Honest, Sober and Willing: Oxford College Servants 1850-1939

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Short Abstract

A comparative study of nineteen Oxford colleges, this thesis offers a novel contribution to the historiography of the University of Oxford: a history of the university 'from below'. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, colleges experimented with a variety of solutions to problems common to many employers. Labour contracts are compared across colleges to consider the role of wage forms and methods of pay in the management of college servants. Colleges and servants relied on family labour networks to mitigate the risks of uncertainty. These networks became particularly important after 1868, when the university began licensing lodging houses for undergraduates, and college servants, together with their families, provided a trustworthy source of labour. By the late-nineteenth century, the employment contract reflected a fundamental shift in the apportionment of responsibility for managing the financial risk associated with death, illness, and most importantly, old age. Colleges were early adopters of contributory pension schemes. Beginning with contributory savings schemes for the purchase of life insurance in the mid-nineteenth century, colleges experimented with a variety of strategies for managing the cost of servants' retirement and by the 1920s, all colleges but two had contributory pension schemes. Contradicting longstanding characterizations, I find evidence of trade union activity among college servants in the early twentieth century that resulted in wage increases for many of these workers.

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Long Abstract

A comparative study of nineteen Oxford colleges, this thesis offers a novel contribution to the historiography of the University of Oxford: a history 'from below'. Men, women and children have worked in these colleges since their foundation, yet college servants are strangely absent in most historical accounts. When included they are often denied agency, disappearing into the fabric of a well-ordered college life. This thesis looks to recover the servants' view of these institutions and in so doing, provide an account of a distinctive and peculiar labour market.

Most of the primary sources used in this thesis are found in the university and college archives. Many of these have not been used before, or only in a limited capacity. Some were uncatalogued and previously unknown. The use of these novel sources combined with a comparative approach has yielded new and occasionally surprising insights.

Colleges faced challenges common to most employers, particularly how to recruit a trustworthy and dependable workforce, and how to motivate them to work efficiently and effectively. Family labour networks were strategically important in addressing these issues. In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, colleges rapidly expanded, facilitated by a scheme of licensed university lodging houses. College servants and their families participated extensively in this scheme, the labour of women was crucial to its success.

Here, theories of labor markets and employment contracts are useful in framing questions, but ultimately their explanatory power is limited by the contradictory nature of paternalistic

management practices. This is illustrated by the debate around college servants' Sunday worship practices: a failure of paternalism that foreshadows college servants' union activity in the early twentieth century. It was obvious to contemporary observers in the nineteenth century that servants' ability to effect anything more than incremental change in their working conditions was limited by social and cultural norms, as well as the fragmentation of the collegiate system. Collective action was first proposed as a means to improve servants' welfare in the late nineteenth century, but these early efforts were met with little enthusiasm from servants.

The Cleveland, Selbourne and Asquith royal commissions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were formed to investigate the finances of the universities. This scrutiny of the colleges' internal management practices prompted intense and sustained criticism of servants' remuneration. Complicated wage forms and methods of pay had developed over the centuries, in part to address common management concerns, to increase productivity and elicit effort; but these systems of remuneration also existed to shift the high cost of service onto resident members of colleges, particularly undergraduates. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, colleges experimented with a variety of wage forms and methods of pay; labour contracts were negotiated and renegotiated throughout the period.

The standardization of accounting practices effected by the royal commissions, particularly from the 1870s onward, revolutionized the internal management of colleges. The demands of record keeping and reporting ushered in the era of the professional college bursar, who also focused attention on improving the standards and efficiency of domestic management. College authorities, particularly bursars, had improved access to increasing quantities of reliable quantitative data with which to formulate management strategies.

Servants' remuneration depended not only on wages, perquisites and gratuities, but on the quantity of work available. The structure of the academic calendar compounded the economic uncertainty of everyday life in Victorian and Edwardian England through seasonal under and unemployment. Growing support for individualism and the ideals of the self-help movement among some fellows gradually shifted the responsibility of managing this uncertainty from the college and community onto the servants themselves. By the 1880s, colleges expressed the sentiment that an 'enterprising' servant would find their own employment during the vacations, regardless of their personal circumstances. Conferences did not provide a reliable source of vacation employment for most servants until after the Second World War. For most servants, the challenge of smoothing income over the calendar year remained a concern throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Nearly all the authority in the paternalistic employment relationship rested in the individual, rather than in fairly enforced rules, or objective and transparent decision-making criteria. The lack of uniformity in the exercise of control in the employment relationship led inevitably to a perceived lack of fairness. Over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, workers became less likely to unquestioningly accept this seemingly arbitrary expression of authority in the workplace. This was particularly true in the case of domestic service, an employment relationship that in the early twentieth century was increasingly shaped by changing ideas about the social order, authority, class and masculinity. Throughout the period, college employment for most junior and many senior employees was relatively low-waged. In the interwar period, long working hours during the terms combined with growing dissatisfaction over a system of remuneration that still relied on gratuities and perquisites. From the 1920s, higher wages were increasingly available in the growing Cowley

Motorworks, particularly for younger workers, for whom domestic service had lost much of its attraction.

In the interwar period, college servants began to grow frustrated with traditional methods of wage bargaining, both individually and collectively. In 1919, college servants allied with trade union representatives and approached colleges to negotiate wage increases and improvements in working conditions. These efforts were met by an organized response, coordinated through the domestic bursars' committee, while a few colleges negotiated directly with the union. The committee responded to the union's demands for uniform pay scales and wage increases by agreeing to fix a minimum weekly wage. Servants at many colleges, whether they were members of trade unions or not, joined in the campaign for wage increases and improvements in working conditions. As a result of this process, wages were increased, however other demands received less attention. Very little improvement was made in working conditions or in inflationary protection for pension awards, which had suffered considerably from wartime price increases. By the 1930s, dissatisfaction with the same issues resurfaced and a second union drive began, although it enjoyed less success than the first.

College service had always promised a 'job for life', paternalistic management offered protection against the uncertainty of working-class life during this period. By the late nineteenth century, the employment contract reflected a fundamental shift in the apportionment of responsibility for managing the financial risk associated with death, illness, and most importantly, old age. Beginning with contributory savings schemes for the purchase of life insurance in the mid-nineteenth century, colleges experimented with a variety of strategies for managing the cost of servants' retirement and by the 1920s, all colleges but two had contributory pension schemes. These schemes originated in the 1850s, and stemmed from various motives, a concern to prevent poverty in old age and an interest in inculcating middle-

class values of thrift and self-help. At the same time, the growth of the industrial insurance industry and developments in actuarial science combined to facilitate the creation of these contributory retirement savings schemes. Colleges enthusiastically incorporated these innovations into the provision of support for servants in old age. Along with these insurance products came the idea of a fixed retirement age. By the 1920s, the idea that servants and their employers shared the financial risk of old age and the cost of retirement was firmly established; the traditional system of employer-provided *ex gratia* pensions was gradually restricted to the lowest-waged workers who were unable to afford contributions.

Although much of this research looks to recover the servants' perspective of this employment relationship, the nature of the sources inevitably limits the insight that can be gained. Much of this evidence is created by or for college employers. Through servants' sports and leisure activities we can begin to glimpse how servants may have thought about themselves and their place in the college and local communities. Unlike other traditional paternalistic employers, college servants' sports were partly subsidized by the colleges but were largely self-organized. This was primarily a result of the academic calendar, which left servants largely unsupervised to enjoy access to the river and sports fields unencumbered by the heavy workloads associated with the academic terms, as fellows and undergraduates left the city during the long vacations. Servants participated in a wide variety of sports: athletics, bowls, cricket, football, tennis and rowing. Servants formed college teams to compete locally, and from these, created university teams to compete further afield. From 1850, regular competitions were arranged with college servants from Cambridge, culminating in a popular Oxford Cambridge servants' boat race and cricket match. College servants' rowing leaves perhaps the best collection of archival sources, and provides considerable insight into the history of working-class rowing, a sport that was uniquely affected by rigid class boundaries

and social hierarchies. Sports were accompanied by other amusements and leisure activities. Although colleges had held Christmas parties for servants throughout the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century, improvements in transportation and the rise of tourism made possible a new programme of excursions and works outings, that were again subsidized by employers but largely self-organized.

Abbreviations

ChCh	Christ Church
COS	Charity Organization Society
CSBS	College Servants' Benefit Society
CSPI	College Servants' Provident Institution
CSCC	College Servants' Cricket Club
CSRC	Oxford University & College Servants' Rowing Club (also OUCSRC)
CSS	College Servants' Society
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
HMRR	Henley Museum of River and Rowing
ILM	Internal labour market
JOJ	*Jackson's Oxford Journal*
LHD	Lodging House Delegacy
NPCE&W	*National Probate Calendar of England and Wales*
OBLI	Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry
OC	*Oxford Chronicle*
OJI	*Oxford Journal Illustrated*
OM	*Oxford Mail*
OT	*Oxford Times*

Library and archive abbreviations

BC	Balliol College Archives
BL	Bodleian Libraries
BNC	Brasenose College Archives
CCA	Christ Church Archives
CCC	Corpus Christi College Archives
EC	Exeter College Archives
HC	Hertford College Archives
JC	Jesus College Archives
KC	Keble College Archives
LC	Lincoln College Archives
MC	Magdalen College Archives
MEC	Merton College Archives
NC	New College Archives
OC	Oriel College Archives
OHC	Oxfordshire History Centre
OUA	Oxford University Archives
PC	Pembroke College Archives
QC	Queen's College Archives
SJC	St. John's College Archives
SOLO	Search Oxford Libraries Online
TC	Trinity College Archives
UC	University College Archives
WC	Worcester College
WCL	Worcester College Library

Glossary of Terms

Battels – College accounts for members' internal expenses, including food, drink, subscriptions, etc. As part of their usual duties, servants added charges to members' battels when goods or services were ordered. Also used as a verb: 'to battel' refers to the privilege of being allowed to accrue charges on these internal accounts. Senior servants were occasionally allowed to battel, usually for drinks served from the buttery. These accounts were produced weekly by the bursary and were to be settled termly, although in practice, arrears were common.

Bedmaker – A college servant who provided personal service to resident members of a college. This term is more common in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and often used interchangeably with the term 'scout' from the mid-nineteenth century. At some colleges, however, the two terms have precise meanings and are used to distinguish between the senior and junior servant. In this thesis, I use these terms interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

Commons – A basic meal served daily, usually comprised of bread, butter, beer and cheese. College statutes often entitled fellows to their commons, while undergraduates were expected to pay for theirs.

Scout – used interchangeably with 'bedmaker' in this thesis

Long vacation – The weeks between the end of the summer term and the start of the new academic year, usually from early July to early October, although the precise number of weeks varied from year to year.

Terms – The academic year, which lasts from October to July, is comprised of three terms. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these are referred to as follows: Michaelmas is the first term of the academic year, Hilary is the second and Trinity is the third term. The names of the terms do vary in earlier periods, however, and these occasionally appear in archival sources

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Short Abstract ..... *i*

Long Abstract ..... *ii*

Abbreviations ..... *viii*

Library and archive abbreviations ..... *ix*

Glossary of Terms ..... *x*

Chapter 1 Introduction *1*

1.1. Historiography **1**

1.2. College servants: jobs and organizational structure **22**

The Lodge 28
The Kitchen 30
The Buttery 32
Common rooms 33
Staircases 34
Laundry 36
Other workers 37

1.3. Sources and methodology **40**

2. Management *46*

2.1. Recruiting workers **49**

College Messengers 49
Porters' Wives 57

2.2. Family labour networks **65**

2.3. The Lodging House Delegacy **76**

2.4. College Servants' Sunday **97**

3. Remuneration *115*

3.1. Perquisites and Gratuities **120**

Alcohol as a perquisite 134
Gratuities 142
Termly Gratuities 149

3.2. Methods of Pay **153**

Laundresses 159

3.3. Seasonal Unemployment and Underemployment **168**

The College Servants' Summer Employment Agency 1859-1914 170
Seniority and Vacation Employment 176

4. Negotiating Remuneration *183*

4.1. Individual and collective bargaining strategies **183**

4.2. Trade Unions **185**

The First Union Drive: 1919-20 188
The Second Union Drive: 1937 211

4.3. Unemployment Insurance 215

5. Uncertainty and Insurance 222

5.1. Individual Strategies: personal savings and kinship networks 227

5.2. Charity and the Poor Law 231
Rev. Powell's Benefaction 237

5.3. Friendly Societies 252
The College Servants' Benefit Society and the College Servants' Provident Institution 252
CSBS and CSPI: Membership terms and cost 262
Friendly societies and old age 267
'The Absconding Cook' 271

5.4. Other Mutual Aid Societies 280
College-Based Clubs 280
College Servants' Slate Club 294

6. Retirement Savings Schemes 299

6.1. Life Insurance and Early Contributory Savings Schemes 299

6.2. Endowment policies 308

6.3. The example of Hertford College 315

6.4. Post Office Annuities 323

6.5. Insurable interest and the designation of beneficiaries 327

6.6. Pension schemes in the early 20th century 337

7. Sociability and Leisure 345

7.1. College Servants' Sports: A Very Masculine Recreation' 347

7.2. The College Servants' Society 1872-1914 358

7.3. Parties and outings 366

8. Conclusion 372

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Historiography

Men, women and children have worked in Oxford colleges since their foundation. These workers have left tangible reminders of their presence: portraits of beloved servants hang in many colleges, plaques commemorate long employment relationships and place names reflect their association – Gunner's room at Magdalen, Patey's quad at Merton, and Bunce's hall at Corpus. Yet college servants are strangely absent in most histories of Oxford. When included they are often denied agency, disappearing into the fabric of a well-ordered college life. This thesis looks to recover the servants' view of these institutions and in so doing, provide an account of a distinctive and peculiar labour market.

The nineteenth century was a transformative period in the history of the colleges and the university, and 1850 provides a logical starting point for this research. The first royal commission to investigate the finances of the colleges and the university was appointed in 1850, thus accelerating the push for reform, and with it, sustained scrutiny of colleges' internal management practices.[1] By 1850, most servants were employed directly by the colleges, rather than by individual members as had been the case previously, and as a consequence, recordkeeping associated with these workers improved. My research concludes in 1939, just before the outbreak of the Second World War. Contemporary observers often express that college life, already altered by experiences of the Great War, was forever changed following

[1] During this period, royal commissions were appointed to inquire into Oxford and Cambridge Universities in: 1850-2 (Oxford only), 1872-4 and 1919-22, as well as the University of Oxford Commission, appointed 1877.

the Second World War, particularly the relationships between domestic servants and their employers.[2]

Nineteen colleges are included in this study: Balliol, Brasenose, Christ Church, Corpus Christi, Exeter, Hertford, Jesus, Keble, Lincoln, Magdalen, Merton, New, Oriel, Pembroke, Queen's, St. John's, Trinity, University and Worcester. I have not included research from women's colleges, although good documentary sources relating to domestic workers in these colleges survive.[3] Women's colleges were founded late in the nineteenth century and their domestic management was very different than men's colleges. Patterns of service were simpler and fewer staff were employed; women entertained less frequently and far less lavishly than at men's colleges. Servants were nearly always young women, who lived in and received board and lodging as part of their remuneration, rather than male servants who lived out and maintained their own households. Labour contracts were straight-forward, rather than the complex arrangements that developed in men's colleges.

Very little scholarship exists on the history of these workers. Christopher Platt, a professor of Latin American history at St. Antony's College, Oxford wrote the only monograph on college servants, a slim volume of popular history offering a nostalgic and amusing account of scouts.[4] Platt recorded for posterity what he described as a bygone era in the history of Oxford colleges, 'In fact it was only from the early decades of the nineteenth century that service by scouts took its now familiar form, and by the 1970s the institution had

[2] Although precise interpretations of regulations vary, data protection rules often prohibit access to individual employee records created after the Great War.
[3] On college staff at St. Hugh's, see L. Schwartz, 'Who Cleans a Room of One's Own?', *A Serious Endeavour: Gender, Education and Community at St Hugh's, 1886-2011* (London, 2011), pp.109-145, hereafter Schwartz.
[4] D.C.M. Platt, *The Most Obliging Man in Europe: Life and Times of the Oxford Scout* (London, 1986), hereafter, Platt. Although the book offers no references, Platt clearly used archival sources from several colleges as well as interviews with former members of staff, undergraduates and fellows.

almost vanished.'[5] Platt describes the day-to-day working life of a scout, providing an account of his schedule and responsibilities.

In the late 1960s, Brian Harrison, historian and fellow of Corpus Christi, led an oral history project comprising interviews of sixteen former members of college staff, as well as other members of the university community. Harrison's project experimented with the application of new technology to an existing methodological approach, the use of voice recorders in interviews. These interviews were combined with sources from the college archive to recover a detailed look at college life in the early to mid-twentieth century. Harrison and the undergraduates who provided research assistance were interested in the social history of these workers, particularly in the relationships formed during their decades at Corpus.

Questions of class are threaded throughout, and ultimately Harrison concludes that these college servants accepted the existing social order and their place therein.[6] In 1972, he wrote, 'Oxford college servants are particularly interesting to the social historian, deeply influenced as he so often is by the dichotomous class model of Karl Marx. For here are people whose relative poverty inspires, not envy, but admiration and even emulation of the privileged' and 'College servants are also interesting because their work-situation inhibits

[5] Platt, p.15. One reviewer of the book offered his own explanation for the decline of the scout, which he dated to the postwar era: the changing socio-economic status of undergraduates. Anthony Quinton, then the president of Trinity College, wrote, 'In the grant-aided Oxford of the post-war epoch, enthusiastically thrown open to the lower middle class, the scout, the manservant assigned to look after the undergraduates living on a staircase, became an anachronism.' Lord Anthony Quinton, 'The scouts have gone' *The Sunday Telegraph*, 18 January 1987.
[6] 'In 1965, Mrs. Davies, the cleaner on staircase 10 and Godfrey Price's much needed aide, told a somewhat bemused freshman Carwardine, 'you see, sir, people like me are put here to serve people like you'. Brian H. Harrison, 'College Servants in Corpus Forty Years Ago' *The Pelican Record,* Vol. XLV (2010), p.28. Richard Carwardine was the president of Corpus from 2010-16. Harrison describes at length the complexities around these hierarchies; several of the undergraduate participants mention feeling uncomfortable about the domestic service relationship.

class consciousness quite as effectively as the office clerk's situation so brilliantly described in David Lockwood's Black Coated Worker.'[7]

Why did these workers chose employment at Corpus? Harrison describes the attractions of college service: aesthetically pleasant surroundings, interesting people, a well-defined career ladder, but perhaps most importantly, security. Unlike factory workers, college servants were rarely laid off. Corpus also offered housing to many long-serving workers. He argues that college work may have compensated for the lack of educational opportunities for the less privileged, 'In the 1960s, there were many people whose educational opportunities had never matched their intelligence, or who had failed to seize opportunities when they had the chance – proportionately probably rather more now. Some such people were simply happy to associate with, or learn from, people whose educational achievements they respected.'[8]

The retired servants interviewed for this project typically enjoyed long careers at Corpus, many were living in college housing and in receipt of a college pension at the time of these interviews, which were conducted by fellows and undergraduates. The project provides a richly detailed look at college life over several decades, and with few similar sources for this period, these interviews are cited in most other work on college service in the twentieth century.[9] The project, and Harrison's articles that resulted from this work, raise many questions. How representative are these workers? Did most servants have long careers, did

[7] Brian H. Harrison, 'Tape Recorders and the Teaching of History', *Oral History*, Vol.1, No.2 (1972), p. 3. Professor Harrison kindly made available the transcripts of these interviews and the accompanying research, which are in his personal archive.
[8] Brian H. Harrison, 'College Servants in Corpus Forty Years Ago' *The Pelican Record,* Vol. XLV (2010), p.25.
[9] For example, Platt; Schwartz; Richard Whiting (ed.), *Oxford: Studies in the history of a university town since 1800* (Manchester, 1993); and Whiting, *The View from Cowley: The Impact of Industrialization upon Oxford 1918-1939* (Oxford, 1983).

they typically stay at one college, and how many enjoyed the type of security described in these interviews?

