaged with leading figures in Newcastle, as evidenced by the connection with the College of Medicine, for example, Lake brought a renewed approach. His reputation as a reformer, and his personal network of significant national figures, must have helped give his new approach credence amongst those in Newcastle who were cynical about the University's ability to support professional education.

In February 1871 the Institute issued an invitation to a 'preliminary meeting' to discuss 'the establishment of Classes ... for the teaching of Physical Science' in Newcastle.⁶⁷ The public meeting was held on 11 March 1871 in the lecture room of the Literary and Philosophical Society, with Sir William (later Lord) Armstrong, the

⁶⁵ *Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers 1869-70, Volume 19* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1870), pp. 40, 56; Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 189.

⁶⁶ E. Allen, J.F. Clarke, N. McCord, and D.J. Rowe, *The North-East Engineers' Strikes of 1871* (Newcastle, 1971), pp. 13-24.

⁶⁷ [NUL] CPSMB: 28 February 1871.

eminent industrialist and artillery specialist, in the chair. One of the first speakers was Isaac Lowthian Bell, the owner of a number of large chemical and iron works, who had provided oral evidence to the Durham Commission in 1862. He had been appointed one of the members of the Institute's committee to discuss the proposed College with the University. Bell had complained to the Commissioners that young men in the north were of 'two extremes, the highly educated and those not educated at all' and that what was missing was 'the means of education of those in the intermediate degree'. This required him to recruit 'self-educated men' as managers in his plants. He even – of all things – once had no recourse but to employ a Frenchman!⁶⁸ Bell repeated this point to the public meeting: what was needed from the proposed College, he told them, was 'that kind of education' which was needed 'for undertaking the responsible duties of managers of collieries, iron works, or chemical works'.⁶⁹

Lake was not present at the public meeting. It is not clear why he was absent but, given suspicions about how fit the University was to support practical science, it may perhaps have been to allow a free and open discussion. Aware of this concern, in his written statement to the meeting Lake emphasised that the proposed College would be led by 'Newcastle men'. It would not be beneficial 'to establish a mere branch of this University at Newcastle', he assured them. What the University would do, is offer its support for the necessary subscriptions, give half of the time of the relevant professors for lectures at the College, and 'throw open to competition' some of its scholarships. However, to offer this support the new College would need to 'be to some extent connected with the University' though 'the bond of connection ... may

⁶⁸ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 84.

⁶⁹ [NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871

be a very slight one'. Under such a plan there was no doubt, Lake predicted, that their new institution 'would be probably as successful as Owens College is at Manchester'.⁷⁰

This offer was indeed met with scepticism. One of those present, for example, Walter Tait, who was the Rector of Benton and formerly a lecturer in modern history at Oxford University, 'asked if it was desirable to prop up the University of Durham' in this way and, although the work of the Royal Commission was only concluded some six years before, suggested instead that 'the best plan would be to have a Parliamentary inquiry as to what Durham does for its money'.⁷¹ John Rutherford, a progressive Congregationalist preacher and educational reformer, suggested moving the entire University to Newcastle, 'with the exception of theology, which might be left under the shadow of the cathedral'.⁷² Despite a largely negative response, others present felt somewhat embarrassed by the apparent snubbing of Lake's approach, with one individual noting that 'the innuendoes respecting Durham University' were 'unfortunate when [the University] was disposed to meet them in a liberal way'.⁷³

The initial prospects for collaboration were not promising. The only agreement reached at the first public meeting was that a communication should be sent to Lake, informing him that the proposal for sharing professors was insufficient but thanking him for his courtesy.⁷⁴ A private meeting followed on 24 March 1871, at which Lake,

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ *ibid.* Despite his recorded reluctance at the first public meeting, Wait was one of the first subscribers to the new College, giving £25, cf [NUL] CPSMB: 25 March 1871.

⁷² [NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871. Rutherford founded Bath Lane School in 1870. The School provided elementary education to poor children, and was a predecessor institution of Rutherford College which formed an original part of what is now Northumbria University. The School's senior department was an early competitor with the College of Physical Science. cf J. Allen, *Rutherford's Ladder: The Making of Northumbria University, 1871-1996* (Newcastle, 2005); Bettenson, *University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 25.

⁷³ [NUL] CPSMB: 11 March 1871.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

on behalf of the University, offered to provide two professors at £400 per year, and ten scholarships each worth £20 per year. This offer was dependent on the College's Newcastle supporters guaranteeing £1,000 per year in matched funding. The arrangement would be fixed for six years, by which time the College, it was hoped, would have become self-sustaining. It was agreed this proposition was 'highly satisfactory'.⁷⁵

Another public meeting was held the following day. William Armstrong again took the Chair. This time, however, the Warden was in attendance and he set about winning over the assembled representatives of Newcastle's industrial and scientific community. It was clear to Lake that, if their scheme for some 'better means' of allowing working men to study their 'professions in a thoughtful and scientific manner was to succeed', bridges needed to be built between a largely alienated community of professionals in Newcastle and the academic clerics of the University. Lake humorously reminded them that 'about sixteen miles from Newcastle, and perhaps not so far, there was a place called Durham' and even though some clearly held an 'inextinguishable hatred to the University' for its part Lake 'had found that the University was animated with the most friendly spirit towards Newcastle and the North of England'.⁷⁶

Lake pitched his proposal that had been hammered out the day before, including the professors, scholarships, and matched funding. Although he understood that 'people would not interest themselves in an institution which they believed was brought over and stuck down from a town of which some of them did

⁷⁵ *ibid.*: 24 March 1871.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*: 25 March 1871.

not entertain an exalted motion' still restrictions in their charters and endowments meant 'it was a matter of necessity ... that there should be some connection between the Institution and the University of Durham'. For these reasons also the students and professors would be termed members of the University. Now was the time for definite and conclusive action, Lake urged them, for while such a scheme 'had often been talked of in past times ... the matter had ended all in talk'. The only other member of the University's Senate present, Joseph Waite (who after a brief interval had succeeded Thorp as Master of University College) backed up Lake's offer by assuring those present 'that a very decided majority of the Senate entirely concurred, not only in the details of the proposal ... but also in the spirit'.⁷⁷

This proposal was at last accepted. Isaac Bell even offered something of an apology. He suggested that those who had disparaged the University were 'much more to blame' for its lack of success for having 'failed to avail themselves of the advantages' it offered.⁷⁸ Joseph Cowen junior, a friend of European revolutionaries who later succeeded his father as the radical liberal MP for Newcastle, summed up the feeling of the meeting.⁷⁹ If they did not carry out the College efficiently, he declared, 'it would be to the lasting disgrace of the town and district', and he further hoped that by being 'brought into contact with the soothing influences of that rather soporific institution ... they would materially improve each other by gradually wearing off the corners of each other's prejudices'.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ W.F. Rae, 'Cowen, Joseph (1829–1900)', rev. E.F. Biagini, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

⁸⁰ [NUL] CPSMB: 25 March 1871.

The task of bringing the College into existence now started in earnest, and the work was swiftly executed. A committee was formed, and again William Armstrong was Chair. This group first met on 4 April 1871 and progress was so fast that the first students were admitted to the College only six months later.⁸¹ The call for subscriptions met with an equally rapid and positive reply. By early May it had been agreed that the College should open for its first academic year that October, with the new Professors taking up their posts in July.⁸² Productive discussions were held with the major learned societies in Newcastle: the Medical College, the Natural History Society, the Literary and Philosophical Society, and the Institute of Mechanical and Mining Engineers. Even *The Times*, in a complete reversal of its earlier criticism, applauded the 'energy of the present Dean' in overcoming all the obstacles that had previously prevented the establishment of such an institution as was now being created in Newcastle. It waited anxiously for the 'result of this educational experiment' to ascertain 'whether it be not expedient to impart scientific knowledge more in the concrete than is the habit in this country'.⁸³ A brief prospectus was issued on 25 May 1871, advertising a two year course (perhaps a result of the move to two year courses in Durham), of three terms per year, each term being ten to twelve weeks long. Rather than obtain a degree or a licence, successful students would become an Associate in Physical Science.⁸⁴ The subjects covered focussed on 'the application of Science to Engineering, Mining, Manufactures, and Agriculture'. The fees would be

⁸¹ *ibid.*: 4 April 1871, 4 May 1871 and 15 September 1871.

⁸² *ibid.*: 4 May 1871.

⁸³ *The Times*, 12 April 1871.

⁸⁴ A Bachelor of Science award was introduced five years later, the first such degree went to Edward Haigh on 27 June 1876.

five guineas for each course of lectures, with an admission fee of one guinea and a separate charge for the use of the laboratory. Examinations for the public Exhibitions, each worth £15 a year, would be held from 12 to 14 June.⁸⁵

By the end of May £21,029 had been received in subscriptions. In June four Professors were appointed: William Steadman Aldis from Trinity College Cambridge as Professor of Mathematics, David Page from the University of St Andrews as Professor of Geology, Algernon Freire-Marreco from Durham itself as Professor of Chemistry, and Alexander Stuart Herschel, the grandson of William Herschel,⁸⁶ from Anderson's University in Glasgow and before that the Royal School of Mines in London, as Professor of Experimental Physics. Herschel received £400 a year, the others £300, to which was added two thirds of their students' fees. These were first rate, and promising appointments.

The College of Physical Science opened to students in October 1871 amidst the turmoil of a bitter engineer's strike. The Nine Hours Movement, so-called because of demands from workers for their day to be limited to a maximum of nine hours, has been described by Norman McCord as 'one of the most significant industrial disputes of nineteenth-century Britain'.⁸⁷ To extend the inauspicious beginning the first students were taught in borrowed accommodation. Rooms were used from the Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, the College of Medicine, and the Literary and Philosophical Society. Uncomfortable though some of these arrangements were, Lake wrote to *The Times* stating that a 'fair start' had been made

⁸⁵ [NUL] CPSMB: 23 May 1871.

⁸⁶ H.P. Hollis, 'Herschel, Alexander Stewart (1836–1907)', rev. A.J. Meadows, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004; online edn 2005).