Richard Sheppard's paper on one family of servants at Magdalen, the Gunstones, uses a different methodological approach, microhistory.[10] Sheppard's research was motivated in part by a fictional account of Magdalen in the Edwardian era, Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street,* published in 1913-4. One of the principal characters, a college servant named Venner, was based on the common room man at Magdalen, Richard Gunstone. Gunstone's father, William, and his grandfather, also William, were all employed by Magdalen – a 'dynasty of college servants'. Of the three, Richard was by far the most successful. Sheppard estimated Richard Gunstone's family enjoyed an income approximately seven times as much as the average working class family in Oxford at the time.[11]

Sheppard's history of the Gunstones highlights several recurring themes associated with the history of college workers during this period, and with these, offers further evidence that existing historiography provides a markedly consistent view of college service. Workers are described as a local 'labour aristocracy'; until the 1930s, these jobs were highly coveted and provided security – a 'job for life'. Labour market conditions are depicted as consistently favourable to college employers, colleges did not need to advertise for prospective employees. College servants reproduce masculine 'dynasties'; positions were passed from fathers to sons. These accounts tend to focus on a few very successful senior servants who enjoyed long

[10] Richard Sheppard, *The Gunstones of St Clement's : The History of a Dynasty of College Servants at Magdalen* (Oxford, 2003), hereafter, Sheppard. A vivid description of the common room under Richard Gunstone's stewardship, prompted by the arrival of the Prince of Wales at Magdalen, is found in 'Gunner's Room', *The Daily Mail*, 18 October 1912.
[11] Sheppard, p.37.

careers with one college, and there is often little mention of other types of workers, particularly women. How accurate are these depictions?

The historiographical focus on a single college as a discrete unit of analysis has hitherto significantly limited the understanding of college service. Although associations with colleges could be long-lived, they were not always permanent. Richard Gunstone began his career not at Magdalen, but at Trinity. Servants moved among college employers, linked through kinship networks and professional associations formed with fellow workers through clubs and societies that spanned the university community.

Much of this context and detail is lost in the existing historiography of these workers, most of which is found in the histories of individual colleges. The production of a college history is a significant undertaking; of the nineteen colleges included in this study, several do not have a recently published scholarly monograph on the college's history: Jesus, Keble, Pembroke, Queen's and St. John's.[12] Others have chosen a format designed to appeal to a more general audience, for example, Hertford, New and Worcester. The remaining twelve colleges take a variety of approaches, some more relevant for this thesis than others.[13]

Some college histories provide only a cursory mention of staff. The choice to overlook these workers is often puzzling. For example, in detailing the daily schedule of an early nineteenth century undergraduate at Corpus, William Phelps, we learn that he wakes at 7:00 a.m., attends chapel, takes a walk, has his breakfast, attends classes, eats lunch in his rooms, has dinner in the hall, retires to the common room, takes tea at 9:00 p.m., and then to bed at

[12] Here, a monograph published anytime from the mid-twentieth century to 2019. For Queen's, I have relied on the work of John Magrath, who was a fellow, bursar, and provost of the college in the early twentieth century. John Magrath, *The Queen's College* (Oxford, 1921).
[13] For example, the recently published history of Exeter does not include the nineteenth century, John Maddicott, *Founders and Fellowship: The Early History of Exeter College, Oxford, 1314-1592* (Oxford, 2014).

10:00.[14] There is little mention of the staff with whom he would have had frequent interaction and who made this comfortable life possible: the scout who woke him up and carried hot water for washing, the charwoman who cleaned the grates of his coal fire, the scout's assistant who brought his breakfast, the servant who recorded his chapel attendance, the porter who greeted him as he entered and exited the college gates, the waiters in the hall or the common room man who served his drink after dinner.

Laurence Brockliss's history of Magdalen offers a more comprehensive look at college service, in which these workers are integrated into college life and its history. 'As in all eras of its history, Magdalen College's ability to function as a centre of godliness and good learning during the presidencies of Bulley and Warren ultimately depended on the dedication and skills of the College staff, or as they were still styled in an hierarchical age, the servants.'[15]

Brockliss draws on a variety of sources from the college archives to answer fundamental questions: how many servants worked at the college, what were their roles, how much were they paid, what were working conditions like, and how were these workers managed? He provides a more nuanced account of this employment relationship, but reaches similar conclusions to Harrison, Sheppard and other college historians, 'Good pay and conditions, plus many perks in kind made working at Magdalen an attractive proposition.'[16] The employment relationship described here is benevolently paternalistic, however, there is little exploration of how this authority was experienced – we are still left to wonder about the servants' perspective. Pensions are awarded, wages received – in this account, as in most

[14] Thomas Charles-Edwards and Julian Reid, *Corpus Christi College, Oxford A History* (Oxford, 2017), pp.280-1.
[15] L.W.B. Brockliss (ed.), *Magdalen College Oxford : A History* (Oxford, 2008), p.514. Hereafter, Brockliss (ed.), *Magdalen*.
[16] Ibid., p.519.

college histories, there is little mention of servants' agency, of negotiation or disputes over pay or working conditions. Were these workers uniformly passive recipients of paternalism?

Paternalism is difficult to define. At a fundamental level, it is a reciprocal relationship based on class. Newby calls it 'a complex web of authority relationships' and argues that it offered an expedient solution to the organization of rural society and the problems of supplying labour in an agrarian economy.[17] Newby's insights are particularly suited to college service and its peculiarities. He offers this description of the contradictions inherent in paternalism, many of which are present in nineteenth and early twentieth century Oxford colleges, '…this management involves the superordinate class being drawn into an inherently contradictory relationship with its subordinates. On the one hand, its interest is to maintain a degree of differentiation from those over whom it rules; on the other hand it wishes to cultivate their identification by defining the relationship as an organic partnership in a cooperative enterprise'.[18]

In colleges, this 'identification' can be seen in references to the employment relationship as a 'family'. The 'cooperative enterprise' is the education, supervision and care of undergraduates in the *in loco parentis* nature of a university education. Newby captures these contradictions in the following, 'At one and the same time, paternalism may be exemplified by autocracy and obligation, cruelty and kindness, oppression and benevolence, exploitation and protection.'[19]

How did colleges and servants interpret the promises of paternalism, particularly as they related to the insecurity associated with illness, old age, and death faced by working class

[17] Howard Newby et al., *Property, Paternalism and Power: Class and Control in Rural England* (Wisconsin, 1978), p.26-7.
[18] Ibid., p.29, citing Newby (1975).
[19] Ibid., p.29.

people in a highly seasonal, low-waged economy? How were these expectations negotiated and renegotiated, from the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century? How did the management of responsibility and risk shift among employers, workers and the state, with the introduction of social welfare provisions, like the old age pension and national insurance?

In order to understand this particular employment relationship and this specific labour market, it is useful to consider the local context. During this period, like the rest of the nation, Oxford was expanding. The population of Oxford nearly doubled from 27,843 in 1851 to 49,285 in 1901, and again to 107,000 in 1951. The most rapid period of growth was associated with a late period of industrialization, primarily the expansion of the Cowley Motorworks in the 1920s and 30s.

The occupational structure of Oxford was unusual. A significant percentage of the city's working population was engaged in domestic service, in 1851 27% of the employed population compared with an average of 13% for England and Wales. This is not explained by the employment of these workers by the colleges. In 1851, colleges employed approximately 614 servants, 152 of whom worked as personal servants to heads of houses and presumably lived-in.[20] In 1895, there were about 800 servants working for colleges and 1,140 by 1937.[21]

Throughout this period, Oxford was a highly seasonal economy, with most workers dependent on the university community, either directly or indirectly. The area is often

[20] Eleanor Chance, Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, C J Day, T G Hassall, Mary Jessup and Nesta Selwyn, 'Modern Oxford', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4, the City of Oxford*, ed. Alan Crossley and C R Elrington (London, 1979), pp. 181-259. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol4/pp181-259 [accessed 8 May 2018].

[21] Figures for 1895 are from estimates made by W. Warner's survey for the College Servants' Society and do not include women and boys, BL Dep.d.825. Figures for 1937 include women and boys, and come from Barnett House Survey Committee, *A Survey of the Social Services in the Oxford District, Vols. I & II* (Oxford, 1940), p.85

described as low-waged, although there are no local wage studies for the nineteenth century.[22] What types of employment were available in Oxford during this period? College servants often describe a labour market with few alternatives. When asked why he wanted to work in an Oxford college, Dennis Veary recalled a dearth of employment opportunities, 'Well, you see in Oxford, there was nothing else, was there? You either worked in a college, you worked in a factory, or you went out muck-spreading.'[23]

In the early twentieth century, a social survey modeled on the work of Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree was conducted by Violet Butler.[24] Butler was a prominent local figure, a supporter of housing reform and improving employment opportunities for women and young people.[25]

In *Social Conditions*, Butler provides considerable detail about the lives of working people in Oxford in the early twentieth century, which reflects her work not only on the survey, but with local charities, particularly the Charity Organisation Society and the Cottage Improvement Society. Butler's study found that in 1901, of the 49,336 inhabitants of the city, the working classes consisted of approximately 13,000 men and boys over 15, along with 8,500 women and girls over 15. Half of these women worked in some type of domestic service, another 640 in laundry work, and about 100 in printing works. Butler estimated that women working as live-in domestic servants earned an average of £1 weekly, including payments in-

[22] 20th century studies of the local labour market include C.V. Butler, *Social Conditions in Oxford* (London, 1912), hereafter Butler; and Barnett House Survey Committee, *A Survey of the Social Services in the Oxford District, Vols. I & II* (Oxford, 1940)
[23] David Lay and Brian Harrison 'Interview with Mr. Veary' 27 May 1969 in Harrison, 'Transcripts of interviews with "College Servants"', p. 5594. Veary was born in 1887.
[24] Butler (1912).
[25] Brian Harrison, 'Christina Violet Butler (1884-1982)', *Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004. Accessed online 7 July 2018.

kind. She estimated that in other types of employment, an unskilled woman could expect to earn 10-12s. weekly.[26]

Most of the local manufacturing work was in printing, employing approximately 600 men and boys. Wages were usually based on piece rates, with a minimum of 30s. weekly. Other manufacturing jobs were in Frank Cooper's marmalade factory and John Allen's and Lucy's engineering works. After printing, tailoring employed the largest number of skilled men, 443. She estimated these workers could earn £2 weekly in the busy months during the academic terms. Based on the occupations in her survey, an average working-class male wage in Oxford at that time was approximately 24-30s. weekly.[27]

The local labour market was altered dramatically in the 1920s with the expansion of William Morris's factory, the Cowley Motorworks. By 1925 it was the largest manufacturer of automobiles in the country.[28] Average weekly wages at the Motorworks during this period were approximately 70-80s. weekly, which far exceeded agricultural wages, then approximately 28-30s., drawing many of these rural workers into the city environs.[29] In 1911, fewer than 900 worked in engineering and vehicle building, by 1951, these two occupational categories employed approximately 20,000. In a 1956 study of the city, J.M. Mogey wrote, 'Today, skilled craftsmen and college servants find they can earn more as semi-skilled production line workers and some choose to move to the factories. A college servant said, "Once upon a time, it was something to be in a college; you were somebody; people looked up to you. Nowadays they'll take anybody, they even take them in off the streets."[30]

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[26] Butler, ch. 3 'Women's Work', pp.62-75. For domestic servants, this was based on £18-20 annually in cash wages and board and lodging, valued at 10s 6d-12s weekly.
[27] Butler, ch. 2 'Work for Men and Boys in Modern Oxford', pp.38-61.
[28] Whiting, R.C., *The View from Cowley: The Impact of Industrialization upon Oxford 1918-1939* (Oxford, 1983), pp.32-33, hereafter, Whiting.
[29] Ibid., p.40.
[30] J.M. Mogey, *Family and Neighbourhood: Two Studies in Oxford* (London, 1956), pp.1-2.

Did colleges respond to the higher wages available in manufacturing by changing recruitment strategies, as suggested by these observations?

As the city grew, social change visited the university and colleges. By the 1880s, a very different picture emerges: 'religion was no longer institutionally central to the life of Oxford'.[31] 'Oxford was now definitely "lost to the Church of England". The clerical fellows who had given it its character were reduced to a beleaguered, aging minority.'[32] Academic standards improved across the institution and saw the rise of a professional class of educators who increasingly saw their futures bound up with the fortunes of the institution. As a consequence, momentum for internal reforms was energetic and sustained. [33]

Over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, workers became less likely to unquestioningly accept paternalistic expressions of authority in the workplace. This was particularly true in the case of domestic service, an employment relationship that in the early twentieth century was increasingly shaped by changing ideas about the social order, authority, class and masculinity.

Contemporary observers noted that domestic servants were underrepresented in and often omitted from labour studies, despite their significance in labour markets. In 1908, W.T. Layton responded to the omission of domestic servants from Arthur Bowley's presentation in 1895 of data from his study of wages to the Royal Statistical Society. Recalling the discussion following Bowley's presentation, Layton wrote,'…(A)ttention was drawn to the fact that

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[31] Christopher Harvie, 'From the Cleveland Commission to the Statutes of 1882' in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.) *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VII: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 2* (Oxford, 2000), p.91

[32] Ibid. p.90.

[33] There is a substantial literature on these reforms, see for example: E.G.W. Bill and J.F.A. Mason *Christ Church and Reform, 1850-1867* (Oxford, 1970); Christopher Harvie, 'From the Cleveland Commission to the Statutes of 1882' in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VII: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 2* (Oxford, 2000), pp.67-96.; L.W.B. Brockliss *The University of Oxford A History* (Oxford, 2016), ch. 9 'A History of Reform', pp.347-95; W.R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London, 1965).

practically no statistics had ever been collected showing the changes in the wages of the largest wage-earning class in the country, viz., that of domestic servants, a class which includes over 40 per cent. of occupied females, or about 4 per cent. of the total population of the United Kingdom.'[34]

The challenges associated with researching domestic servants have been well established.[35] Much of this work took place in private homes and left little documentary evidence. As a consequence, many studies rely on census data and surveys. The use of census data to study domestic service is complicated by the tendency of the enumeration process to exhibit bias in the recording of women's occupations.[36] College histories depict this work as gendered, with very little mention of women's work. The predominance of male servants, combined with the availability of sources in college archives provides a new setting in which to investigate this type of employment.

Unlike other employers, colleges were much less likely to hire young women as servants, to avoid interaction with male undergraduates. If women were employed in colleges, they were apt to be middle-aged, married or widowed. Humphries and Weisdorf's work on women's wages argues that married women often had improved access to better-paid casual work through their husbands. Was this the case in colleges? Married women were more likely

[34] W.T. Layton,'Changes in the Wages of Domestic Servants during Fifty Years', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 71, No.3 (Sept. 1908),p.515. Hereafter Layton.
[35] For example, David Kent, 'Ubiquitous but Invisible: Female Domestic Servants in Mid-Eighteenth Century London', *History Workshop Journal*, Fall 1989, Vol.28(1), pp.111-28. Sîan Pooley's study of domestic servants in 1880-1914 Lancaster details a more recent application of the use of census data. Siân Pooley, 'Domestic servants and their urban employers: a case study of Lancaster, 1880-1914', *Economic History Review*, 62, 2 (2009), pp.405-29, hereafter, Pooley.
[36] A recent overview of this debate is found in Edward Higgs and Amanda Wilkinson, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Victorian Censuses Revisited', History Workshop Journal, 2016, Vol. 81(1), pp.17-38. The authors conclude that 'although there are plainly problems with the nineteenth-century censuses in regard to the analysis of women's employment, these do not necessarily invalidate their use.'p.34.

to work as casual domestic labour, or charwomen, rather than live-in servants, which matches the needs of college employers, who employed few live-in servants during this period.

Recent scholarship on historical living standards has established the importance of women's labour to the household economy, however we know comparatively little about this type of employment.[37] How was this work incorporated into working-class household budgets during this period? Existing historiography on Oxford colleges neglects the role of casual labour entirely. Did colleges employ casual labourers? How did these workers fit into these organizational structures? How did the terms of their employment, wages and working conditions compare to those of successful, senior servants that feature prominently in college histories? How did servants manage the uncertainty associated with precarious employment?

Much of the literature on domestic service during this period is concerned with the 'servant problem'. A persistent shortage of domestic servants willing to labour in private households, the servant problem was debated widely in the local and national press for decades, from the late nineteenth century to the Second World War. Recent literature finds that new employment opportunities and changing attitudes in working-class women, particularly younger women, explain this apparent failure of the labour market.[38]

This presents an interesting paradox. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the labour market for college servants is consistently described as highly competitive, with the advantage always accruing to employers. If there was a servant problem in England in this period, did Oxford colleges devise a solution? Were colleges better at recruiting and retaining

[37] For example, Jane Humphries, 'The lure of aggregates and the pitfalls of the patriarchal perspective: a critique of the high wage economy interpretation of the British industrial revolution', *The Economic History Review*, Vol.66, No.3 (August 2013), pp. 693-714.
[38] For example, Selina Todd, 'Domestic Service and Class Relations', *Past and Present*, No.203(May, 2009), pp.181-204; Laura Schwartz, *Feminism and the Servant Problem* (Cambridge, 2019).

workers? Did colleges offer labour contracts that responded more efficiently to workers' demands for higher wages and improved working conditions? Did Oxford colleges benefit from a regional labour market that was significantly different from the national experience?[39]

Domestic service is a peculiar employment relationship, its complexities and contradictions have inspired a range of contributions from social historians, but far fewer from economic historians. Contemporary observers understood that the nature of the workplace, private homes – and the intimate character of the work itself – meant that servants were expected to be motivated by loyalty and fidelity as much as by the terms of the employment contract. In 1890, Ellen Darwin offered this assessment, 'The relation between employer and servant is infinitely complicated by the fact that it is by no means a purely business one. Wages are, indeed, settled roughly by the laws of supply and demand, though until there are trade-unions among servants none can tell how exactly. For a certain amount of money and board and lodging they undertake to do a certain amount of badly defined work. But here the business relation ends, and the human relation, tremendous in its scope and importance begins.'[40]

Existing literature offers very little insight into the negotiation of domestic servants' employment contracts. These contracts were often complicated, and included a variety of payments in-kind, as well as other perquisites and gratuities. It seems unlikely that servants merely accepted the terms offered, given the scope for bargaining implied by these wage forms and methods of pay.