⁸⁷ Allen, et al, *North-East Engineers' Strikes of 1871*, p. 98.

but that more donations and support would be welcome.⁸⁸

Despite the labour issues caused by the strike, local industry was booming and Newcastle could now boast of two colleges offering a higher education, both of which were connected with the University: the newly opened College and the College of Medicine. Outside of their connections with the University in most other respects the two colleges were very different institutions. The College of Medicine was the private initiative of a single professional group. It grew out of the growing need for additional and formal medical education which, during the course of the nineteenth century, was embedded within a legal framework. The training needs of senior medical practitioners were therefore narrowly defined, and increasingly specified. While the College of Physical Science also grew out of the interests of a professionalising area, there were multiple groups involved from different industries. Neither did their work develop within a coherent national framework nor were they united by a common purpose at a local or regional level. This national context in part explains the local realities which led to the earlier success of the College of Medicine, even though both colleges can trace some origin back to Greenhow's paper presented to the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1831. Another important aspect, however, is that the purpose of training in engineering, mining, and commerce spanned a greater range of abilities: from the type of training required for junior posts to the needs of advanced engineers including the gap identified by Bell for 'the means of education of those in the intermediate degree'.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the changed national context and increased local population and industrial activity, carefully managed by Lake, at last created a

⁸⁸ *The Times*, 2 November 1871.

⁸⁹ *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 84; Sanderson, *Universities in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 166-7.

sufficiently benign environment for the College of Physical Science to become a reality.

A Sound School of Theology

‘There is a great want of theological teaching in the English Church’, Lake wrote in his memoirs, ‘and Durham, though not of course equal in this respect of Oxford or Cambridge, might under effective teachers become a really great school of divinity’.⁹⁰ While Lake’s vision for Durham itself was strictly limited to the production of clergy this did not mean that he intended to leave the University’s theological provision unreformed. In fact, several crucial initiatives evolved under Lake that continued into the twentieth century: connecting the University with the new theological colleges, the establishment of international links, and the eventual creation of new and privately funded halls dedicated (though not exclusively) to the teaching of theology and the training of ordinands.⁹¹ It was these developments that set the tone and reputation of the University for decades to come, at least until the re-introduction of scientific education in the mid-1920s.⁹²

The key to Durham’s future success, Lake argued, would be the ‘importation of some really able men as heads of the two colleges and principal teachers’.

There is no reason why the early successes of Dr. Jenkyns should not be repeated. It must be remembered, however, that there is at present only one Professor of Divinity, and that the appointment to the post is in the hands of the Bishop. To make a good school of theology would certainly require more professors.⁹³

Where he could, Lake recruited men of quality and reputation early in their careers.

One of his first appointments was Alfred Plummer, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford

⁹⁰ Lake, *Memorials*, p. 115.

⁹¹ St Chad’s Hall in 1904 and St John’s Hall in 1909.

⁹² Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 259.

⁹³ Lake, *Memorials*, p. 115.

to become Master of University College from 1874 to 1902. C. K. Barrett described him as a 'good though hardly outstanding' student at Oxford and possessing a 'sound and careful scholarship but few sparks of brilliance and originality'.⁹⁴ William Sanday, also a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, was appointed Principal of Hatfield Hall by Lake in 1876. Sanday left Durham in 1882 to become Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Oxford. He later became the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church. Although a more significant scholar than Plummer, the conclusion reached by Joanna Hawke on his work, that he was 'not original in his research and slow to arrive at conclusions', indicates a similar sort of solid but unexceptional mind.⁹⁵ Sanday's successor at Hatfield was Archibald Robertson, yet another Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. He was, perhaps, the most eminent of the three. In 1897 he left Durham to become principal of King's College, London, and was Vice-Chancellor of London University in 1902/03. He became Bishop of Exeter in 1903. Claude Jenkins' summary is that he was 'a careful, fair-minded, and patient teacher and administrator' – not an exceptional scholar, then, but he did combine 'conciseness ... with clarity of exposition'.⁹⁶

Lake attributed Durham's 'position as a sound school of theology' to the work of these three men and the Tutors who supported them. Still, they were not truly exceptional and in Lake's estimation more would have to be done before Durham

⁹⁴ C.K. Barrett, 'Plummer, Alfred (1841–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

⁹⁵ J. Hawke, 'Sanday, William (1843–1920)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

⁹⁶ C. Jenkins, 'Robertson, Archibald (1853–1931)', rev. H.C.G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

could become a 'really great school of divinity'.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Lake was thoroughly convinced that Durham could never achieve parity with Oxford and Cambridge: their 'predominance', he argued, would 'prevent Durham from ever attaining a high position'. Durham could therefore 'never expect many able scholars among its members'.⁹⁸

Connections with the Theological Colleges

In 1876 the *Durham University Journal* boasted that the University was 'entering upon a period of prosperity'.⁹⁹ This optimism was caused by the arrangements made in May 1876 to allow students to progress from the theological colleges to study for a year at Durham and obtain the Bachelor of Arts.¹⁰⁰ Extending at first to four colleges, the number of connected colleges grew rapidly and eventually included institutions as widely flung as Jamaica and New Zealand.¹⁰¹ Allowing students from the theological colleges favourable admission to the BA was a popular move as far as recruitment went. The average number admitted annually to the Arts course in the decade starting in 1856/57 was a mere 11. The situation improved marginally over the following decade, coinciding with the reduction of time required to complete the Arts course to two years, with average admissions reaching 19 students per year. However over the next ten year period, starting in 1876/77, there was a radical increase as the average number of entrants jumped to 55 per year.