[39] Siân Pooley argues convincingly for the importance of regional variation in understanding labour markets for domestic servants during this period. Pooley (2014).
[40] Ellen Darwin, 'Domestic Service', *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, August 1890, 28(162), pp.287-8.

The standard labour contract for a domestic servant offered remuneration for time worked, which was inherently problematic. Employers wanted to purchase both the quantity of labour that was required to perform all of the tasks associated with daily living, and servants' time, in order to have a servant available whenever their labour was required.[41] The time spent at work was relatively easy to monitor, particularly if a servant lived in; the labour they expended was much more difficult to supervise. With only the prospect of the agreed-upon cash wage, a servant was motivated to provide the minimum quantity of labour an employer would accept.

Perquisites and gratuities were a common feature of servants' labour contracts, designed to mediate this problem. Unfortunately, it was not quite that straightforward. The domestic service relationship was made unusually complicated by a range of social and cultural norms which meant that a servant's behavior around the request for and receipt of these payments was also at issue.[42] The request for extra payment in the form of a gratuity could be perceived by the employer, not just as bargaining, but as insubordination.

Existing literature on domestic service neglects individual bargaining strategies, and typically characterizes collective strategies as limited or unsuccessful.[43] Was this true for college servants? Domestic servants are depicted as uniquely resistant to unionization, a

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[41] Citing Arthur Okun, *Prices and Quantities: A Macroeconomic Analysis* (1981), Michael Huberman outlines this general problem and his research shows how Lancashire firms created labour contracts for cotton spinners to address these issues in M. Huberman, *Escape from the Market* (Cambridge, 1996), p.13. Huberman argues that although the outcomes of this labour market are identical to an internal labour market, to label it as such can 'obscure different processes', p.153-4, [Hereafter Huberman, *Market*]

[42] On the emotional labour of domestic servants, see Lucy Delap, *Knowing their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2011), Alison Light, *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants* (London, 2007), Laura Schwartz, 'Who cleans a room of one's own?' in *A Serious Endeavour: Gender, Education and Community at St Hugh's, 1886-2011* (London, 2011), pp. 109-143, and Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007).

[43] For an overview of these fragmented efforts, see Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (Stroud, 1995), ch.9. Laura Schwartz provides a detailed look at the Domestic Workers Union in L. Schwartz, *Feminism and the Servant Problem* (Cambridge, 2019).

narrative that endures into the twenty-first century. Servants worked long hours in relative isolation from other workers, making combination difficult. Historians have hitherto concluded that efforts to organize college servants were similarly limited and unsuccessful. Brian Harrison wrote in 1972, 'Trade unionism has always failed among college servants because the servants are fragmented in two ways: by divisions between the colleges, each with its own traditions and attitudes: and by divisions within the college - between the various departments…'.[44] Harrison later wrote, 'Inter-war efforts to unionize college servants never came to much, if only because the servants valued flexibility in their conditions of employment and because their working world was human in scale and subdivided into small departments - each alert to the pay, workload and pretensions of the other, each with its own small hierarchy.'[45]

Richard Whiting, in his study of the Cowley Motorworks, agreed that any union activity among college servants was limited and short-lived. He found that in 1920 a few servants joined unions but within months, union activity had 'come to nothing'.[46] In a more recent examination of college service, Laura Schwartz looked at the specific case of college servants working in a women's college at St. Hugh's. Somewhat skeptical of Harrison's observation that college servants' proximity to wealth and privilege inspired admiration rather than resentment, Schwartz located the first union drive in 1919 in a larger movement of 'working class militancy', demanding better working conditions and fair wages. However, Schwartz agreed that there was little evidence to suggest that any union was even formed in the 1920s,

[44] Brian Harrison, 'Tape Recorders and the Teaching of History', *Oral History*, Vol.1, No.2 (1972),p.3.
[45] Brian Harrison, 'College life, 1918-1939' in B.H. Harrison (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford. Vol. 8, the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1994), p. 103.
[46] Whiting, *Cowley,* p.109

concluding instead that it was not until the 1970s that unions of college servants gained any significant momentum.[47]

Recent historiography challenges these assumptions for domestic servants generally and finds support for unionization among these workers in a variety of periods and locations. In Edwardian Britain, Schwartz's research on the Domestic Workers' Union reexamined many of these narratives, particularly around the intersection of gender and class. Servants joining this union sought recognition for themselves as workers, their employers' homes as workplaces and demanded protections increasingly afforded to other workers.[48]

A comparative approach, considering new evidence from nineteen colleges provides an opportunity to similarly reconsider the history of unionization among college servants. Union activity represented a serious threat to both. From the perspective of college authorities and some senior servants, it is clear that unions were unwelcome intruders in the paternalistic employment relationship. Existing narratives emphasize the importance of tradition among college servants, depicting them as a group largely united in their continued acceptance of paternalistic management practices and the existing social order. A focus on recovering servants' perspectives promises a fresh perspective on these questions.

The history of servants' leisure, while still closely connected with college employment, provides considerable insight into servants' identity, both individual and collective, and how this changed over time. 'Sport was one of the most powerful of England's civil cultures.'[49]

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[47] L. Schwartz, *A Serious Endeavour: Gender, Education and Community at St Hugh's, 1886-2011* (London, 2011), p. 133, see also the chapter 'Who Cleans a Room of One's Own?'pp.109-145.
[48] Laura Schwartz, 'What we think is needed is a union of domestics such as the miners have': The Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland 1908-14', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 25, No.2, 2014, pp.173-198.
[49] Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998), p.332, [Hereafter, McKibbin, *Classes*]

From the early nineteenth century, college servants participated in a wide variety of organized sports, including athletics, bowls, cricket, football, rowing and tennis. Servants' matches and regattas were reported in college magazines with regularity, and the existence of these teams often mentioned in college histories. However, it is only by looking at the participation of servants across all colleges that an accurate accounting of servants' sports emerges. Although the nineteenth century saw significant interest in university sports generally, and ample archival sources survive, the participation of servants is strangely neglected by histories of the university. Servants competed locally in college teams, but also joined together to form university teams, which competed further afield. These organizations were evident from at least 1850 and provide further evidence of servants' interest and ability in overcoming the fragmentation of the collegiate system.

Curthoys and Jones promise a reappraisal of Oxbridge sport, arguing that existing literature tended to 'obscure the varieties of local experience'. Their approach, by contrast, asserts that 'the cultural meaning of sport within the late nineteenth-century colleges was often egalitarian' and stresses 'the inclusive tendency of rowing'. In this context, it appears that 'egalitarian' chiefly means the inclusion of undergraduates who did not attend elite public schools.[50] H.S. Jones offers the following in his chapter on nineteenth-century sports in the university, 'The contention advanced in this chapter is that Oxford sport was a more original or indigenous phenomenon than these critics suggest. Far from being socially divisive and élitist, its tendency was integrative and "democratic"'.[51] However, Jones then limits his discussion on servants to one sentence: 'The college community was enlarged to embrace old

[50] M.C. Curthoys and H.S. Jones, 'Oxford Athleticism, 1850-1914: a reappraisal', *History of Education*, 1995 Vol. 24 No.4, pp.305-17.
[51] H.S. Jones, 'University and College Sport' in Brock, M.G. and Curthoys, M.C. (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. 7, the Nineteenth-Century Part 2* (Oxford, 2000), p.520.

and current members, and even college servants, whose relationship with the college became much closer as they began to coach the eight or umpire college cricket matches.'[52]

Questions around the relationship between social and cultural norms in this context are perhaps best interrogated through the history of servants' rowing. McKibbin describes rowing as a 'sectarian sport'[53], one with a limited following, but in nineteenth-century Oxford, it was preeminent. The history of college servants' rowing makes an important contribution to the history of the sport, particularly to the history of working-class rowing, which has hitherto received little attention. In her history of fishermen, bargemen, and canal boatmen in Oxford, Mary Prior locates college servants in a local community of working-class rowing clubs founded in the mid-nineteenth century, along with the Clarendon Press, the Gas Works, Morris Motors and the YMCA.[54] By the late-nineteenth century, rowing was a sport that internalized rigid class structures and social hierarchies, and in 1885, manual workers were banned from competition by the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA). In 1890, a second amateur rowing organization, the National Amateur Rowing Association (NARA) was founded in part to address the exclusion of these workers from the sport. However, the exclusion of manual workers from the Henley Regatta, which was still affiliated with the ARA, persisted until 1936.[55] Holt asked, 'Just as the skilled and literate worker in mid-Victorian England was to be brought "within the pale of the constitution" by the Second Reform Bill, was he also to be excluded from athletics and rowing?'[56] The role of these hidebound class strictures does not seem to have had a discernable negative impact on Oxford

[52] Ibid., p.526.
[53] McKibbin, *Classes,* p.357.
[54] Mary Prior, *Fisher Row: Fishermen, Bargemen & Canal Boatmen in Oxford 1500-1900* (Oxford, 1982), pp.304-5..
[55] Martin Crotty, 'Separate and distinct? The Manual Labour Question in Nineteenth-century Victorian Rowing' *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 15:2, 1998, pp.152-63.
[56] Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), pp.108-9.

college servants' rowing. Given that these social and cultural norms were evident in the university at the time, the enduring popularity of college servants' rowing merits further research. Of all the college servants' leisure activities, rowing has left the most significant collection of archival sources, found in college and university archives, and also in the Henley Museum of River and Rowing, the national museum of the sport.



Figure 1 Undated photo of members of Oxford College Servants' Rowing Club, John Wilkins, scout at University College on right (UC:P251/P1/13)

1.2. College servants: jobs and organizational structure

Although organizational structures varied by college and over time, there are enough similarities that it is useful to consider a general overview of these arrangements. The day-to-day management of a college was the responsibility of its officers: the head of the college, the vice-principals, deans and bursars. At all colleges during this period, the bursar was responsible for managing servants and reported directly to the head of the college. Until the late nineteenth century, the bursar was appointed or elected from among the college fellows. The typical term of service was short, often only a year, but fellows with an aptitude for the work occasionally held the position for several years. The job was burdensome, and necessitated considerable administrative work as well as the management of all the college's domestic staff. This included recruitment, hiring and firing, as well as the day-to-day organization and supervision, of these workers.

Larger colleges, or those with considerable real property holdings, divided the responsibilities of the bursarship between two or more fellows, a senior or estates bursar; a junior or domestic bursar; along with assistants. The estates bursar oversaw the college's real property, including commercial and residential real estate, as well as agricultural properties. The domestic bursar superintended the internal management of the college, including the provision of undergraduate and fellows' accommodation, the hiring and supervision of college servants, and management of the catering arrangements.

Decisions were often taken in committees, usually comprised of fellows – senior members of the college. Most colleges had a servants committee, with its membership comprised of fellows and the head of the college. Many also had a servants' committee, with

its membership comprised of servants. Discussions related to the management of servants also occurred at meetings of the governing body, as well as finance committees.

From the mid-nineteenth century, the demands on college bursars increased. Colleges grew in size during this period, adding new buildings and more resident members. Improved and standardized accounting practices created new administrative burdens, which necessitated the hire of additional clerical labour in the bursary. The advent of compulsory schooling in the 1870s supplied bursars with literate and numerate boys eager for college work. Decades later, from the Great War, many colleges hired women to work in the bursary as typists.

Colleges offered a variety of incentives for fellows to take up these positions. Bursars were entitled to the usual remuneration of a fellowship, which typically included a stipend, board and lodgings, as well as an annual share in the revenues of the college.[57] The bursar's position offered additional emoluments, including a stipend and a variety of perquisites, like the 'bursar's poundage', which was a percentage of the internal revenues of the college.[58] Total remuneration varied considerably, by college and by time period.

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[57] Histories of Oxford colleges offer some information about the remuneration of fellows, for example James Thompson, the bursar at Lincoln, received a salary of £285 in 1835, the most highly remunerated fellow at the college that year. V.H.H. Green, *The Commonwealth of Lincoln College 1427-1977* (Oxford, 1979), p.391. However these historical accounts typically offer little insight into the complexity and variety of emoluments specifically associated with the bursar's position. Perhaps the best exposition of these is an 18th century account, William Blackstone, *Dissertation on the Accounts of All Souls College* (Oxford, 1753). A good discussion of Cambridge fellows' emoluments is found in Henry Howard, *An Account of the Finances of The College of St John the Evangelist in the University of Cambridge 1511-1926* (Cambridge, 1935), including the eighteenth-century practice of allowing bursars to profit by speculating with the college's funds and keeping the proceeds.

[58] Recordkeeping and survival frequently obscure the calculations of these payments, however clues to these arrangements are occasionally found in minutes of meetings. For example, in 1829 at Balliol, the bursar's poundage on the bedmakers' account was discontinued, BC GOV C, 19 November 1829; in 1853 at Magdalen, the bursar's poundage on the butler's sales and the plate man's account was replaced with an annual cash payment of £20, MC CP1/12, 25 February 1853; in 1895 at Christ Church, the steward's poundage was increased from 3 to 4 pence in the pound, CCA S.xxxiii.a.1, 22 June 1895.

Although both servants' and fellows' remuneration varied considerably, undoubtedly the income of very successful senior servants approached, and occasionally exceeded, the pay of some fellows. However, by the late nineteenth century reforms to both the pay of servants and of fellows, particularly tutorial fellows makes this much less likely.[59] In the early to mid-nineteenth century, some senior servants' positions were essentially similar to contractors. They received a nominal salary from the college and were entitled to the revenues of the position, as well as responsible for the associated costs – effectively running a business within the college. For example, some head cooks managed kitchens in this way, collecting a set fee from every resident member of the college. This guaranteed income was offset by the expenses of running the kitchen, including food, labor, fuel and equipment. These arrangements were often quite lucrative, and it is likely from these arrangements that stories of fantastically wealthy servants originated. Of course, some of these tales were true, but by the early nineteenth century, concerns about efficiency meant colleges were scrutinizing these arrangements.[60] By the late nineteenth century, most, if not all of these employment contracts had been reformed. However, the myth of the wealthy senior servant persisted well into the early twentieth century.

[59] For estimates of fellows' remuneration, see Dunbabin, pp.406-13. Dunbabin estimates fellows received on average approximately £500 in 1871, which increased to just under £700 by 1912. The most highly compensated college servant according to surviving wage records was the chef at Christ Church, who earned £400 annually in the mid-nineteenth century in salary alone. Both groups benefitted from additional emoluments, however, and it is very difficult to make accurate comparisons.

[60] For example, in 1597, Thomas Bentley, the butler at Exeter, financed the construction of undergraduate accommodation and in 1612, Thomas Clarke, the head cook at St. John's, financed the construction of a new college kitchen, as well as four sets of rooms above. H E Salter and Mary D Lobel (eds.), 'St John's College', *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 3, the University of Oxford*, (London, 1954), pp. 251-264. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol3/pp251-264 [accessed 7 March 2019].







Figure 2 New College Staff top: c.1900, mid: 1927, bottom:1957-8 (NC DB/J1,11,12)

From the 1860s, staff photographs were taken, and these frequently survive in college archives. Figures 3.1-3 show staff at New College over the first half of the twentieth century. Even though archival sources show that women were employed at every college during this period, they rarely appear in early photographs.

College servants can be grouped into five categories, or departments:

I. Bursary
II. Lodge
III. Kitchen
IV. Buttery
V. Common Rooms
VI. Staircases
VII. Laundry
VIII. Outdoor/other workers

These are ordered in a rough hierarchy, although again, this varied by college.

The values of fellowships and of servants' places, particularly those of senior servants, are difficult to determine with any precision. Fellows were entitled to a share in the college's income, including a share of the property revenue; various allowances, including food, drink, and lodging; along with other perquisites.[61] These varied considerably among colleges, as well as within a college, and from year to year. However, sources suggest that the remuneration of senior servants approached, and in some cases exceeded, that of junior fellows.

The relative hierarchy of these departments within a college was flexible and responded to the aptitude and personalities of individual servants, as well as those of the

[61] On the complexity of estimating the value of fellowships, see I.G. Doolittle, 'College Administration' in L.S. Sutherland and L.G. Mitchell (eds.) *The History of the University of Oxford, Volume V, the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1986),pp.236-9.

bursar and college authorities. In many colleges, the butler, who was placed organizationally within the buttery, was the senior servant and considered to be second-in-command to the bursar, with considerable responsibility for the management of subordinate servants. Alternatively, the role of senior servant sometimes belonged to the manciple, who worked in the kitchen, or the senior porter, who worked in the lodge.

There is considerable variation in the wage forms and methods of pay for college servants, however some general comments are included in the descriptions below. The more senior positions were characterized by increasingly complex remuneration, lower-waged workers typically had simpler contracts. Nearly every department required the services of a charwoman, or cleaner. The responsibilities of these women varied, but their pay was uniform – a weekly cash wage, paid either by the college or by a senior servant. At each college, only one or two of these women were employed year-round, most were term time only.