⁹⁷ Lake, *Memorials*, p. 115.

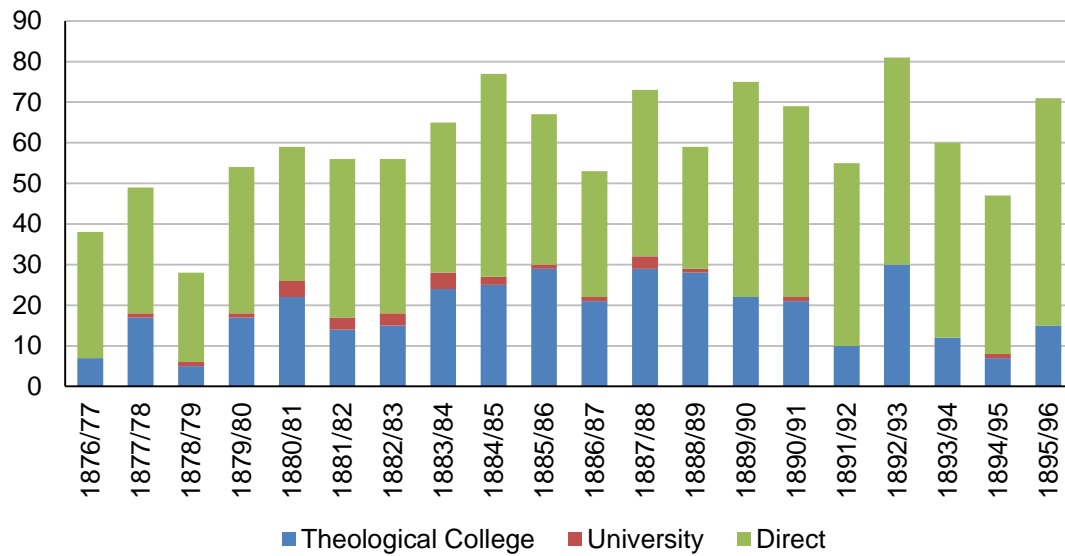
⁹⁸ Lake, *Memorials*, p. 115.

⁹⁹ *Durham University Journal*, 1/2, (December 1876), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Park, *St Bees*, p. 92.

¹⁰¹ The first four colleges were St Aidan's, St Bees, Lichfield, and the Theological Department of Queen's College, Birmingham. Colleges based overseas included Selwyn College, Dunedin, and St Peter's College, Jamaica.

Figure 13: Entrants 1876/77 to 1895/96 by Previous Institution (Durham Only, Arts Course)¹⁰²



Although the entirety of the increase cannot be attributed to the admission of students from theological colleges, it was a significant factor: in the first year of the new allowance for advanced entry, 18% of entrants to the Arts course progressed from a theological college and between 1876/77 and 1895/96 up to 47% of entrants in any year came via this route, with the average over the two decades being 31% - a total of 370 students.

While this scheme undoubtedly increased the number of students at Durham it was not universally popular. Whiting, probably based on the first hand reflections of his older colleagues, noted that there were ‘well-grounded objections to this system as at first introduced’. The principal complaints were that the students who transferred in from the theological colleges avoided the first year examination in Arts, and that the required residence of three terms need not be kept consecutively; even six half-terms over six years could be added together to fulfil the requirement of the

¹⁰² Source: [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96.

regulations. This gave the University the unfortunate reputation that it 'gave a degree on easier terms than any other university'.¹⁰³

Unattached Students

Neither was the development of progression routes for students from the increasing number of theological colleges the only way in which entry to Durham was liberalised under Lake. From the outset the University had been residential and matriculated students were required to reside in a 'recognized College, Hall, or House'.¹⁰⁴ The collegiate system in part accounted for the concerns over the cost of studying at Durham – even if the costs were lower than the older universities, it was still not low enough. This changed when so-called Unattached Members were first admitted in Epiphany Term 1871, without the need to join a college or hall.¹⁰⁵ It is possible that the Archbishop's influence was at work here too, as Tait advocated strongly for the admission of non-collegiate students to Oxford while serving on the Royal Commission there. It was not, however, until 1868 that non-collegiate students were first admitted to Oxford.¹⁰⁶

Although not a member of either College or Hall, Unattached students at Durham were still required to reside in a house or lodgings licensed by the Warden and the option was only open to men over 23. Whiting recorded that this extension was not universally popular: as the unattached men were older and often married 'there was a tendency to avoid that general intercourse with their fellows which is the

¹⁰³ Whiting, *University of Durham*, pp. 309-10.