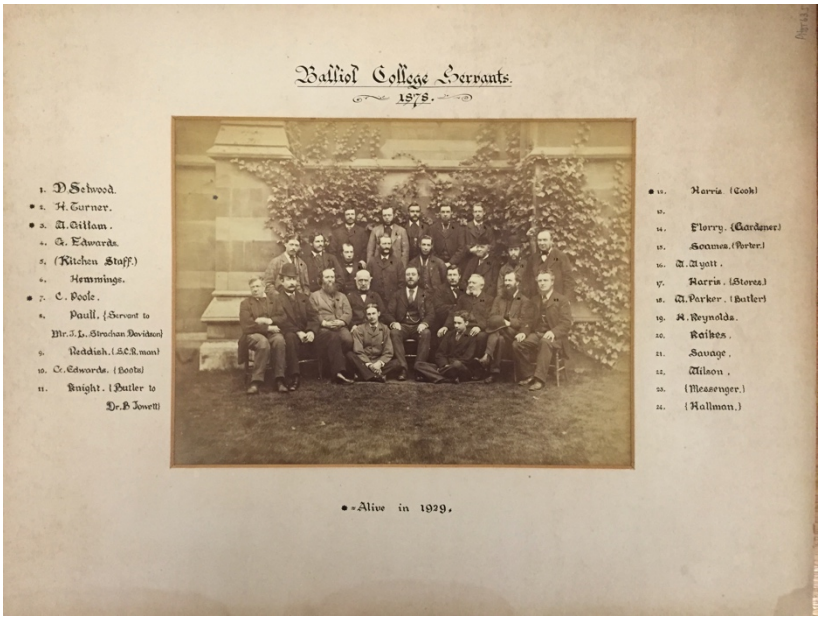
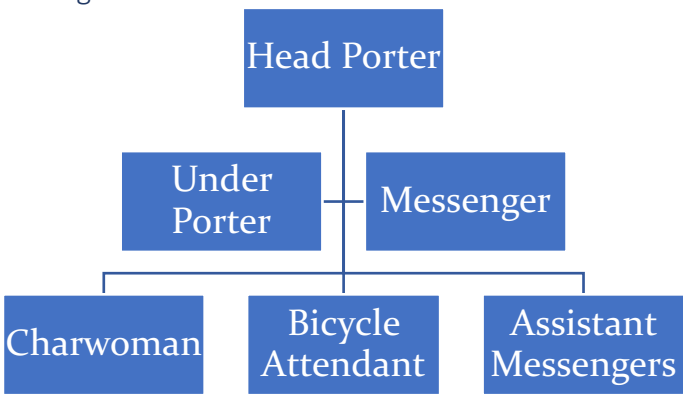


Figure 3 Balliol College staff 1878 (BC PHOT 63/5)

The Lodge



Head Porter The porter's lodge at every Oxford college served as the main entry and exit point; the porter's chief responsibility was controlling access to the college and ensuring its security. The importance of the role and the long hours meant that the porter was one of the most prominent and highly compensated college servants. His remuneration typically included an annual salary paid by the college and some percentage of the gate fines, fees levied on undergraduates who returned to college after the evening curfew. Porters were often entitled to housing, usually in the porter's lodge, and this included coal and occasionally some meals.

Porters received post and packages for members of the college, kept the gate books and looked after the vast inventory of keys. Members of college entertained frequently and a mix of people came and went constantly. The job required literacy, numeracy and a good memory – as porters needed to recognize not only all of the members of the college, but their friends and colleagues, as well as tradespeople who visited regularly.

Porters and their assistants, like most college servants, were also responsible for the discipline of undergraduates. Servants were expected to observe and report violations of

college rules to college authorities. Porters had additional responsibilities in this regard, as they also kept watch overnight in the college and patrolled the building and grounds. These subordinates were usually paid a salary by the college and employed only during term time. Messengers and bicycle attendants were typically paid piece rates, from fees levied against services.

Under porters The head porter needed an assistant, either his wife or an under servant. The number of assistant porters depended on the size of the college and its configuration. Larger colleges with more traffic, and colleges with multiple entrances or an annexe, hired additional workers. Under porters were often assigned other minor responsibilities in the college, taking undergraduates' attendance in chapel, for example.

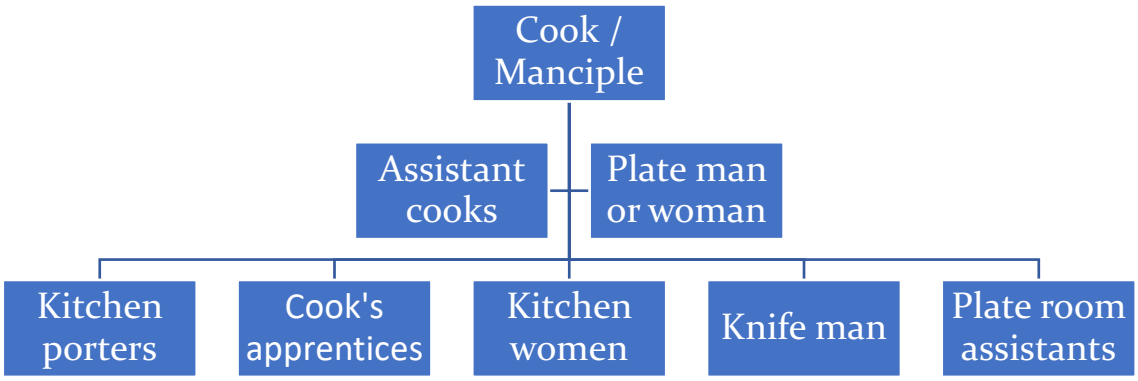
Messengers Carried messages and parcels from members on their college to recipients in other colleges and the university. Messages were usually dispatched two or three times daily.

Assistant messengers Some colleges, particularly larger ones, employed an additional messenger and/or hired labor for periods of peak demand.

Bicycle attendants By the late nineteenth century, the bicycle's popularity meant that most colleges employed servants to keep bicycles in an organized, secure location, as well as providing repairs and maintenance.[62]

Charwoman Typically the porter's wife was responsible for cleaning the lodge, among other duties, otherwise a charwoman employed elsewhere in the college was assigned this work.

[62] For example, Balliol constructed a 'bicycle stable' in the spring of 1897, BC GOV C. Magdalen recruited two boys to clean bicycles in the stable yard in December 1897, MC CP/9/24/i-ii.



From their foundation, colleges usually employed a manciple, who was responsible for securing the supply of good quality food, and a cook, who was responsible for preparing it. By the nineteenth century, the growth and integration of markets for consumables meant that the procurement of food was less time-consuming, and increasingly, the job of cook and manciple were combined, especially at smaller colleges. These positions were among the most highly remunerated at colleges and their income often reached or exceeded that of the average fellow. Cooks had typically completed an apprenticeship and worked through a progression of positions before being appointed to manage the kitchen. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colleges recruited cooks from further afield, particularly from prestigious clubs and hotels in London.

The pay arrangements for these workers depended on how the management of the kitchen was structured, which varied considerably by college and over time. All of the workers in the kitchen were entitled to meals and some were also entitled to leftover food and drink from college dinners.

Assistant cooks Depending on the size of the college and the style of cooking and service, a college might employ anywhere from two to six assistant cooks. These workers had

a variety of experience and skills, some had completed apprenticeships, most worked their way up through a progression of subordinate positions. Colleges employed specialist meat, vegetable and pastry cooks. Women are occasionally employed as subordinate cooks. Nearly all of these positions are term time only.

Cook's apprentices Colleges granted a cook the privilege to take an apprentice. Some larger colleges allowed the cook two or three. These boys served an apprenticeship usually of 5-7 years, with the expectation of then finding work at a college or hotel. Apprenticeship fees were paid directly to the cook.

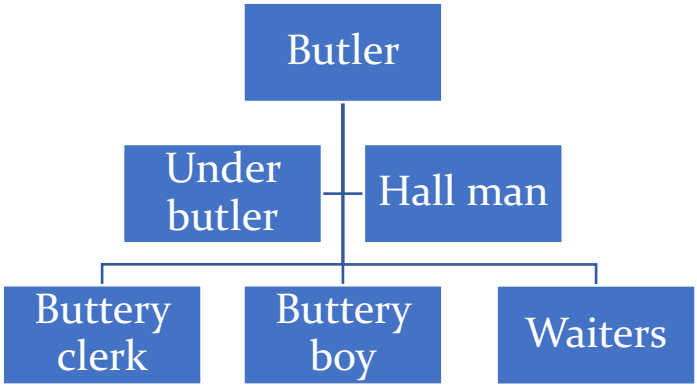
Plate man or woman Colleges had a formal dinner service in the hall every evening, which required the use of a large quantity of crockery, utensils and plate. These were cleaned in the plate room, the servant in charge of this work employed not only an assistant, but hired casual labour as needed.

Knife man Larger colleges assigned the cleaning and sharpening of knives to one servant, at smaller or poorer colleges, usually this work was combined with other responsibilities.

Kitchen women Women worked in kitchens in a variety of roles, from unskilled work, like cleaning, to skilled work, like cooking. All of these workers were typically called kitchen women. Usually it is possible to infer something about an assistant cook's work/seniority from their wages, but this is not the case for kitchen women, who often found it difficult to negotiate more than the customary wage.

Kitchen porters The least-skilled subordinate kitchen worker, responsible for cleaning and general manual labour.

The Buttery



The buttery, where drinks and snacks or small meals were served, was superintended by the butler. Traditionally the commons, or daily allowance of bread, beer, butter and cheese, was served from the buttery. During hall dinners, waiters carried drinks from the buttery to the hall and at most colleges, they are located in close proximity. Some college butteries also had a small store where goods were sold to undergraduates, to be kept and consumed in their rooms, like tea, marmalade, biscuits, etc.

Items served from the buttery were billed to individual members, and remuneration of these workers was tied to department revenues. The precise arrangements varied, but more senior workers received a salary from the college, supplemented by these commissions, while some subordinate workers, like the buttery boy, received no cash wage from the college and worked for tips and food.

Under butler An assistant to the butler.

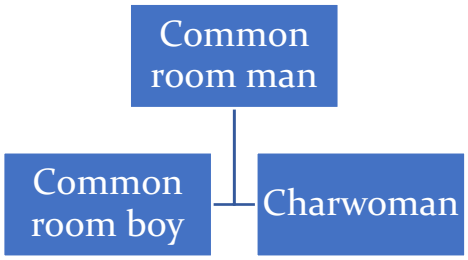
Hall man Lit the fire, cleaned and polished the tables, swept and cleaned the floors after the previous evening's dinner. Some colleges employed a man to supervise the waiters in the hall. At other colleges this was done by a senior waiter or by the butler.

Buttery clerk The buttery kept accounts of food and drinks served to members of the college, these accounts were produced weekly and sent to the bursar for inclusion in weekly battels, or individual members' accounts of college charges.[63] In smaller colleges, this work could be managed by the butler and under butler, in others a separate clerk was employed.

Buttery boy Many colleges employed a boy to provide extra labour for a few hours a day during the academic terms.

Waiters All scouts were required to wait in the hall during evening meals. In colleges where a high level of service was preferred, other servants were pressed into service in the hall. These could be servants employed elsewhere in the college, regardless of whether their other work required waiting, like scouts who also served in members' rooms. Boot cleaners, messengers and gardeners were all eligible to wait in the hall. Colleges also frequently hired waiters from a pool of casual workers who were not otherwise employed in the college.

Common rooms



By the mid-nineteenth century, colleges usually had a senior common room, for the use of fellows, and a junior common room, for the use of undergraduates. Although customs

[63] 'Battels' seems to have been the most commonly used spelling, however other variations frequently appear in archival sources.

varied by college and over time, the common room was a place for socializing. Food and drink were served, and at some colleges, sundries could be purchased from the stores.

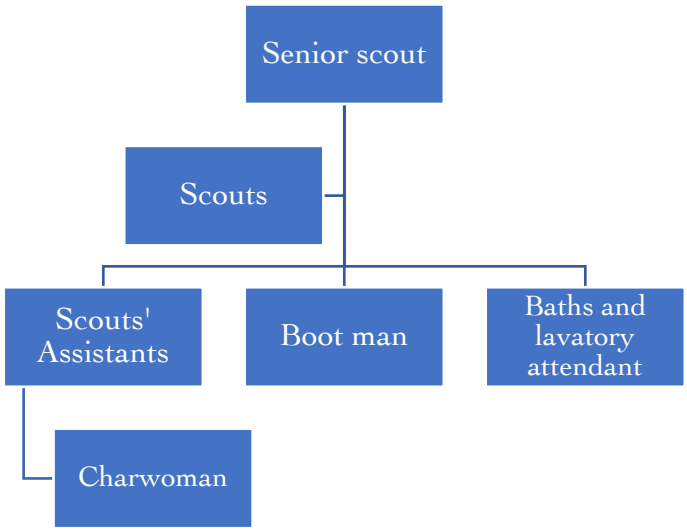
Common rooms were funded by fees levied on members, and the wages of these workers were paid from these funds. As such, the employment contracts of these workers can be particularly complicated.

Common room man This was a senior position, often highly remunerated. The common room was a centre of conviviality, the common room man, its host.

Common room boy An assistant to the common room man, he helped with serving and attendance. These workers were typically paid only in gratuities and food, and received no cash wage.

Charwoman Employed to clean and occasionally assist with service, she was often hired and paid directly by the common room man.

Staircases



Residents' rooms in colleges were arranged on staircases vertically, rather than along hallways. One scout was assigned to each staircase and typically looked after eight to ten men.

Senior scout A senior scout was usually designated by his colleagues or by the bursar, and served as a conduit between the scouts and the bursar. At a large college, like Christ Church, there could be more than fifty men and boys working as scouts and scouts' assistants. Bursars preferred to deal with a representative rather than directly with each worker. The senior scout typically had decades of experience, having started as an assistant and gradually progressing.

Scouts Until the nineteenth century, scouts were privately employed by the men they served, either brought to Oxford as personal servants, or hired in Oxford by resident members (fellows and undergraduates) of the college.[64] Under these arrangements, the customary termly fee was paid directly from the resident to the scout, and the college had little involvement in the employment relationship. By the early nineteenth century, colleges were asserting more control in the management of these workers, and eventually banned the practice of bringing private servants to college. However, aspects of the relationship were slow to change and throughout the nineteenth century, scouts found themselves uncomfortably placed, with some of the financial risk of a contractor – dependent on gratuities and other discretionary methods of pay– while still subject to the authority of the college.

Scouts arrived in college at 6:30 to wake men up, serve their breakfast and help with their morning ablutions. There was a short break until they served lunch at 1:00, again in the rooms. A longer break could be had between lunch and dinner, after which scouts returned to the college at about 6:00 to wait in the hall. Their day concluded when the meal was finished

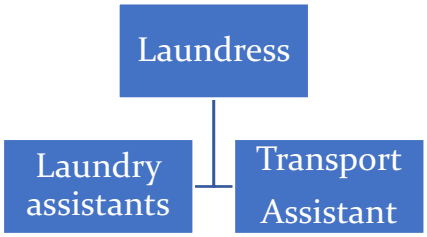
[64] In some circumstances, it was possible to hold a fellowship without being resident in Oxford. Typically, service charges were only levied on residents of the college.

and they were no longer required on the staircases, about 9:00, but of course, this depended on the needs of the men they served.

Scouts' assistants or scouts' boys Scouts employed and managed their own assistants directly, usually a wife or son if one was available. They assisted in all aspects of the scout's work.

Charwomen Often employed and managed by a senior scout, these workers cleaned the floors, stairs, fires and grates, as well as swilling the slops and whatever else was required. Archival evidence suggests that chamber pots were in use well into the twentieth century.[65]

Laundry



The college laundress was the only servant obliged to perform their duties outside the college.[66] With one exception during this period, colleges employed women to do the washing of its' members.[67] This included personal items, like clothing and bed linen, as well as institutional washing, like the hall and chapel linen. Laundresses ran home-based businesses, and hired, managed and paid their own assistants, often employing family members. Male

[65] 'First things was the chambers, pots, piddle pots. I could tell you but … it's disgusting. And had to clean the chambers outs and put them back again, put them in the tiny locker you know, see that the toilet rolls was there and everything.' WOR/PDR/53 Transcript of Interview with Phyllis George, scout and lodging-house keeper 1946-60, interview conducted by Daniel Greenstein, March 1988.
[66] There are, of course, exceptions. Evidence suggests that at least some laundry was done in the college at Balliol in the late nineteenth century, BC I.V Bursar's Laundry and Sundry Accounts 1873-1878, 1877-1881.
[67] The husband and son of the laundress at Trinity took over the college laundry after her death.

family members frequently provided transport, carting laundry between the college and the home.

Other workers

Colleges employed a small number of outdoor workers, including gardeners, coal men and labourers. I do not include these workers in this thesis, largely due to the paucity of data. These employment relationships were often opaque, in many cases the workers were paid by a senior servant and wages were not systematically recorded. Some workers did occasional outdoor labour in conjunction with their primary indoor work and in these cases, I do include examples where available.

Staff of Corpus Christi 1928

Table 1 Staff of Corpus Christi 1928 Source: Papers from Brian Harrison's personal archive, pp.6164-6

Name	Job Title	Department
Mr. J.A. Goldsworthy	Butler and clerk	Bursary/buttery
Mr. O.J. Veary	Bursary clerk	Bursary
Mr. W. Lay	Typist	Bursary
Mr. P. Cross	Under butler	Buttery
Mr. E. Soames	Buttery boy	Buttery
Mr. C. Bancalari	SCR man	Common room
Mrs. Jacobs	Common room woman	Common room
Mr. J. Gatchfield	Manciple	Kitchen
Mr. F. Milligan	Head cook	Kitchen
Mr. J. Osborne	Assistant cook	Kitchen
Mr. Willoughby	Kitchen porter	Kitchen
Mrs. Mott	Vegetable cook	Kitchen
Mrs. Preston	Scullery woman	Kitchen
Mrs. James	Vegetable cook	Kitchen
Mrs. Sanders	Plates and dish washer	Kitchen
Mr. F. Wilsden	Porter	Lodge
Mr. R. Tew	Under porter	Lodge
Mr. C. Lapworth	Messenger	Lodge
Mr. F. Williams	Bedmaker	Staircases
Mr. A. Bone	Bedmaker	Staircases
Mr. B. Standen	Bedmaker	Staircases
Mr. J. Plowman	Bedmaker	Staircases
Mr. P. Bancalari	Bedmaker	Staircases
Mr. H. Quainton	Bedmaker	Staircases
Mr. L. Kimber	Bedmaker	Staircases
Mr. T. James	Bedmaker	Staircases
Miss Long	Bedmaker's assistant	Staircases
Miss Pruce	Bedmaker's assistant	Staircases
Mrs. Bakewell	Bedmaker's assistant	Staircases
Mrs. Harris	Bedmaker's assistant	Staircases
Mrs. Harris	Bedmaker's assistant	Staircases
Mrs. Warner	Bedmaker's assistant	Staircases
Mrs. Agutter	Bedmaker's assistant	Staircases
Mrs. Roper	General help	Staircases and Kitchen
Miss Bancalari	Laundry repairs	Staircases
Mr. E. Chandler	Boots, baths, furnaces	Staircases and Other/outdoor
Mr. H. Ward	Gardener	Other/outdoor
Mr. R. Gammon	Furnaceman's assistant	Other/outdoor

The preceding table provides an example of how staffing looked in practice. This information is based on a staff contact list of 38 names and addresses from Hilary term in 1928, likely kept in the bursary.[68] The list was created after the introduction of National Insurance, and as such, should provide an accurate estimation of the college staff, although there are some obvious omissions. No laundress is listed, the college typically employed two or 3 women for this work. The college likely employed additional casual labour, extra waiters, assistance for the gardener, and other workers as needed.

At that time, the college had approximately 80 resident members, producing a relatively high ratio of servants to members. Staffing levels varied considerably by college and over time, Corpus was 9th out of the 19 colleges in this study in terms of annual income.[69] The largest department at Corpus in 1928 were the men and women working on the staircases, this was true for most colleges throughout the period. The second largest was the kitchen, again, likely true for most colleges. Approximately half of these workers were likely to be either unemployed or underemployed in the long vacation.

[68] Papers from Brian Harrison's personal archive, pp.6164-6.
[69] *Royal Commission on Oxford and Cambridge Universities: Appendices to the report of the commissioners* (1922), p.325. In 1920, the college reported to the commission that servants' wages totaled £2,826. Ibid., p.326.

1.3. Sources and methodology



COACH AND FOUR ON THE ISIS.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

A FOUNDER OF JOURNALISM.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE MISSION.

Figure 4 A page from Richard Gunstone's personal photo album, kept during the early 20th century, This page features a photograph of Gunstone on Addison's Walk at Magdalen College (MC uncatalogued)

Most of the primary sources used in this thesis are found in the university and college archives. Many of these have not been used before, or only in a limited capacity. Some were uncatalogued and previously unknown. For example, the photograph above is from a personal scrapbook kept by a college servant, Richard Gunstone, that was acquired by the college while my research was in progress. The use of these novel sources combined with a comparative approach promises new insights. Although record keeping patterns are broadly similar at these nineteen colleges, record survival varies considerably. This makes systematic comparison very difficult in most cases.

My research relies extensively on bursarial and financial documents. College bursars generated copious quantities of paperwork, particularly correspondence. College accounts are a particularly rich, but idiosyncratic source. At some colleges, survival of these sources is very good. A cursory examination of many of these sources offers an immediate challenge to

another myth, that college servants were largely illiterate.[70] Correspondence and accounts created by servants survive at most colleges, and provide considerable evidence of literacy and numeracy.[71]

Although it was the focus of much attention, it was not until the Cleveland Commission in the 1870s that university and college finances were scrutinized. The reporting requirements prescribed by the royal commissions standardized the accounting systems at the colleges.[72] Colleges transitioned from the medieval charge and discharge form of accounts to double-entry bookkeeping, and ushered forth the age of the professional bursar. [73]

The financial history of Oxford colleges during this period concentrates largely on college estates and the income they generated, as these were the main focus of the royal commissions. The effect of the commissions, particularly the accounting changes, on the management of staff has been neglected.

Before the reforms of the 1870s, most colleges did not produce balance sheets, and evidence strongly suggests that many could not; college accounts were not professionally

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[70] For example, V.H.H. Green, *The Commonwealth of Lincoln College 1427-1977* (Oxford, 1979), pp.416-7.

[71] Servants' account keeping and the entrepreneurial nature of their work is detailed in William Blackstone, *Dissertation on the Accounts of All Souls College 1753*, W.R Anson (ed.) (Roxburghe Club Editions, 1898). 'The Manciple (who is usually Head-Butler or Pincerna likewise) keeps the Buttery-Book; in which, opposite to the Name of every Member of the College, his Battels are minutely entered…This Account is made up weekly… In the Buttery-Book are also weekly kept the Accounts of the several College Servants, who furnish Provisions or Necessaries & the Sums dur to them for those several Articles are allowed upon their respective Names; which is what eth Servants call Takings, but in the Language of the Bursary they are styled Alloc super Nomen. For the only Provisions supplied by the College itself are Bread & Beer; the rest being furnished by some or other of ye College-Servants.'[71]

[72] On historical accounting practices at Oxford, see Dunbabin (1975), (1978), (1997); and Michael Jones (1991), (1997). The financial history of the internal management of colleges and the university is comparatively neglected.

[73] Dunbabin argues that the professionalization of bursars began in the early nineteenth century and was intensified by colleges' transition from beneficial leases to rack-rents in the late nineteenth century. J.P.D. Dunbabin, 'Finance and Property' in Brock, M.G. and Curthoys, M.C., *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. 6, the Nineteenth-Century Part 1* (Oxford, 1997), pp.419-20.

audited.[74] These accounting reforms left unaddressed the complexities of internal accounts, and the Cleveland Commission could not state with any certainty whether colleges operated at a profit or a loss. Dunbabin characterizes the reformed accounting systems as 'inappropriate for efficient internal management'.[75] Indeed, until the 1880s, colleges themselves could not say with certainty whether internal revenues met internal expenses, of which servants' labour was one of the largest costs.

Standardization of college accounts and reporting requirements dramatically improved the availability of financial data, however, with respect to college servants, these published reports must still be approached with caution, and must be supplemented with the relevant archival sources. The 1874 report of the royal commission stated that when it came to the internal management of the colleges, particularly the kitchen and the buttery, there was 'no uniformity'. In 1892, Oriel's treasurer Langford Price noted that although the newly published accounts of Oxford colleges offered 'important and interesting material'… 'there is reason for believing that the different colleges follow different methods of classification and arrangement in arriving at the totals presented under the various headings of published accounts'.[76] This was still true fifteen years later, and in a 1907 report, Lord Curzon offered several examples, including a comparison of the cost of servants for three colleges:

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[74] Michael John Jones, 'Accounting Revolution at Oxford in 1882. The Case of a Governmental "Deus ex Machina"' *Accounting and Business Research*, Vol. 22, No. 86 (1992), pp.125-32; and 'The Accounting System of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1812', *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, Vol. 1 (No. 2, 1991), pp.141-62.
[75] Dunbabin, p.392.
[76] Langford Price, The Recent Depression in Agriculture as Shown in the Accounts of an Oxford College, 1876-90', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 55, No.1 (March, 1892), p.4, hereafter, Price. Price compared the internal income and expenditures of colleges in a subsequent paper, he calculated that all payments to college servants reported in these audited accounts in 1903, across all colleges, totaled £25,096, or approximately one-twelfth of internal expenditure. This represented a decrease from 1883 and 1893, despite matriculations increasing during this period– 'an addition to the proportionate cost of service might have been expected'. Price, 'The Accounts of the Colleges of Oxford, 1893-1903; with Special Reference to their Agricultural Revenues', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 67, No.4 (December, 1904), p. 635.

Table 2: 1907 cost of servants

Source: Price, p.4

College	*Resident Undergraduates*	*Cost of Servants (£ s. d.)*
Worcester	90	399 19 0
Hertford	108	674 17 6
Merton	118	1586 9 5

A number of explanations could have been proposed to explain the variation in the cost of servants, but Curzon noted that '…College accounts only record the fact of the difference with its pecuniary results: and we have no means of ascertaining the cause.'[77]

Comparisons are made as far as the data allows and I have chosen to privilege individual stories of servants' lives to underscore that this is a history not only of institutions, but of communities, families and individuals. This gradation is lost in most existing historical accounts. While searching for the given name of a bedmaker at Lincoln, Mrs. Vickers, who is always referred to by her title rather than her given name, I found the record of her daughter Sophia's baptism in 1814. Just a few lines below was the baptism of another servant's child, William and Sarah Worvill's daughter Ann. William and Sarah worked at Trinity, just a few minutes' walk from Lincoln. Lydia Vickers and Sarah Worvill share another page in the register when they both give birth a few weeks apart, again to daughters, in 1816. Both women worked alongside their husbands Robert Vickers and William Worvill, on the college staircases at Lincoln and Trinity, respectively. They both became widows, and both women supported their families by continuing in college employment following the death of their husbands. Both lived in Holywell parish for the entirety of their working lives. In the absence

[77] Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, *Principles & Methods of University Reform, Being a Letter Addressed to the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1909), p.156.

of further evidence, we are left to wonder whether they knew one another or helped each other in times of hardship.

The sources provide much more detail into servants' experiences than previous accounts offer, yet they are still limited in their ability to allow us to understand this employment relationship. In order to recover servants' perspectives, I also use of oral histories where they are available. From these, for example, when considering the persistence of cash gratuities, in the face of apparent opposition from all sides, a longtime servant offered the following:

> 'Alec Lyne recalled that he always received a gratuity from the president of the college at the end of the terms. 'Of course, in those days you did rely a lot on those sorts of gratuities. …It's a nice feeling, if you can understand me that a man comes to you even at Christmas, only at Christmas, and you sort of think "Oh, he's appreciated what I've done for him through the year…'[78]

Servants created many records, but most are products of their employment and are limited in how much they reveal. One source stands out as a sometimes candid record of college employment, the Scouts' Committee Minute Book at Christ Church. In it, servants complain about the steward and one another. They also memorialize important relationships with co-workers, again, an important aspect of labour history that is very difficult to capture.

> 'In 1906, Richard Malpas retired after forty-six years' service at Christ Church. At a meeting of the scouts' committee, his colleagues presented him with a silver inkstand; minutes note that nearly all of the senior servants at the college had contributed to the gift. Charles Green presented it to Malpas and said that 'it was not so much the value of the present as the regard held by everyone for Malpas'. Malpas was 'very much overcome' by the occasion and said he felt 'a great loss of words in replying to what had been said about him'.[79]

[78] Brian Harrison 'Interview with Alec Lyne' 8 May 1969 in Harrison 'Transcripts',pp.5576.
[79] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1, 27 September 1905. Twenty-nine servants subscribed. Malpas said that he would 'treasure the gift as long as I live'.

The personal papers and effects of some servants have been donated to college archives and where available, these are also an invaluable resource.[80]



Figure 5 University College staff, each with at least 40 yrs' service, at an event held in their honor. (UC:P251/P1/14, photo copyright Oxford Mail)

[80] These include the personal scrapbook of Richard Gunstone, and papers of several servants, John Wilkins and Norman Dix at University, for example.

2. Management

Colleges, like most employers, have always faced two problems: adverse selection and moral hazard – or how to hire the right employees and how to motivate them to work effectively. This section explores how colleges designed labour contracts and developed management strategies to address these and other issues during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[81] For most of this period, colleges found it relatively easy to attract a pool of applicants for vacant positions. Choosing from among these candidates was more difficult. Colleges were highly risk averse when it came to recruitment and typically invested hiring authority in a committee, usually comprised of the head of the college, the bursar and several fellows. Until the early twentieth century, bursars typically did not stay in post for long and most did not develop the type of managerial skills and experience necessary to recruit and retain an efficient and effective domestic staff.[82]

As a consequence, family labour networks were an important strategy for managing the risks associated with both adverse selection and moral hazard. Current employees referred members of social and kinship networks to college authorities when positions became vacant. Servants had little incentive to risk their reputations or their own positions by recommending a poor candidate to their employer.

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[81] Colleges made extensive use of wage forms and methods of pay to motivate and discipline workers, these are discussed in chapter 2.

[82] The rise of the professional bursar in colleges is similar to that of the professional industrial manager described in Sidney Pollard, *The Genesis of Modern Management* (Chatham, 1965). There were exceptions, including Washbourne West, the bursar at Lincoln for over thirty years in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. His longevity in that role may be explained by his lack of aptitude for others. Green said of West, 'He was sociable and witty, but, a third-class man, he had no pretentions to learning. The only book with which he showed any acquaintance was Napier's *Peninsular War*.' V.H.H. Green, *Oxford Common Room A Study of Lincoln College and Mark Pattison* (London, 1957), pp.134-5.

In many cases, a college hired and paid the wages of one worker, but two or more family members provided the labour. These arrangements were advantageous for both employers and employees. Having more family members physically present in the workplace increased access to valuable perquisites and in-kind payments. In this way, women and children could access work through a husband or father that was otherwise inaccessible.[83] If a servant became unable to work through illness, disability or old age, tasks could be redistributed among other family members and the level of household income could be maintained. Until the mid to late-nineteenth century, the accumulation of property rights in a college job were acknowledged by employer and employee alike. In the wake of a servant's death, these rights offered security and enabled surviving family members to manage the financial risks associated with the loss of a breadwinner. Over the nineteenth century, these rights were gradually eroded. In 1868, the university instituted a licensed lodging-house scheme and from then on, preferred to have women employed in this work rather than in college. The piecemeal introduction of retirement savings schemes, particularly those that prioritized the purchase of life insurance, led to a gradual shift in the responsibility for managing the financial risk associated with death and old age from employer to employee, and as a consequence, changed how colleges viewed property rights in jobs.

Both colleges and servants preferred to cultivate long employment relationships, however it is very difficult to design labour contracts that can anticipate all the contingencies inherent in a lengthy attachment. Over time, colleges developed management strategies that rewarded workers for remaining with the college. This meant allowing servants to continue in their

[83] Jane Humphries, and Carmen Sarasúa, 'Off the Record: Reconstructing Women's Labour Force Participation in the European Past', *Feminist Economics* 18(4), October 2012, pp.39-67, hereafter Humphries and Sarasúa.

position despite declining productivity associated with aging. Traditionally, colleges designed contracts that offered deferred compensation, paying junior workers wages below their marginal productivity, while older workers collected wages in excess of their marginal productivity.[84] The cost of these strategies was effectively subsidized in part by resident members through gratuities and perquisites. Younger servants competed with one another for these highly remunerated senior positions, progressing through a rigid hierarchy.[85] When a servant was unable to continue in work at the end of their career, college employment promised the reward of an *ex gratia* pension. Although these awards were related to tenure, the precise value of a servant's pension was based on subjective criteria. By the late nineteenth century, colleges had designed occupational pension schemes and over time, these also became highly effective tools for managing workers throughout their careers. Yet, the introduction of these schemes and the adoption of mandatory retirement ages did not strengthen the policy of deferred compensation, as predicted by personnel economics.[86] Anecdotal evidence suggests the opposite frequently occurred, that the colleges maintained low wages for junior workers, but did not consistently retain the wage differentials in senior positions.

Theories of labour markets and employment contracts are useful in framing questions, but ultimately their explanatory power is limited by the contradictory nature of paternalistic management practices. The final section of this chapter looks at a failure of paternalism that foreshadows college servants' union activity in the early twentieth century. It was obvious to contemporary observers in the nineteenth century that servants' ability to effect anything

[84] Lazear, 'Retirement', pp.1261-1284.
[85] On these workplace competitions or tournaments, a good historiographical summary is found in E. Lazear, and Paul Oyer, 'Personnel Economics', NBER Working Paper 13480, October 2007, pp.8-11. [Hereafter Lazear and Oyer]
[86]

more than incremental change in their working conditions was limited by social and cultural norms, and compounded by the fragmentation of the collegiate system.

2.1. Recruiting workers

College Messengers

Messengers provide a useful window into the recruiting process. The work was easy to learn and straightforward to perform, but low-waged and difficult to supervise. The right candidate was low-skilled, cheap and dependable. Colleges attempted to address these issues through the use of piece rates, but these methods of pay only offered a partial solution. Candidates who were reliable, but ambitious did not stay long, these jobs turned over relatively frequently as workers moved on to better positions. Consequently, it was difficult to match the right worker with the job. All colleges employed at least one messenger during this period. These employees were usually young men at the beginning of their career or older men, who were unsuccessful in more demanding roles, but the college still wanted to keep them on staff. By the early twentieth century, messengers used bicycles, which were usually supplied by the college. Necessarily, the work was important, but difficult to supervise. Undergraduates and fellows alike sent and received a considerable number of messages. The messenger was paid a small annual salary, supplemented by a fee for each item delivered, billed through battels, as well as cash gratuities paid directly. They were also required to keep their own accounts. Messengers were typically only guaranteed employment during the term and were underemployed or unemployed in the long vacations, unless they were offered other employment in the college to supplement their reduced earnings.

From the late-nineteenth century, it was well-established that the job offered little prospect of advancement. Alec Lyne started his career in the 1920s as a messenger at All

Souls, a job his father, who was also a college servant, had helped him obtain. Lyne recalled, 'There was nothing in a messenger's job really.'[87] As soon as an opportunity presented itself, Lyne moved to a job as an underservant at Christ Church where his brother worked, a job that was better paid and had a clear career path. He then responded to an advertisement in the newspaper for a position at Corpus Christi, where he stayed until he retired.[88]

After the Great War, conditions in the local labour market changed and good candidates were easier to recruit. Colleges could choose from a pool of men rather than boys, for even the most junior positions – work that traditionally offered little opportunity for advancement. In 1920, Corpus required a new messenger when the previous man was unable to continue in work due to poor health. Four candidates were considered: Jones, formerly a lieutenant in the OBLI; C. Lapworth, formerly lieutenant and quartermaster in the Royal Berkshire regiment; Ellis, corporal in the OBLI; and H. Whitman, the son of the messenger at Balliol, currently assisting his father in his work. The college interviewed all of the candidates. Jones was ruled out immediately, he had an injured foot. The other three candidates were deemed impressive, and Lapworth was offered the job at £2.2.0 weekly. In addition to delivering messages, Lapworth was also required to help with arrivals and departures, to carry luggage, move undergraduates in and out of their rooms as required. For moving rooms, he was paid 5/- per room; for all other services, presumably he depended on gratuities.

[87] Brian Harrison 'Interview with Alec Lyne' 8 May 1969 in Harrison 'Transcripts',p.5572.
[88] CCC:B/4/7/1B, Lyne was hired as a scout on 22 May 1930, at £2.5.0 weekly. Lyne's service was interrupted in 1939 when he was called up to serve in the OBLI, he was taken prisoner in France and interned as a P.O.W. for 4.5 years. In his interview, Lyne recalled the kindness of the college during this time, sending food parcels, cigarettes, and other items to himself and other men serving overseas. The college paid his wages to his wife during the war (it is unclear from the transcript whether she was also employed by the college during that period) and when he was hospitalized for six months on his return, the college continued to pay his wages throughout. Brian Harrison 'Interview with Alec Lyne' 8 May 1969 in Harrison, 'Transcripts',pp.5572.