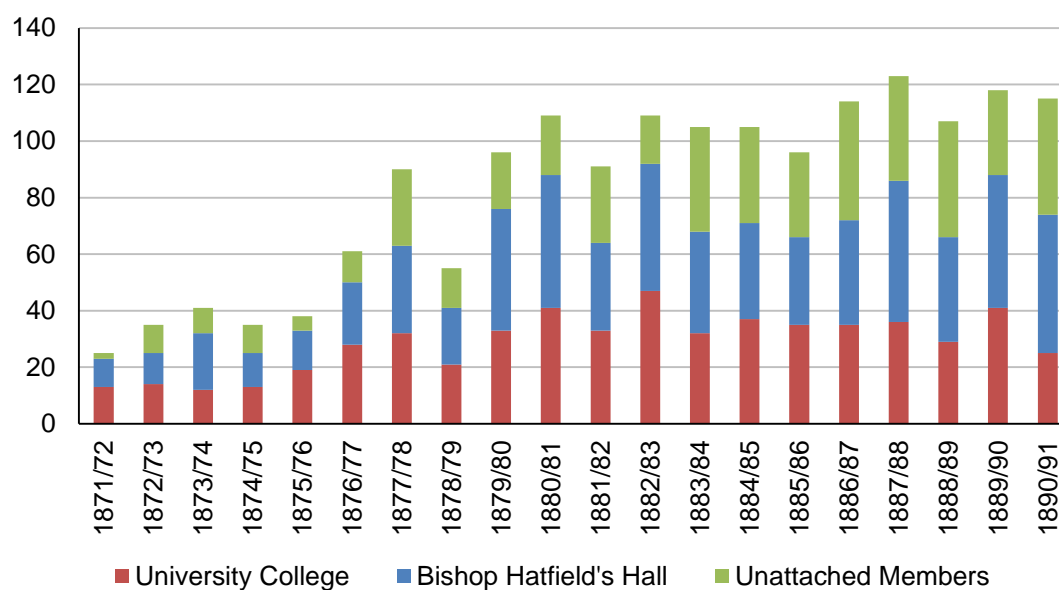
¹⁰⁴ Regulations, Title II, Of Admission, paragraph 2.

¹⁰⁵ This group of students first warranted a listing in the Calendar for 1876.

¹⁰⁶ A. Bullock, "'A Scotch University added to Oxford'? The Non-Collegiate Students' in Brock and Curthoys (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Volume 7*, pp. 193-208, pp. 193-4.

essence of university life', he noted.¹⁰⁷ The establishment of the Union Society in 1873 helped mitigate this to some extent, but in the 1880s the unattached students formed their own society to promote social interaction.¹⁰⁸ This eventually became St Cuthbert's Society in 1888.¹⁰⁹

Figure 14: Entrants 1871/72 to 1890/91 by College or Hall (Durham Only, All Courses)¹¹⁰



Whatever shortcomings there may have been, the option proved popular: 29% of the students (10 out of 35) admitted in 1872/73 were unattached, as were 28% (465) of all entrants between 1871/72 and 1890/91.

Changing the recruitment policy to admit students from the theological colleges on preferential terms, alongside other aspects of reform at Durham such as the increased emphasis on economy and the admission of unattached students, helped

¹⁰⁷ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁸ Fowler, *Durham University*, p. 57; Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 142; Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society*, p. 8-9. The meeting on 25 October 1888 at which the creation of the Society was agreed was chaired by Hastings Rashdall who later became a celebrated historian of medieval European universities.

¹¹⁰ Source: [DUL] DUR: Admission Book 1833-96.

create a greater connection between the University and the diocese and region in which it sat. From roughly the mid-1860s onwards the University played an increasingly important role in radically widening the social backgrounds of the diocesan clergy. By the early twentieth century 42% of ordinands in the Durham diocese had been educated at the University, and these men were typically older and from lower social classes than those from Oxford or Cambridge.¹¹¹

The emphasis on theology in Durham persisted into the 1880s and eventually additional staff were appointed to support the growing student population. Although a Professor of Hebrew had been projected for many years, it was only in 1880 that an appointment was made. Henry William Watkins, who had graduated BA from King's College, London, and MA at Balliol College, Oxford, was appointed to the long-awaited fourth professorship. Whiting recorded how he adopted the same understanding as Lake that there was very little scope for development at Durham: a stance which had become *de rigueur* following the Warden's appointment.¹¹²

International Affiliations

By developing a narrower focus on theology and the preparation of ordinands, the University became the natural home for two new and innovative international relationships with colleges in the worldwide Anglican Communion. So, while this move towards theology turned Durham into what its detractors had always criticised it for, it nevertheless opened up great opportunities. Durham's reputation, no doubt, also made it more approachable as a body with which to affiliate than either Oxford

¹¹¹ Lee, 'Class, Industrialization and the Church of England', p. 171; Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield*, p. 70.

¹¹² Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 143.

or Cambridge. The only other English University then existing, London, had been able to recognise institutions throughout the British Empire for the purposes of submitting candidates for degrees since 1850 and had started to do so through the Royal College in Mauritius in 1865.¹¹³ It still had no Faculty of Theology, however, and would not establish one until 1898, and remained as resolutely religiously non-aligned as it had been since its foundation.¹¹⁴

The first of Durham's international affiliations was with Codrington College, Barbados. Named after Christopher Codrington (1668-1710), who in his Will left a substantial bequest to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the College at first opened in 1745 as a Grammar School.¹¹⁵ After the See of Barbados and the Leeward Islands was constituted in 1824, William Hart Coleridge, DD of Christ Church, Oxford, the inaugural Bishop, soon concluded that the supply of local clergy was inadequate. At Coleridge's instigation, therefore, something approaching the original intention of Codrington's Will was eventually agreed in 1829 when the Grammar School was reconstituted principally, though never exclusively, to train students for ordination.¹¹⁶ Courses were offered in Arts (including classics and mathematics) and Theology, leading to separate Testamurs.¹¹⁷ The Testamur was considered the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree and did carry prestige with it: it enabled those who possessed it to vote under the Franchise Act of Barbados, for

¹¹³ Harte, *University of London*, pp. 98, 106-7.