Approximately twenty years later, conditions in the local labour market favored workers. Bursars responded by expanding recruitment networks to include local schools. From the late nineteenth century, headmasters were often asked to provide references for boys who applied for work in the colleges. From the early twentieth century, colleges increasingly used these contacts to fill vacant subordinate positions. In 1941, Oriel struggled to recruit a messenger; the acting treasurer wrote to local headmasters asking if they could recommend a 'reliable lad', who had recently left school or was nearing the end of his schooling, and was prepared to work in all types of weather and was 'of good physique'.[89] In addition to messengers, schools were a particularly good source for recruiting junior clerks; administrative work had expanded considerably due to growing numbers of undergraduates, improvements in accounting standards and the institution of national insurance. The college wrote to the headmaster of Oxford High School a few years later in 1944, looking for a boy to work in the bursary as a clerk for 35/- weekly, who was 'neat in his work and good at arithmetic and likely to develop into a proficient clerk and accountant'.[90]

From the interwar period, college employment suffered a loss of prestige. Jobs were sometimes difficult to fill, colleges could no longer count on a flood of applicants when a vacancy was rumored. Where men were too expensive, colleges considered hiring more women.[91] In 1920, Corpus wanted to hire a new third cook. The second cook, W. Stone had recently been dismissed and the existing third cook, F. Milligan was promoted to his position. Both jobs carried the same annual salary of £80. The college wanted to pay £60 for his replacement and resolved that 'if a man cannot be obtained for that wage, a woman to be

[89] OC:TF 2 B1/2, 16 February 1941.
[90] Ibid., 14 December 1944.
[91] Oriel was unique among the colleges for hiring women, rather than boys, to work as scouts' assistants on staircases throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

engaged. The term of a woman cook to be 9 months; and the wages to be less than £60 for that period, if possible.'[92] During the interwar period, younger workers were particularly difficult to recruit. Notes from the 1940s show that Oriel regularly advertised and readvertised vacancies in local newspapers, as well as using servants' registry offices.[93]

In 1942, Oriel was still trying to recruit a messenger and had turned to more dubious methods. The president of the Oxford Union Society wrote to the bursar at Oriel,

> 'Our library boy when delivering notes at Oriel College has, more than once, been offered the post of Messenger at Oriel, £1 a week and a bicycle. Whilst we do not resent fair competition in the Labour Market, Advertising, Labour Exchange, etc, we do feel that it is perhaps not the right thing, to wean away by this method the staff of another educational institution in the University. I feel sure that this is a method not approved by the Authorities of the College.'[94]

As this exchange suggests, there was a longstanding implicit agreement among the colleges not to poach each another's workers.

Colleges were slow to increase wages and generally resistant to wage decreases. This is due in part to the practice of wage coordination among college bursars, if one college increased wages, the others naturally felt pressure to respond accordingly. Additionally, an increased wage for a recently hired worker would necessitate increases for existing workers, which could be expensive for large colleges. Oriel was adjacent to one of the largest, Christ Church, and would likely have felt pressure to resist frequent wage increases.

[92] CCC B/4/7/1B, 5 August 1920.
[93] OC TF 2 B1/2. Three registries are listed: Bates Registry Office; Miss K.L. Clare; and Long's Registry Office, all in Oxford city centre.
[94] Ibid., 19 February 1942.

Similarly, colleges expected loyalty from their servants in the recruitment process. Rigid internal hierarchies, along with the traditional practice of servants working well past a traditional age of retirement, meant that younger servants often had to look outside their college in order to advance their careers. Policies on applying for and accepting positions in other colleges varied. Usually it was a straightforward process, but occasionally colleges exercised considerable control over servants' employment. In 1920, the domestic bursar at Corpus reported the 'misconduct of Tew, the under-porter in applying for the post of under-porter at another College (New College) without sufficient notice to the Domestic Bursar. Resolved, in view of this misconduct, not to raise his wages for the present.'[95]

In 1871, Washbourne West, the bursar at Lincoln, wrote to Samuel Wayte, the president of Trinity, and explained that Isaac Price, the underporter at Lincoln had asked him to write in support of his wife's application for a position as laundress at Trinity. Jane Price provided three excellent character references, but it was West's that held sway. Rather than recommending that Wayte hire Jane Price, West asked that Wayte reject her application. West explained that Price's wife was 'very respectable and a good laundress' but that 'it was very likely that when a Laundress's place is vacant here, she will be appointed to it.' West went on to add, 'I shall be glad if you will not put this to Price when the appointment has been made for what I now say amounts to a promise of appointing his wife here as a laundress, which I would rather he did not know.'[96]

College servants were well aware of these practices and could do little in response. Bob Dickens recalled that when he was refused an increase in salary while working at Corpus; he applied for and was offered an SCR position at Magdalen. Dickens informed the bursar at

[95] CCC B/4/7/1B, 5 August 1920.
[96] TC Bursary drawer 26 2/2, 13 November 1871.

Corpus that he had accepted the position and 'next thing I was told, they [Magdalen] were going to wait and see what happened.' Dickens suspected that the offer was rescinded after Corpus intervened.[97] Bill Morris felt the practice was still ongoing several decades later. In the mid-1960s, while employed as an SCR man at Corpus, he applied for an advertised position as the SCR butler at Brasenose. Morris said, '… I do know for a fact that after the interviews, I was on the short list and there was a phone call from Brasenose to Corpus and that was finished.'[98]

The frequency and ease with which servants moved from one college to another can be sharply contrasted with the effort colleges expended in some circumstances to impede these transitions. Gains accrued to both employers and employees from the knowledge and skills that servants acquired on the job, but the cases listed above suggest that there was no agreement on how these gains should be distributed.

Around 1920, James Warner, a retired fellow at University, recommended a servant of his college, John Wilkins, to H. Blakiston the president of Trinity. Warner wrote,

> 'John Wilkins, single man, aged 28 of 35 Pembroke St., son of the buttery man at St. John's is the servant whom I yesterday recommended to you. He has been here 11 years, underservant to the best servant by common consent in the college… He is eminently a gentleman's servant, being ready, obliging, refined, etc. The only fault I can see in him is a certain diffidence, which is however, a virtue and which has amused me once or twice, but never inconvenienced me, …I can only add in conclusion that I should have been extremely unwilling to lose him during my own residence here.'[99]

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[97] G.A. Jonge and A.J. Purkis, 'Interview with Bob Dickens', 20 June 1969, Harrison, 'Transcripts' p. 6231. Dickens remained at CCC, he lived in a house owned by the college on Magpie Lane where he and his wife provided undergraduate lodgings for the college. Peter Baldwin, who lodged with Dickens as an undergraduate in the 1940s recalled, 'Four of us were admitted to the heaven of the house of the butler, Bob Dickens, then in Magpie Lane, and to the exceptional kindness of his wife, Mrs. Bob, who acted on the belief that all achievement in Oxford should be founded on a substantial breakfast — skill and ingenuity being in her case brilliantly victorious over rationing.' Harrison, *Corpuscles*, p.160.

[98] D. Lay and R. Rose, 'Interview with Bill Morris', 13 May 1969, Harrison, 'Transcripts', p.6413.

[99] TC Old Bursary – Drawer 26, 7 August. No year is specified, but John Wilkins was born in 1892.

John Wilkins spent his entire career at University, sixty-six years. In this letter, Warner makes it clear that he would personally accrue some of the loss if Wilkins had left the service of the college. During this period, junior servants worked for food and gratuities while they trained on the job and waited for a promotion. Most colleges assigned a maximum age to these subordinate positions. For example, at Corpus: 'Boys are liable to be superannuated at the age of 19. It is the duty of the bedmaker to inform the Bursar three months before his assistant attains that age'.[100] At Christ Church, assistants were superannuated relatively late at age thirty; the college was one of the last to establish an organized pension scheme and adopt policies regarding retirement ages. Allowing older workers to stay on required the college to permit assistants to stay in post longer as well.[101]

[100] CCC B/4/7/1B, 21 January 1893.
[101] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1, 27 September 1905.



Figure 7 John Wilkins, presented with a silver salver at his retirement party in December 1972. (UC:P251/P1/15, photo copyright Oxford Mail)





Figure 6 Left: John Wilkins aged 15 in July 1907 (UC:P251/P1/1) Right: Wilkins 1907 in his bell boy uniform. Wilkins worked in a hotel in Lowestoft in the summer of 1907, after he started work at University in 1906. (UC:P251/P1/4)

Colleges expected that some junior servants might have to leave their service in order to obtain a promotion. Having paid little or none of the cost of their training, presumably colleges accepted that junior servants would retain all of the benefit of the general knowledge and skills acquired. Servants who had been with the college longer acquired more specific knowledge and skills, particularly about individual members' preferences. As Warner expressed above, he would have personally borne the inconvenience of an inexperienced replacement if Wilkins left. The preferences of the institution were not always aligned with those of individual members – University may have had been indifferent between Wilkins and another equally qualified worker. The rigidities of class hierarchies also complicated matters, preventing negotiated solutions. It is impossible to determine how often servants' career progression was impeded in this way; these communications were unlikely to be memorialized and only survive occasionally in archival sources. Similarly, insufficient data survives with which to understand patterns of behavior around job changing. Of particular interest is the question of whether these patterns were affected when colleges began directly employing junior servants in the late-nineteenth century and assumed more of the training costs.

Porters' Wives

Recruitment and retention were difficult and time-consuming as these examples show. Family labour networks provided a more efficient and effective means of supplying colleges with trustworthy and dependable candidates. College histories emphasize the masculine character of these networks, and have hitherto overlooked the role of women and children in this labour market. Part of this omission is an artifact of record keeping, wage records frequently obscure the labour of family members, particularly wives. In some positions, it was

expected that family members would work together, although the salary or wage was only paid to one of them, nearly always the husband. Some part of the omission of women's labour must also be due to a predominately gendered narrative of male 'dynasties' of college service that omit any discussion of the work of wives, mothers and daughters. [102] These are typically supported with references to college statutes that suggest the presence of women was always strictly regulated, ignoring that these statutes were variously interpreted and observed over the centuries.

The college porter is a hugely important character in college life. He features prominently in historical counts, fictional and factual. Yet, by examining a wide variety of archival sources, it becomes clear that the porter was usually hired as a team, along with his wife. At many colleges in the nineteenth century, both the porter and his wife lived and worked in the college, her full-time labour was included in his remuneration.[103] An explication of the porter's role at Balliol included the following description of the ideal candidate:

> 'He must be of middle age, strong, healthy, and of good character. Married. No family. The engagement to include the services of the wife who must make herself acquainted with the duties of the Lodge, as she will be required to assist in taking charge of it in the absence of the Porter – so that no person should be able to pass into the College unobserved.'[104]

The college assumed that the porter's wife was equal to the job of securing the college and supervising the under porter; she was also literate, as the porter received and distributed correspondence, and kept the gate book: a record of all undergraduate members of the college

[102] For example, Eliza Gunstone's work as a licensed university lodging-house keeper is not mentioned in R. Sheppard, *The Gunstones of St Clement's : The History of a Dynasty of College Servants at Magdalen* (Oxford, 2003), [Hereafter Sheppard, *Gunstones*]
[103] Other occupations similarly anticipated husbands and wives working as teams, gaolers for example. Olwen Hufton, 'Women Without Men: Widows and spinsters in Britain and France in the eighteenth century' *Journal of Family History*, Winter 1984, pp.365, [Hereafter Hufton, 'Women']
[104] BC F.12.23 Qualifications and Duties of the Head Porter of Balliol College, undated.

who came in past curfew. Additionally, all tradespeople were required to show a written order for admission to the college. She was also likely numerate, as the porter kept several account books, including gate fines, and accounts of postage sold in the college. For this, the couple received £80 annually, plus rent, gas and firing; the contract makes no mention of meals.

In 1909, Robert Bryan retired as head porter at Hertford. In the preceding months, he negotiated the terms of his retirement with the bursar, C. Jackson. In one of these letters, Bryan reminded Jackson of the many years Bryan's wife worked as an unpaid assistant:

> '28 December 1908
> Sir,
> After reading as requested my Policy of Insurance and thinking over all that was said to me on the subject of Pensions in the Bursary, I would like as the College is not in favor of paying the whole of the amount of the Policy in one payment, a Pension in lieu thereof, and if the latter be decided upon I would respectfully remind you of my deceased wifes [sic] services who was the only assistant I had during the time we were together at the Lodge. A sufficient Pension from College would be the most acceptable to
> Your Obedient humble serv't,
> RH Bryan, Porter'[105]

If the porter predeceased his wife, she often found herself in difficult financial circumstances. Although she may have spent her working life in the service of the college, she often received minimal consideration in her retirement, which was forced in the event of her husband's death. In 1855, a Balliol college order listed 'Pittances to Porters' Widows': 3d. weekly to Mrs. Moore and 5d. weekly to Ann Leonard, the widow of Charles Leonard, who died in 1852.[106] While the porter and his wife usually received college housing as part of their remuneration, there was no entitlement to continued tenancy in the event of the death of

[105] HC/33/1/3.
[106] BC GOV C, 25 January 1855.

either party. It is not clear what happened if the porter was fired, whether his wife could continue working for the college in some capacity or if her employment was contingent on his. Mrs. Moore's pension award of 3d., awarded some fifteen years after her husband left the service of the college leaves open the possibility that she was able to keep working for the college or at least maintained some right to a pension, independent of her husband's actions. William Moore was dismissed from his position as college porter in 1831, having been disciplined for drunkenness in July and then found to be making 'inaccurate returns' in the book of gate fines.[107]

Ann Leonard was able to secure college accommodation, but still suffered a significant reduction in her household income. An 1856 college order instructed that her rent arrears would be deducted from her pension and 'to inform her that if any similar complaint be made hereafter of her non-payment of rent, her pension shall be withdrawn'.[108] At Lincoln, minutes from the college order books note that on Chapter Day in 1874, 'that by way of gift to Mrs. Thorpe, widow of the late porter, the Bursar pay her when she leaves the Lodge at Christmas the whole quarter's wages instead of the half quarter which will be her due.'[109] Minutes from the college meeting in November 1875 mention that the new porter was to receive an allowance 'for the help he is obliged to pay for in scrubbing the hall floor', work that appears to have been done by Mrs. Thorpe when she lived in the lodge. Beyond the one month's wages mentioned previously, Mrs. Thorpe did not receive any pension from the college and there is no mention of her being provided with any other assistance in-kind.[110]

[107] BC GOV C, 2 January 1831 and 30 November 1831. William Moore does not appear to have received any severance or pension from the college, which further suggests that his wife was able to continue her employment.
[108] Ibid., 11 February 1856.
[109] LC/G/M/3.
[110] Ibid.

Other porters' wives fared better. Richard Richmond, the longtime porter at University received £120 annually in the mid-1870s. He lived in the porter's lodge for most of his tenure at University, and in 1874 moved to a college house on the High Street. The rent on this house was £40 annually; the college paid the rates.[111] In March 1876, Richmond retired and was awarded an annual pension of £80 for the remainder of his life. Three months later, he died, and left an estate of approximately £800.[112] The college awarded his widow, Sophia, a pension of £40 annually for five years.[113] When remuneration was agreed for the new porter, his wife was paid a 'gift' of £2 annually, for 'assisting the Porter in sweeping and cleaning the Chapel, Hall, Bursary, Library, Porter's Lodge and W.C.'[114]

[111] UC:GB4/A1/1-4, 20 March 1874.
[112] *NPCE&W* 1876, p.121.
[113] UC:GB4/A1/1-4, 22 March 1876. She lived with her son and granddaughters until her death in 1895.
[114] Ibid.



Figure 8 Richard Richmond, porter at University College c.1864 (UC:P4/P/1)

Examples of family labour networks are found in many positions, however in most cases it is difficult to find archival evidence of their work. Oral histories provide valuable insight into these silences in record-keeping. Phyllis George, who worked as a scout at Worcester from 1946-60, described helping her mother with college laundry many years earlier as a girl. '…I walked. I was young… well I used to go around to the colleges when I was small with a big washing basket … Nothing was done on electricity, nothing. We had a dolly tub. My mum had a dolly tub.'[115] George explained that the laundry was done primarily in the family's kitchen, presumably she helped when required. In 1905, Oriel agreed to increase the weekly wages of Mrs. Cooper, the plate washer on the understanding that her daughter would come

[115] WOR/PDR/53, pp.3-4. George recalled that chamber pots were still in use when she started work at Worcester, p.11.

into the college on Sundays and assist her.[116] Norman Dix recalled coming into college as a boy to help his father, 'Mind you, I'd seen College long before that. I'd been on my father's staircase on Kitchen Staircase when I was about nine years old.'[117]

Moses and Ann Jackman both worked for St. John's, he worked as a messenger and she worked as a laundress. They lived in north Oxford with five young children and two servants. Her earnings far exceeded his, for example in 1857, she received £198.10.4 ½ as a laundress and he received £62.11.6.[118] Their work was complementary, as the messenger, he could easily transport laundry to and from the college.

Casual work was often similarly accessed through these informal networks. Prospective candidates sometimes found work as substitutes, hoping to then be offered a permanent post. Bob Dickens worked as a substitute scout in the interwar period while he waited for a permanent position, 'If anyone went sick, they knew where to come, and that's how I came to Corpus. Somebody was put out at a minute's notice and I came here.'[119]

The casual labour of middle-aged women was a ubiquitous feature of college life, and an important source of income for many families. These women worked predominately as cleaners, but were employed variously as servers, to run tea rooms and to cater for sports events, such as teas for cricket matches and picnics for days out on the river.

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[116] OC:GOV 4 A4 Minutes of the Governing Body, 6 December 1905.
[117] UC: Robin Darwall-Smith, 'Transcript of Peter Bayley's interview with Norman Dix' 25 March 1997.
[118] SJC ACC III D.118.
[119] G.A. Jonge and A.J. Purkis, 'Interview with Bob Dickens' June 20, 1969 in Harrison 'Transcripts of interviews with "College Servants"' p. 6224. Dickens was hired to fill the vacancy created when J. Kimber was fired, after receiving a warning, for unpunctuality. Dickens was paid £2.5.0 weekly, term time only. CCC B/4/7/1B 11 February and 19 May 1932.

One such woman, Mrs. Griffin, was the head of her household and filled in a weekly diary of her income and expenditure in 1910:[120]

Income	
College work	£0.7.6
Charity Organization Society	£0.3.0
Lodger	£0.2.6
Washing for lodger	£0.0.6
Sunday dinner for lodger	£0.0.6
Boy's morning work	£0.2.0
Sewing a blouse	£0.0.3
Weekly total	£0.16.3

Although the specifics of her college employment are not provided, she was likely working as a charwoman. The Charity Organization Society (COS) worked closely with colleges during this period and it is possible that she obtained her college employment through a referral from the society. Many wives and daughters of Oxford dons volunteered with the COS, which had developed extensive networks of college contacts by the late nineteenth century. It is also highly likely that any financial assistance from the society depended on her acceptance of whatever work was made available. Her weekly income suggests casual employment with a college, a weekly full-time wage for a charwoman would have been higher.

Butler's research showed that in 1909-11, women working in Oxford laundries could expect about 10/- weekly or a daily rate of 2/6-.[121] Charwomen, who were usually married women and widows, earned about the same. During this period, charwomen who had regular work at colleges earned more, approximately 12/- weekly, but very few of these jobs were year round.

[120] BL:Butler Papers/Box 12.
[121] Ibid.