¹¹⁴ S. Evans, 'Theology', in Thompson (ed.), *University of London*, pp. 147-60.

¹¹⁵ G.C. Simmons, 'Codrington College in Barbados, Legacy of Christopher Codrington of All Souls', *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, 9/1-2 (1969), pp. 474-96, p. 476.

¹¹⁶ T.H. Bindley, *Annals of Codrington College Barbados* (London, 1911), pp. 31-3.

¹¹⁷ Simmons, 'Codrington College in Barbados', p. 478; Bindley, *Annals of Codrington College*, p. 38.

example, and it was listed by the Royal College of Surgeons of England as satisfying its requirements for general education required of those seeking the Diploma of Member.¹¹⁸

The connection with Durham first germinated when John Mitchinson became the third Bishop of Barbados in 1873. He had been born in Durham on 23 September 1833, just over a month before the University admitted its first students. He had attended Durham Grammar School from 1841 to 1851, the same period when the University's hopes for growth and success remained reasonably buoyant. In 1874 when the College's Principal, William Webb, called for it to 'be affiliated to some English university' Mitchinson's connection made Durham the natural choice.¹¹⁹ The College was duly affiliated with the University in Easter Term 1875. The arrangement enabled students of the College to become matriculated in the University, and to Keep Terms and meet other academic obligations in Barbados. The examination papers were sent 'in a sealed packet, by the last mail that' left England before the exams started in Durham, and returned – unread – for marking as soon as they had been completed.¹²⁰ The degrees were awarded by the Bishop of Barbados, 'acting under Commission from the Warden'.¹²¹

The first four students to graduate were conferred their Bachelor of Arts degrees on 23 October 1877.¹²² This made them the first students to receive degrees

¹¹⁸ *Calendar of the Royal College of Surgeons of England for 1870*, p. 7.

¹¹⁹ W.T. Webb, 'Codrington College, Barbados', *Mission Life*, V (1874), pp. 206-13, pp. 212-3.

¹²⁰ *Durham University Calendar 1876*, Regulations, Title XI, para 3, p. xlii-xliii.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, Title XI, para 5, p. xliii.

¹²² *Durham University Calendar 1883*, p. 136.

from a UK institution having followed a residential course overseas.¹²³ Recruitment through the College remained buoyant in the first decade, with an average of eight new students per year. The prestige of a real university degree rather than a testamur helped raised the standing of the College too.¹²⁴

The second connection swiftly followed when Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone was affiliated in 1876. It had been founded in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society, and started with just six students. Nevertheless, it soon grew in prominence and attracted an international teaching staff drawn from Africa, America, and Germany as well as England.¹²⁵ It gained a strong reputation and earned for Freetown the title of the 'Athens of Africa'.

In the middle part of the nineteenth century several prominent figures in West African society called for the establishment of an African university.¹²⁶ However it was not until the 1860s that the first clear vision for a West African University was set out by James Africanus Beale Horton. Edward Wilmot Blyden then continued the argument first put forward by Horton.¹²⁷ The British Bishop of Sierra Leone, Henry Cheetham, returned to his African diocese from a visit to England in 1872 and found 'the place ablaze with a scheme for a godless West African University under Government and Negro control'; the 'great source of evil', he pronounced, was Mr

¹²³ G.C. Simmons, 'West Indian Higher Education – The Story of Codrington College', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 18/3 (September 1972), pp. 51-72., p. 55.

¹²⁴ Simmons, 'Codrington College in Barbados', p. 484.

¹²⁵ F.J. Taylor and E. Downing, 'Fourah Bay College: University College of Sierra Leone', *Nature*, 185 (26 March 1960), pp. 884-7, p. 885.

¹²⁶ A.O. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans 1860-1960* (London, 1997), p. 2.

¹²⁷ D.J. Paracka, *The Athens of West Africa: A History of International Education at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (London, 2003), p. 52; Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism*, p. 13.

Blyden.¹²⁸ It had become clear that there was a growing split between African pastors on the one hand, many of whom advocated the establishment of an independent African Church, and the British ecclesiastical authorities and European missionaries on the other. Working with the Church Missionary Society to develop Fourah Bay College was in fact an attempt to see off the threat of a secular university.¹²⁹ Durham was not, however, the only institution considered to take on the role: at least Cambridge and London were as well. Durham was picked because of its theological strengths and Anglican foundation.¹³⁰

Fourah Bay College was affiliated with the University on 16 May 1876 and became a broader institution than it had been hitherto.¹³¹ The first six students to graduate with Durham degrees were conferred their awards on 10 December 1878; one student, Nathaniel Davis, gained a Bachelor of Arts and the remaining five received the Licentiate in Theology.¹³²

Conclusion

Despite all these reforms the University's reputation still declined during the 1870s. Not only was the University seen as intellectually moribund, the students were seen as rowdy. The *Durham County Advertiser*, for example, called the students 'a set of slangy, underbred youths, who mistake impudence for wit and vulgarity for

¹²⁸ H.R. Lynch, 'The Native Pastorate Controversy and Cultural Ethno-centrism in Sierra Leone 1871-1874', *Journal of African History*, 5/3 (1964), pp. 395-413. p. 406.