2.2. Family labour networks

Family labour networks were important to household survival strategies in this labour market, particularly to older workers and surviving family members in the event of a servant's death. In a highly seasonal economy like Oxford's in the nineteenth century, servants found it difficult to accumulate any long-term savings. Continued access to work and the possibility of assistance from a paternalistic employer were effective ways to manage the financial risk of death, illness, disability and old age. This section examines the importance of family labour networks in managing uncertainty.

Archival sources that reveal the everyday strategies of these workers were created and survive with greater frequency around an important event, like death. Where husbands and wives worked together during a marriage, it was relatively common for the widow to continue working in the same occupation after the death of her husband.[122] When widows and children assumed these roles, it can be inferred that they had previously worked alongside their fathers and husbands.

The most accurate predictor of a widow's status was the status of her husband; women who had assets and could carry on a business were generally successful, while women who had to depend on wage labour were less assured of success.[123] College employment offered something between these two states, a college position had no value to an outside party comparable to a business; however it typically provided continuity of employment to surviving family members. Although not all women employed by colleges were widows who had inherited positions from their husbands, many were - colleges had a preference for hiring

[122] For other examples of occupations where widows traditionally continued in employment, see Hufton, 'Women', p. 365.
[123] Beatrice Moring and Richard Wall, *Widows in European Economy and Society, 1600-1920* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp.116-7.

married middle-aged women and widows, which was frequently detailed in college statutes. College servants were typically prohibited from engaging in other types of occupations commonly held by married women during this period, specifically running a public house; while the ownership of other types of businesses was restricted, for example owning a shop or inn. A college servant's widow could not have taken up any of these occupations after the death of her husband without access to the capital required for setting up the business. She would have faced significant challenges in starting an enterprise in a time of likely financial insecurity. The right of a servant's family members to continue in employment after the death or incapacity of the primary wage earner was often the crucial factor in quickly formulating a successful economic survival strategy.

Of the available strategies for maintaining household income in later life, servants preferred to remain in work as long as possible. When they worked alongside family members, the workload could be redistributed within the family to accommodate changes in the physical and mental capacity of the primary wage earner, typically without much involvement from college authorities. Through these measures it was possible to achieve 'on-the-job retirement' as an alternative to full retirement.[124] Colleges supported the efforts of older servants to stay in work through various modifications: acknowledging the declining strength of servants by changing physically demanding tasks for an easier workload, less carrying of heavy items like sacks of coal and large trays of food, changing work assignments to avoid climbing several flights of stairs; easing the physical discomfort of the aging servant's body by allowing them to work indoors during the winter months, particularly sitting in the

[124] Defined as '…a move down the occupational ladder from a skilled or semi-skilled industrial job or to a service sector occupation' in R. Ransom and R. Sutch 'The Labour of Older Americans: Retirement of Men On and Off the Job, 1870-1937', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. XLVI, No. 1(March 1986), pp.1-30.

porter's lodge where it was warm and allowing increased perquisites of coal, food and tea. Colleges provided shorter working hours, allowing servants to continue with work they preferred. For scouts this might include presiding over small breakfast and luncheon parties and waiting at high table where they could expect gratuities and food but could also employ assistants for more physically demanding tasks. Older servants were often granted the privilege of giving tours of the college to tourists, providing an insider's view and collecting gratuities in the process. [125] The practice of continuing to employ workers past traditional ages of retirement was financially prudent for colleges and shared the cost of older workers between the residents they served and the college, delaying the expense of a pension and the risks and additional supervisory burden of hiring a replacement.[126] The continued employment of older servants was also a recognition of the value of the knowledge they accumulated over their working lives, an intimate and familiar understanding of the traditions and history of the institutions and the fellows and undergraduates they served.

In 1907, an undergraduate at University, Mr. Dupuis, appears to have organized a petition signed by 59 of his fellow undergraduates, complaining about the porter's age and his behavior towards the young men. Arthur Poynton, the bursar, responded, 'The complaint made against an honest, kindhearted & high principled old servant, one who never informs against your friends & is always on the side of youth & high spirits is that he is guilty of "a studied lack of civility"'. Of the undergraduates' complaint about the porter being past retirement age, Poynton wrote '…of the statement, which by whomsoever supplied is

[125] The experience of college servants in old age supports a more positive view of employment opportunities for these workers, similar to the conclusions in Pat Thane (2000) but in marked contrast to the pessimistic view in John Macnicol (2008).
[126] Thane similarly describes these arrangements as 'an alternative to ex gratia payments'. Pat Thane, *Old Age in English History* (Oxford, 2000), p.243, [Hereafter Thane, *Old Age*]

inaccurate about the age at which it is usual to supersede the Porter, I am not able to take any notice.'[127] Many decades of service often yielded genuine expressions of loyalty on all sides and while the colleges as paternalistic employers were obliged by the terms of the employment contract to reward years of service by older workers, personal feelings about servants - both favorable and unfavorable - also informed management decisions.

By at least the mid-nineteenth century, colleges believed that servants' physical and mental capacity for work began to show symptoms of decline around age 60, and the earliest retirement savings schemes assumed a retirement age of 60 or 65. Of course, there was considerable variation, and until the late nineteenth century, all colleges made decisions about how to manage aging workers on an individual basis.[128] The widespread purchase of annuities and endowment assurance policies in the mid-to-late nineteenth century helped to fix these limits, as retirement ages were set to coincide with the maturation of insurance policies. By the late nineteenth century, it was common for colleges to specify a default retirement age, again usually 60 or 65, after which a servant could only continue in work with the permission of the college. After reaching retirement age, servants were free to leave college employment completely, but few who were able to stay in work chose full-time retirement until after the Second World War. The use of these older workers in part-time or alternative employment declined after the Second World War when technology supplied more efficient and less costly alternatives to servants' labour, including vacuums, electric light and heat.[129] These innovations were compounded by changes in patterns of domestic management in colleges,

[127] UC: EB4/J1/6, 15 May 1907.
[128] Inconsistencies in the descriptions of college servants' employment in census data make it infeasible to accurately estimate servant's labour force participation and its relationship to age.
[129] This phenomenon is described in P. Thane, 'The History of Retirement' in G. Clark, A. Munnell and M. Orszag (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Pensions and Retirement Income* (Oxford, 2006). Electronic resource accessed via SOLO, 4 February 2019.

meals were now taken communally in the hall, undergraduates expected less in the way of personal service and colleges were more willing to hire women, who were typically cheaper than male servants.

When considering the arrangements for the college stores in 1876, fellow Francis de Paravicini, who had been tasked with overseeing their management, advised Balliol to continue to employ the current store keeper, Mr. Harris, despite concerns about his age. Paravicini wrote, 'I find Harris extremely trustworthy, and wonderfully willing and reliable, and I do not think there is the least chance of our getting nearly as good a servant to replace him. He is still capable of walking to Islip and back at a good pace: his faculties are perfectly good, and there is no sign of childishness about him.'[130] Mr. Harris continued to work for the college and retired on a pension of £60 in 1888.[131]

The decision to give up work could be initiated by the servant or the college, and in either case, evidence shows that the details of retirement were agreed through negotiation. In 1855, the college concluded that Mrs. Vickers, a bedmaker who was 'entirely past work' ought to retire. Lincoln offered her an 'allowance' of £20, which would increase to £26 if she agreed to give up her post as bedmaker in the same academic term.[132] Presumably this meant that a formal resignation from Mrs. Vickers served to terminate her rights to any income from the position as bedmaker, including the termly gratuities from residents immediately due to her. Mrs. Vickers evidently refused the college's first offer which appeared to value these gratuities at £6, and several weeks later the college offered her £10 for the current term and an annual pension of £30, a substantial increase on their first offer. The college order stipulated that her

[130] BC:F.12.18 Report of Mr. Paravicini on Stores 1876.
[131] BC English Register of College Minutes 1875-1908, 10 October 1888.
[132] LC/G/M/2, 8 February 1855.

replacement should be 'an efficient man who will do all the work and receive all the emoluments of the place', language which suggests that Mrs. Vickers employed an assistant to do at least some of her work and likely commanded more remuneration than a single man could expect. The order also emphasized the college's reluctance to agree to Mrs. Vickers' demands for an increased pension award - 'the allowance of so great a pension shall not be drawn into a precedent'.[133]

College servants who worked as scouts, in the common room, and in the plate room often employed their spouses or children as assistants and records show that the recognition of property rights in these positions was well-established. Servants handed these positions down to family members in the case of physical or mental incapacity and in the event of a servant's death; the right of surviving family members to take over the position was respected by the college and fellow servants alike well into the late nineteenth century. Wives took over the jobs of their husbands; sons and daughters took over the jobs of their mothers and fathers, and there appears to be no preference given to sons over widows when both survived the death of a male servant. In 1858, John Harris, the common room man at Lincoln, wrote to Rev. Calcott, a fellow of the college, 'Rev. Sir, The Bursar has received several applications for the situation supposed to be vacant by the death of poor William Prisley should the widow not succeed to the situation I would most respectfully beg to recommend to your notice my assistant Isaac Price a young man 24 years of age…'.[134] In a similar turn of events, Harris himself had assumed the role of common room man in 1855 from his father who was incapacitated and unable to work.[135] Before working in the common room, father and son had

[133] Ibid, 23 March 1855.
[134] LC/B/C/6.
[135] LC/G/M/2, 23 March 1855.

worked together as scout and assistant with Harris Jr. taking over the senior position as scout in 1848 when his father moved to the common room.[136] The 1855 order did not provide for a pension or sick pay to Harris Sr., which suggests that the family's rights to the income from the position also came with the responsibility to manage the redistribution of the workload, and the college did not expect the family to suffer a reduction in income that necessitated any further assistance.

A servant's rights to any position were limited by the authority of the college. In 1834, Charles Rose, a fellow of Lincoln College wrote to the bursar, Rev. Calcott and asked if the college might be able to find employment for Rose's personal servant, Henry Allen. Allen worked as Rose's manservant for fifteen years, many of them while Rose was a resident of Lincoln. Rose did not have the authority to offer Allen a position at Lincoln, but he knew that a bedmaker's place might soon be vacant due to 'the hopeless state of poor Mrs Bickard', who was evidently close to death. Rose acknowledged that both he and the college were obliged to recognize Mrs. Bickard's rights to the bedmaker's position, and that she may transfer them to her children. Rose's letter allows that the college has an obligation to employ 'little Robert Bickard in case of the death of his mother' but that the college should feel no such obligation to Mrs. Bickard's older son John and that her rights to the position are still subject to the authority of the college, as 'he appears to be so worthless that no one can be expected to care about him'.[137]

In 1831, wage records from Trinity in the 1830s show the husband and later the son of the college laundress Mrs. Sarah Chapman taking over her position after her death in 1832. The

[136] Ibid., 25 March 1855.
[137] LC/B/C/4, 11 November 1834. Occasionally, fellows tried to find college work for their personal servants. If a servant was near the end of their career, this was an obvious way to avoid having to pay anything towards a servant's retirement.

Chapmans had been employed by the college to do laundry for at least twenty years; the quarterly salary for the position, £9 3s. 9d. remained the same, whether it was paid to Sarah Chapman, her husband or son.[138] It is less clear if women were able to achieve comparable levels of remuneration in the same positions as their husbands, and if so, whether the difference can be explained by the reduction in the quantity of labour applied to the position, or if gender was also a factor.

In 1834, college authorities at Lincoln resolved to inform the manciple, Mary Mason, that she be 'called upon to decline the Ironmongers business or be deprived of her situation in college, and that she shall have one year from the present time to make her selection as to whether she will continue Manciple or Ironmonger'. Mason, a widow, was 56 years of age at the time of this order; a few years later in 1841 the census shows her living on her own, with a female servant near Lincoln. The position of college manciple was one of the most senior and lucrative available in a college and Mason's interest in setting up a business in addition to her college responsibilities as a manciple is highly unusual and suggests that she may have struggled to maintain the level of household income she enjoyed while her husband was alive. Mason agreed to give up the ironmongery business; a college order in 1851 agreed to her retirement from the office of manciple and assigned her an annual pension of £30.[139]

When her husband William died in 1832, Sarah Giles Worvill continued to work at Trinity College until her retirement in 1861. Wage records show William Worvill was employed as a scout at the college from 1807 and had taken over the role of senior scout and messenger in late 1828 or early 1829 when Richard Bradley, the senior scout died aged 68.

[138] TC Servants *Liber Famulorum*/1c 1831-1847, This is one of the few examples of men taking over the work of women after their death.
[139] LC/G/M/2, 6 June 1837.

The two positions required more work than one person could reasonably be expected to manage, which suggests Worvill worked with an assistant, likely his wife and possibly one or more of his children. In the years before his death, William Worvill received over £200 annually in cash wages: roughly two-thirds from his work as a scout and one-third from the work as messenger. This represented a significant increase over his wages before 1828, which averaged about £84 annually. The family, which included one servant, lived at 57 Broad Street; their home was owned by the college and the annual rent of £15 was deducted from the Worvills' wages in two payments.[140]

Records do not show that Mrs. Worvill received any financial assistance from the college after his death in the form of a pension or a gift, but offer some clues about how she and the rest of the household managed after the death of the primary wage earner. Wage records show her receipts as a messenger from 1832 to late 1839 were roughly equivalent to his, however there are no records of any payments for other work to her or her sons during this period, possibly due to a change in the recording of payments to scouts. After 1839, she appears to have given up the messenger duties, but kept the work associated with maintaining the college postage and letters account, which reduced her wages by nearly half.[141] The position required collecting letters from the college, usually three times a day during the academic terms and less frequently during vacations, assigning the correct postage to the letters and then taking them to the post office. This required her to keep a strict accounting of the regular cash advances she received from the college and postage charges incurred by residents. These accounts were reviewed by the bursar and the charges included in residents'

[140] TC Servants *Liber Famulorum*/1a-1c.
[141] Ibid.

quarterly bills. This work would have also been more predictable with regular hours bounded by the post office's hours of operation compared to the duties of a messenger.

All servants at Trinity were paid quarterly, Sarah Worvill's rent was deducted from her wages in the first quarter of the calendar year and in the summer. Her wages varied during the year and were lowest in the summer, when she often did not earn enough during the quarter to pay her rent. This debt was usually about £1 and was carried over to the next quarter when it was deducted from her wages.[142] The following quarter she was obliged to pay the second half of her rent, which left little opportunity to accumulate any savings. These patterns of income fluctuation and periods of debt, including rent arrears, continued until she retired. Sometime in 1855, she negotiated an allowance of £2.10.0 to offset her rent, which was enough to keep her from owing the college in the terms her rent was due. A change in record keeping practices at the college in the late 1850s shows that along with several other employees, Worvill regularly requested and received cash advances on her wages from the bursar, another strategy she used to manage variations in her income. For example, she received £2 on 28 September and £1 on 3 December 1858.[143]

It's clear that income from other sources was necessary for the survival of the household. Census records from 1851 show that four of the Worvill children lived with their mother in the family home well into adulthood. Her son William aged 34, a tailor; her daughter Elizabeth aged 33, a domestic; Anne aged 27 and Sarah, aged 32, both needlewomen, all lived at 57 Broad Street. Her son John married and lived nearby, he continued to work as a scout at Trinity. From at least 1860, Sarah Worvill offered lodgings in her home and in 1868, she was licensed to provide lodgings under the university scheme. She offered one set of rooms at

[142] Ibid.
[143] TC Servants *Liber Famulorum*/1d.

a modest 12/- rent per term.[144] Sarah Worvill continued to work for Trinity as a messenger until her retirement in 1861, when the college awarded her a weekly pension of 10/- in addition to an annual payment of £5.[145] She died in the family home at 57 Broad Street in 1869. The recognition of the Worvill family's rights to carry on in college employment after the death of William, the primary wage earner in 1832, provided the family with relatively secure housing and employment for over thirty years. Sarah and her son John both worked at Trinity until retirement while her daughters worked in the home looking after undergraduate lodgers. As the Worvills' example demonstrates, within this 'economy of makeshifts', lodging-house keeping was an effective complement to existing strategies for managing economic uncertainty in this labour market.

[144] LHD/D/1/1-77.
[145] TC College Order Book D 111.A.4, 11 June 1861. The same order also superannuated her son John Worvill, who died later that year. Sarah Worvill died in 1869 aged 84.

2.3. The Lodging House Delegacy

Family labour networks were also an important strategy for managing employers' uncertainty, particularly managing the risk associated with adverse selection. In 1868, the university allowed undergraduates to live out of colleges in licensed lodging houses.[146] The decision to permit the licensing of lodging houses accompanied the admission of unattached students: undergraduates who studied for a degree but were not affiliated with a college. These two measures, among others, were intended to improve access to a university education; it was widely acknowledged that the high cost of living in a college precluded many qualified young men from attending. A similar relaxing of restrictions proved successful at Cambridge in 1854 and enjoyed the enthusiastic support of several of the smaller Oxford colleges, as they could expand rapidly in spite of the limitations of space and the cost of construction. Various contemporary sources suggested that living in lodgings could reduce the cost of attendance by as much as half.[147]

These measures were successful. From 1868 to 1876 the number of undergraduates on the books of the university increased from 1,974 to 2,542, an increase of 28%; the accommodation required for the expansion was provided largely by these newly licensed lodging houses.[148] This section primarily relies on records from the Lodging House Delegacy (LHD), the administrative organization set up to manage the recruitment of lodging-houses, to inspect and regulate the standard of lodgings provided, and to supervise the conduct of both house

[146] It was possible in some circumstances to live out of college before 1868 with permission from the university, if undergraduates were of mature age (over 25) or lived with their parents.
[147] For example, 'Colleges vs Lodgings', *OC*, 9 February 1867.
[148] BL:G.A. Oxon 8° 705.

keepers and resident undergraduates. Although existing narratives emphasize the late nineteenth century as a period of significant growth in undergraduate numbers, hitherto little attention has been paid to how this rapid growth was actually accomplished, given the space constraints, cost and time of constructing additional accommodation. These sources reveal the extent and importance of the local community, particularly though family labour networks, in providing housing and attendance to nearly one-third of undergraduates in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the first year of the scheme, at least 25% of licenses for lodging houses were granted to college servants.[149] It is not possible to determine how many undergraduates were housed with college servants, however, qualitative analysis shows that college servants were more likely to enjoy higher occupancy rates because of their employment relationship.