¹²⁹ Taylor and Downing, 'Fourah Bay College', pp. 409, 411.

¹³⁰ C.P. Foray, *An Outline of Fourah Bay College History (1827-1977)* (Freetown, 1979), p. 6; T.J. Thompson, *The Jubilee and Centenary Volume of Fourah Bay College Freetown, Sierra Leone* (Freetown, 1930), p. 70.

¹³¹ Thompson, *Fourah Bay College*, p. 33.

¹³² *Durham University Calendar 1883*, p. 140.

humour'.¹³³ During the enfranchisement debates in Parliament it was clear the University's national reputation fared no better. One MP, George Denman, called Durham 'a little, wretched, miserable University'.¹³⁴ By 1880 the regional newspapers called for the University to be affiliated to Oxford University as it had 'proved its incapacity to stand alone'.¹³⁵

But Lake's 25-year tenure as Warden also coincided with considerable reforms, though of a kind never envisaged by Thorp and Van Mildert. Lake was a radical figure, and his determination and single-mindedness meant he was not an easy man to get on with.¹³⁶ Of all his reforms, Lake attached the greatest importance to the developments in Newcastle, which were often seen as entirely separate from the University in Durham. His pride in the achievements there are palpable from his Memoirs, written in the early 1890s. The College of Physical Science, he wrote, now had 'the character of a University; and in point of extent of work and of the number of its professors and teachers, it far exceeds the Durham portion of the University'.¹³⁷ This success, however, created tensions between the two parts of the University which would ultimately lead to the creation of the separate University of Newcastle on 1 August 1963.¹³⁸

Lake's legacy is therefore every bit as complex as Thorp's. It can be argued he saved Durham from a slow and painful demise into obscurity and closure. The Royal

¹³³ *Durham County Advertiser*, quoted in Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 139; cf Tudor, *St Cuthbert's Society*, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁴ *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, HC Deb, 17 June 1867, vol. 187, c. 2004.

¹³⁵ *Eastern Morning News* (Hull) and *Western Morning News* (Plymouth), quoted in Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 138 and *Durham University Journal*, 4/13 (March 1880), p. 21.

¹³⁶ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 162.

¹³⁷ Lake, *Memorials*, p. 116.

¹³⁸ Bettenson, *University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, p. 70.

Commission had failed to bring about positive change, and the Dean and Chapter fared little better in doing so during the 1860s. Lake's reforming zeal finally, and after many previous attempts, brought about the long-anticipated College of Physical Science that many in Newcastle craved so desperately. Yet in Durham Lake restricted the University to being nothing but a sound though unexceptional school of Theology. The University did good work during this period, for sure, but its ambitions were much lower than the soaring expectations of the 1830s. This also cemented the University's reputation until well into the twentieth century as a northern, Anglican, clerical enclave. As Whiting recorded about the early twentieth century: 'the Durham man found himself constantly explaining to people that Durham was a university and not a theological college'.¹³⁹ The Newcastle and Durham divisions never fully integrated and the only thing surprising about the separation in 1963 is that it did not come earlier. It can be argued convincingly that Lake saved the University from an ultimate and final collapse, but by the time he became Warden the environment for higher education was more conducive, and the price he paid was to give up on the ambitions held by Thorp and Van Mildert.

¹³⁹ Whiting, *University of Durham*, p. 259.

Conclusion

Durham's nineteenth century development is a story of reform, though it has been told as if reform were only visited upon an unwilling Chapter after 30 years of it attempting unsuccessfully to mould a northern replica of Oxford. The University Van Mildert and Thorp endeavoured to establish was a reforming institution. It was not designed to be in aggressive opposition to the older English universities, in fact it was hoped it could achieve some measure of equality with them, but that does not mean it failed to innovate or offer a vision of reformed higher education. Under Thorp's leadership the University offered a traditional Arts course, and developed external examiners to demonstrate comparability, but also initiated a course in civil engineering and even attempted a course in medicine. These were modern, vocational, and professional subjects. Its collegiate system also built on the older universities' residential and pastoral system though it was integrated alongside a similar type of professorial model that could be found in Scotland or the new London colleges. So Durham also had much in common with the ideas that underpinned the civic universities.

However, at first there were insufficient students needing the type of education Durham offered, and when an increase in demand came it was initially satisfied by Oxford and Cambridge. Although it may have appeared fortunate that Durham was founded as a university, and not a college, that same fortune gave rise to elevated expectations that it could never satisfy. Coupled with the old High Church atmosphere of its founders, a churchmanship that was not in favour with either the Tractarians or the Evangelicals, the University became an easy target for more radical

reformers. Other institutions like Owens College or King's College, London, avoided such opprobrium as they had not been founded as universities, and though they were no more successful the expectations on them were commensurately lower.

The irony of Durham's nineteenth-century existence is not simply that it was founded in the early 1830s, the worst time to found a university in that century, but that Lake's reforms were instituted during the 1870s, which was the best time.¹ Even then, the new College of Physical Science in Newcastle was still struggling some ten years after it was founded.² Lake was a more typical reformer than Thorp but both men were driven by many of the same desires, including a desire to develop modern courses in professional disciplines. Durham's lack of initial success can be explained by the fact that it had been created for an environment which would not exist for another half century. There were too many complaining voices to deny that Thorp was deficient as a leader in several important respects, and therefore if his approach had been more inclusive of his tutors it is at least unlikely that the University's development would have been harmed. But it is, nevertheless, almost inconceivable that Durham could have fared very much better between 1831 and 1862 under different leadership.

Any institutional history of an English university can fall under the shadow of Oxford and Cambridge, or become a bland commemoration of milestones being passed. Gaining a balanced view of an institution within its historical, social, and local context is neither easy nor frequently attempted.³ Durham's case is perhaps even more

¹ Anderson, *European Universities*, pp. 1-3.

² *Durham County Advertiser*, 23 June 1882.

³ E.J. Morse, 'English Universities and the Myth of Decline', *History of Universities*, XI (1992), pp. 177-204, pp. 177-9.

complex than most because it simultaneously looked toward the Oxford ideal as well as seeking to break new ground in professional education. And hence it is the case that, created by a wealthy Dean and Chapter, with the support of a powerful Bishop, as so many European universities before it, Durham can be thought of as the last of the ancient universities. But it can claim to be the first of the new universities based on its founders' intentions to offer modern, practical, and professional subjects with a vocational orientation.

Appendix – Student Record

Summary Information

The student record for Durham University includes 6,059 entries, extending from the first entrants in 1833/34 to 1905/06. The main sources for the database are the University Admissions Registers and the University Calendar. This basic record was supplemented by information from the Admissions Registers for University College and Hatfield Hall and other sources including Census Records, Crockford's Clerical Directory, and alumni records for Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin, as well as school registers.

College	Number of Students	Date Range
Durham University (Durham only)	4,460	1833/34 to 1905/06
College of Medicine	1,043	1853/54 to 1887/88
College of Physical Science	406	1872/73 to 1887/88
Codrington College	98	1875/76 to 1902/03
Fourah Bay College	52	1876/77 to 1888/89

As should be expected, most students on the database are male: there are 109 female students, all in Durham except for two at the College of Physical Science. Across all records, there are: 652 students with a date of birth, 284 with a place of birth, 222 with a date of death, and 651 with some future career details. There are 3,057 graduation records, including 2,104 BAs, 1,074 MAs, and 1,556 LThs.

Sample Entries

The following sample entries have been selected to demonstrate the range of information in the database. John Cundill, for example, was the first student to matriculate at the University, shortly before James Skinner.

John Cundill (Clergy), son of James Cundill (Clergy)

ID: 183301001

Born: 9 May 1812

Place of birth: Stockton-on-Tees, Durham

Died: 14 September 1894 (age 82)

Background: Father was Vicar of Coniscliffe

Matriculated: 25 October 1833 (age 21)

Course: Arts

College: University College, Durham

BA: 8 June 1837 (age 25)

Classification in BA CGL: Class 2

Classification in BA MPS: Class 1

MA: 28 April 1840

LTh: 19 June 1838

BD: 19 June 1850

Elected Fellow: 1839

Career: Chaplain (1839-42) and Bursar (1843) of University College; Rector of St Margaret's (1844-84+) and Principal of Bede College.

James Skinner (Clergy), son of John Skinner (Clergy)

ID: 183301014

Born: 23 June 1818

Place of birth: Forfar, Forfarshire

Died: 29 December 1881 (age 63)

Background: Father was Dean and Grandfather a Bishop

Previous higher study: Marischal College, Aberdeen

Matriculated: 25 October 1833 (age 15)

Course: Arts

College: University College, Durham

BA: 8 June 1837 (age 19)

Classification in BA combined: Class 5

MA: 28 April 1840

Elected Fellow: 1844

Career: Chaplain to the Forces (1844-50), Curate St Barnabas London (1851-7), Vicar of Newland (1861-77), Religious writer and (in)famous Tractarian.

William Young

ID: 185503002

Matriculated: 4 June 1856

Course: Medicine

College: Neville Hall, Newcastle

LMed: 17 June 1856

MC: 19 November 1861

MB: 15 June 1858

Frederick Barkas

ID: 187210030

Course: Physical Science

College: College of Physical Science, Newcastle

APS: 24 June 1873

Career: The first graduate of the College of Physical Science.

Edwin Longstaff Prowde (Lay)

ID: 187705017

Born: 11 April 1852

Place of birth: Loftus, Yorkshire

Died: 15 July 1922 (age 70)

Previous higher study: University of Cambridge

Course: Medicine

College: College of Medicine, Newcastle

MB: 28 June 1881

Career: Surgeon at Forcett quarries, Melsonby, Yorks, and Sunderland.

Nathanael Temple Hamlyn (Clergy), son of William Hamlyn

ID: 188602015

Born: 9 November 1864

Place of birth: Totnes, Devonshire

Died: 26 January 1929 (age 65)

Background: Totnes Grammar School

Matriculated: 4 February 1887 (age 23)

Course: Theology

College: Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham

LTh: 25 June 1889

Career: Curate of Eglington, Northumberland (1891); CMS Missionary in Nigeria (1896); Vicar of Christ Church, Lagos (1898); Archdeacon of Lagos (1901); Bishop of Accra (1909-10); Vicar of Eaton, Norwich and Assistant Bishop (1910); Rector of N Creak (1927).

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