University lodging-house keeping in Oxford, particularly by college servants and their families, provides a different view of this economic activity. Historical accounts of lodging-house keeping describe it largely as gendered work; women were the chief providers of lodgings, particularly middle-aged and older women.[150] Existing literature describes it as a subsistence activity, rather than deliberately profit-making or entrepreneurial.[151]

In houses run by college servants, evidence shows that the work was done by men as well as women, although women still provided most of the labour. Records show that both men

[149] This is an underestimate, I have only included applications where the occupation explicitly states college servant, and have excluded those that specify occupations generally, like servant, cook, waiter, or similar, unless I could match the name and address to other sources. Several applications omit occupational information altogether and this may have happened more frequently for applicants who were already known to the university.
[150] For example, Leonore Davidoff, 'The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century England' in Sandra Burman (ed.), *Fit Work for Women* (London 1979) [Hereafter Davidoff, *Landladies*]; Alison C. Kay,'A Little Enterprise of Her Own: Lodging-house Keeping and the Accommodation Business in Nineteenth-Century London', *London Journal* 28(2) 2003, pp.41-53.
[151] Davidoff, *Landladies,* p.67.

and women prepared and served meals, waited on parties, cleaned boots, and tended fires. Men and women of various ages kept lodging houses and employed servants to assist with the work, middle-aged charwomen as well as adolescent boys and girls. Women accessed this work through their husbands, fathers and sons. These associations could be kinship ties, the wife or mother of a servant currently employed by a college, a widow of a college servant or the daughter of a former servant, or other types of relationships, a friend or neighbor of one of these families. Single male college servants also let lodgings, often with the assistance of a female housekeeper, who was typically a family member. Age was no impediment to entering this labour market. Older widows as well as young married couples applied for licenses.

Junior college servants were typically on low salaries and the additional income from letting rooms could help support a growing family. Running a lodging house was a way to strengthen the employment relationship, signaling a young servant's trustworthiness. Similarly, lodging-house keeping was a way for servants to access employer-owned housing. It was also a means of supplementing the earnings of these workers, at little or no cost to the institution. When licenses were granted to these younger, male servants, it is clear that their wives, often at home with young children, frequently ran lodging houses.[152]

Some servants continued this work through various stages of their lives. Census records show that in 1861, Moses Allnutt, the common room man, and later butler, at St. John's, let at least one set of rooms in his house to an undergraduate at Trinity. Allnutt lived with his wife and eight young children in a large house in St. Giles. He was granted a license when the scheme began in 1868 and continued to let rooms, continuing on his own after the death of his

[152] Although a systematic, quantitative analysis of this data is outside the scope of this thesis, qualitative analysis suggests that women with young children frequently took up lodging-house keeping when opportunities became available. These patterns of employment support the demand-driven view of female labour force participation, and illustrate the importance of local characteristics of the labour market in Humphries and Sarasúa.

wife in 1876. Allnutt had two sets of rooms to let, each for £1.10.0, nearly double the average set, which was closer to 12-14/- weekly. In 1876, then a widower, Allnutt reported to the LHD that it was primarily he who waited on lodgers, although he kept one female servant who also provided attendance, and occasionally his eldest daughter and son would help if required.[153]

By taking on progressively larger houses with more sets of rooms to let, some lodging-house keepers were able to establish a lucrative small business that provided a comfortable income and respectability within the local community. University lodging-house keeping, particularly by college servants and their families, cannot accurately be characterized as strictly a survival strategy or subsistence activity.

The 1868 licensing scheme expanded and rationalized economic activity that had existed in Oxford for centuries. Records show college servants offered lodgings as a means of supplementing household income well before 1868. In the years immediately preceding the scheme, the 1864 *Post Office Directory for Oxfordshire* shows that at least nineteen of eighty-one college servants who applied for licenses in 1868 were listed as lodging-house keepers before the university began issuing licenses.[154] All of the lodging-house keepers in the 1864 directory who can be identified as college servants chose to apply for a university license rather than continue letting rooms to lodgers outside the university community. It is likely that they

[153] LHD/L/2/1-8. In response to allegations made by John Burgon, the dean of Chichester, that former prostitutes were employed as servants in these lodging houses, in 1876 the LHD surveyed all lodging-house keepers and asked about the division of labour in the household and prices charged for extra services. From his entry in the *DNB*: 'From Chichester, Burgon continued to voice his opinions on university affairs. In 1876, he invited ridicule by attacking the lodging-house system as dangerous to undergraduate morals, alleging that some lodging-house keepers recruited servant girls from the local penitentiary. Lord Salisbury nominated him the same year to the parliamentary commission on university reform, but his appointment was greeted with such opposition that Burgon had to withdraw.' G. Martin Murphy, *DNB* 2006. Accessed online, 14 March 2017.
[154] E.R. Kelly (ed.), *The Post Office Directory of Oxfordshire* (London, 1864), pp.833-42. Accessed online at ancestry.co.uk 5 May 2017.

recognized their employment with the colleges could be leveraged to provide a more predictable and profitable supply of lodgers.

It is possible to locate all of these nineteen college servants in census records and college sources. All of these men were married, and only one was not living with his wife in 1868; eight of the households also listed an older daughter (aged 12 and above) and/or a domestic servant. None of the census returns list any occupational information for the college servants' wives, even though it is clear from all of the information available that they were engaged in lodging-house keeping, either performing all the work themselves or with the assistance of their children and domestic servants.[155] The room rates for these houses ranged from 12/- per week to £1.10.0 per week; just under half of the houses had two sets of rooms to let, the rest had one set. Lodging-house keeping was just one of a number of ways that college servants and their families could supplement their household income. However, the availability of documentary evidence for university lodging houses provides an opportunity to investigate the labour force participation of wives and children in a way that is not possible for other types of economic activity.

Walton discusses the advantages of attracting a 'better sort' of clientele, in addition to the increase in income, there were important social benefits.[156] Housing undergraduates, typically wealthier young men, conferred a certain degree of respectability on the lodging-house keeper. This small sample of nineteen servants includes two manciples, two butlers and a common room man – all among the most highly compensated senior positions in college

[155] It is clear that this activity is significantly underrepresented in census records until 1881, when it appears to have been recorded more accurately, likely due to the association with the university. On the underreporting of women's work in providing boarding and lodging, see Claudia Goldin, *Understanding the Gender Gap An Economic History of American Women* (Oxford, 1990).
[156] John Walton, *The Blackpool Landlady: A Social History* (1978), pp.140-1, [Hereafter, Walton, *Blackpool*]

service. This suggests that additional income might not have been the only reason these families let rooms. Other motives might have included access to a larger house, promoting long employment relationships and the possibility of a socially acceptable career for women that allowed them to work at home while looking after their own children. Contemporary accounts also show that many college servants enjoyed looking after undergraduates and friendly relationships developed between young men and these families.

The Lodging House Delegacy (LHD) oversaw the recruitment of lodging-house keepers; inspected and regulated the standard of lodgings provided; and supervised the conduct of both house keepers and resident undergraduates. A committee of ten men, all college fellows, was appointed to oversee the Delegacy. The committee included the vice-chancellor, proctors, and censors of unattached students, with the remaining fellows appointed and approved by convocation.[157] The burden of serving on this committee was considerable. Meetings were held daily; sub-committees were also formed and met with varying frequency: the business of supervising the operations of hundreds of lodging houses continued around the clock, throughout the terms. Outbreaks of disease, disciplinary problems and the ordinary business of supervising young men, many of whom were experiencing life away from home for the first time, all contributed to a heavy work load for the Delegacy.

Qualified, trustworthy candidates were needed to manage these lodgings.[158] Notices were placed in the local Oxford newspapers for three weeks in 1868 soliciting applications from prospective lodging-house keepers and four hundred copies of the notices were printed to be

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[157] Convocation is the supreme governing body of the university.

[158] There was anxiety regarding the association of working-class lodging house keepers and undergraduates. 'That a proper discipline should be maintained among the lodgers most depend on the care, integrity and good sense of the lodging-house keepers. And how can we expect to find these qualities united in an indefinite number of persons in rather humble life, and of whose own early education we know nothing?' Pantin here quotes Archbishop Whately, Oxford University Commission (1852) Evidence, p.26 in W.A. Pantin, *Oxford Life in Oxford Archives* (Oxford, 1972), p.12-3, [Hereafter Pantin, *Archives*]

posted around the city.[159] In order to ensure the respectability of the lodging-house keeper, applicants were required to have two recommendations and many were briefly interviewed to assess their suitability. Only a person of standing in the community - like a vicar, a respected doctor, or a college fellow could act as a referee.[160] As an additional check, a list of prospective applicants was circulated throughout the university community to convocation and to the colleges with the instructions to strike out the names of any unsuitable candidates. In 1868, the first year licenses were issued, 340 applications were received and only eight of these were rejected outright. Several other applications were granted on a temporary basis, usually because some aspect of the house required repair or improvement.

Once licensed, if rooms were occupied by undergraduates, other rooms could only be let to members of the university. Any other arrangements required the prior approval of the Delegacy, which meant that a lodging-house keeper with several rooms to let had to assume a certain level of risk, if they could not fill their house with college students, they would not be able to let the empty rooms to other, non-university lodgers.[161] This naturally resulted in applicants with fewer sets of rooms to let. As the income from one or two sets of rooms would not be sufficient to support a family, many of these men and women had other employment, either full or part-time, inside and outside the home. Many licenses were granted to homes where a small business was located, however businesses where either the patrons or the employees were mostly young women were not granted a license, examples of these included millinery shops and dressmakers.

[159] LHD M/2/1, minutes from 24 July 1868.
[160] LHD/M/2/4.
[161] It is not clear if this restriction applied outside of term.

Occupational information is listed on many of the surviving applications and shows that prospective lodging-house keepers came from all walks of life.[162] Of course, the most important pool of applicants was close at hand. Of the 340 applications received in 1868, just over a quarter, 81 were college servants. All were approved. There was no typical applicant among the college servants who applied to let lodgings in 1868: Harriet Lingham, a college laundress, was approved to let one set of rooms in Beef Lane, near Pembroke; Charles Patey, the butler of Merton, was approved to let two sets of rooms in Merton Street. Most, but not all, of the college servants who let lodgings were married. The ideal arrangement, from the colleges' perspective, was a servant with a wife at home to look after lodgers, but single men and women were frequently approved for licenses, with the provision that if they were not on hand to supervise the house, this responsibility was left to a trusted servant.

Although the houses were licensed through the LHD, all financial arrangements were negotiated and managed between the lodger and the lodging-house keeper. The official list of licensed rooms available to let was updated termly and available at the offices of the LHD and in the porter's lodges of colleges and halls. These lists provided an advertised price for the weekly room rate, but these rates could be negotiated. The lodging-house keeper was also required to state the prices of any extras that might be part of the tariff, including light, heat, attendance, food, boot cleaning and the use of plate and linen. A written agreement was suggested and later made mandatory. Printed at the top of the list was this notice: 'The prices in this list are those at which the Lodging-House Keepers *offer* to let lodgings. It is not the intention of the Lodging-House Delegates, in printing these prices, to signify any approval of

[162] LHD/R/1/1-5 Examples of occupations included: compositor, laundress, gunmaker, billiard room proprietor, perfumer, wine merchant, auctioneer, boat builder, hosier, confectioner, and draftsman at the ordnance survey office.

them, but only to notify to the University that the Lodgings can be obtained at these or any lower rates which may be agreed on. Undergraduates about to take Lodgings are advised to be particular in their enquiries as to whether any and what extra charges will be made, and in all cases to insist on having a written agreement made.' [163]

A survey conducted in 1876 by the LHD provides a snapshot of the types of extra services and charges that comprised these agreements. In all cases, it seems that the traditional charge for service in college of £1 per person per term applied out of college as well. Other charges varied considerably. William House, a servant at Wadham who lived at 49 Holywell Street let one set of rooms to an undergraduate who had very few extras and did not pay House any gratuity:

> '[T]he only thing we supplied was coals which was charged 8 pence per box which he used but little otherwise he dealt with the cooperative stores and kept everything in his own possession and used them as he required and we did not have anything for attendance when he left so that have not had one farthing more than the rent.'[164]

Gas and coal, for light and firing were always extra. Sometimes the charge was based on consumption, as in the case of House's undergraduate lodger, but usually there was a fixed weekly price. William Walker, a college servant who let four sets of rooms at 4 King Edward Street, listed a number of supplementary charges: gas on the staircase 1/-, kitchen fire 1/-, cleaning boots 1/-, cruets -/6, all charged weekly and then the termly charge for attendance of £1.[165] These rooms were more expensive than the average, with two sets at 30/- per week, one set at 25/- and the fourth set at 20/-. Walker appears to have been retired from his position at

[163] LHD M/2/1, emphasis in the original.
[164] LHD/L/2/5.
[165] LHD/L/2/4.

Oriel and states that he employed no servants and did all the waiting himself.[166] The 1876 survey provides information about the number of servants kept in lodging houses. Of the 540 lodging houses, 499 returned their completed survey. Of these, 165 employed no servants at all. 310 households employed 381 female servants, and 45 male servants were employed in 41 households. One of the returns stated emphatically that the wife of the lodging-house keeper 'certainly did not' wait on lodgers herself, implying that perhaps there were gradations of respectability associated with lodging-house keeping. It may have been perfectly respectable for a working-class college servant's wife to wait on lodgers, but the wife of a professional might have considered such work beneath her.[167]

A license did not guarantee a lodger. Unfortunately, archival sources do not provide an efficient or accurate way to determine occupancy rates. It follows that it is equally difficult to determine an average annual income from lodging-house keeping. For a college servant who received a steady supply of undergraduates each term, in average circumstances of letting two sets of rooms for three terms per academic year – it is possible that a family could expect to earn approximately £50, an important source of supplementary income.

Lodgings had to be located in an approved geographical area not more than one and a half miles from Carfax Tower and meet a minimum standard of accommodation, including the room size, ventilation, provision for light and heat, and sanitary arrangements. Rooms were let in sets, which included a sitting room of at least 1,000 cubic feet and a bedroom of at least 600 cubic feet. One toilet was required for six adults, a seventh resident would necessitate a second toilet and requirements increased proportionally. Each house was inspected by

[166] The charge for the cruet is unusual and appears in only a few returns. Walton described the cruet as a 'mysterious commodity'; it appears to be a general charge for the use of condiments and sauces. Hereafter, Walton, *Blackpool* p.94.
[167] LHD/L/2/1-8.

representatives from the LHD and later in 1882, by a sanitary inspector as well. Inspections were conducted initially on application for a license and then at least annually afterwards, more frequently if a complaint was raised.

After a house was licensed, these annual inspections were not scheduled; the controller or a representative would visit the house unannounced and conduct an interview and an inspection immediately. The interview and inspection were conducted with any member of the household who happened to be at home, reports indicate that inspectors spoke with the lodging-house keeper as well as with any family member or servant who was available. Inspectors judged the state of the house, its construction and state of repair as well as the standard of decoration and appearance. The entire house was inspected, inside and out, not just the areas of the house that were available to lodgers.

Nineteenth-century Oxford had a reputation for a damp, unhealthy climate.[168] Sanitary inspections were very thorough; the reports for a house usually run to several pages and include precise detail about the conditions inside and outside the house. Water quality was a particular concern, whether houses had city water or wells, the water at many licensed houses was tested by a university laboratory to see if it was safe for drinking and washing. Very close attention was paid to the system of drainage in and around the house; improvements and repairs were commonly required before a house could be licensed or a license renewed. Houses that were previously licensed often required major repairs and updates after sanitary inspections became mandatory in 1882.

The LHD acted as a powerful intermediary between tenants and colleges, advocating on behalf of tenants and securing prompt repairs and improvements to their homes. The standard

[168] Henry Acland, *Memoir on the cholera at Oxford, in the year 1854: with considerations suggested by the epidemic* (London, 1856) Other major cholera epidemics were recorded in 1832 and 1849.

of accommodation that was deemed suitable for members of the university was higher than that of the typical working family in Oxford. Running a lodging house could provide improved living standards to the lodging-house keepers, but results were often mixed, sanitation was improved, but families also lived in cramped, poorly ventilated attics or basements, reducing their own living space in order to maximize the potential revenue of their home during the six months that members of the university were resident in Oxford.

By the late 1880s, it was likely that if a house could be licensed as university lodgings, it could command more rent.[169] Advertisements in the local newspapers as early as 1877 highlight the earning potential of a house that could be licensed under the LHD scheme.[170] Colleges owned a considerable number of properties in the city centre that were eventually incorporated into the scheme, although the nature of record keeping makes precise figures very difficult to obtain. Lodging-house records show very clearly that there was a network of servants who were known to the colleges as trustworthy lodging-house keepers. Houses owned by colleges and run as university lodgings stayed in the hands of college servants, if a family moved on to take a larger house, another servant was found to take their place. These networks crossed colleges – houses were owned by colleges, run by servants of the same or other colleges, and occupied by residents from all colleges. The degree of coordination must have been significant. These relationships can be examined by looking at the history of individual lodging-house keepers or by looking at the history of a single house.

Daniel Styles was a young college servant at All Souls during the late nineteenth century. He worked as a butler's assistant in the late 1870s and early 1880s, following one of his uncles

[169]Unusually, under this scheme, the university did not exercise control over room rents, as they had done for centuries. W.A. Pantin, *Oxford Life in Oxford Archives* (Oxford, 1972), pp.16-7.
[170] For example, property advertisements in *JOJ*, 22 September 1877.

into service. He was a keen cricketer with the college servants' team and won the highest scoring batsman's award at least once, he was an active member of the College Servants' Society and appeared assured of a successful career in college service. In 1884, he married Kate Alder, who worked as a binder for the University Press. They settled on Marlborough Road and began their family. In the summer of 1892, Daniel fell ill and died of kidney failure while working as a waiter at the Granby Hotel in Harrogate during the long vacation. Styles left behind a pregnant widow and several young children.

It is not clear how Daniel Styles' employer responded to his death and his widow's circumstances, but his fellow servants offered a solution. The College Servants' Society (CSS) organized a concert to benefit Kate Styles and her children, the net proceeds were over £50.[171] This is the only case in the records of the Society of this type of charitable activity, demonstrating both the Society's feeling for Daniel Styles and their concern for the survival of his widow. A subcommittee of the president and two ordinary members of the Society was formed to oversee the distribution of the funds and to advise Mrs. Styles in starting out in business for herself as a lodging-house keeper[172].

64 Holywell Street was owned by New College and licensed to George Beesley, a messenger at Hertford. He was formerly licensed at 8 Worcester Place, and recommended by the dean of New College to move up to a larger house with an additional set of rooms to let. He lived with his wife, two young children, and a maidservant for ten years, by all accounts a satisfactory lodging-house keeper.

[171] BL:Dep d. 825, 19 December 1893.
[172] Ibid., 2 February 1894.

In Michaelmas 1893, Mrs. Styles succeeded the Beesleys at 64 Holywell Street. Her application for this house was 'well recommended by the principle of Brasenose College'.[173] The £50 she received from the proceeds of the charity concert were used to furnish the house for lodgers. The Society was pleased with this outcome and the minutes from a meeting on 2 March 1894 state that 'a letter is read from Mrs. Styles who has Thomas Byles write to the Society on her behalf. She has used nearly all of the £50 to buy furniture to set herself up in business as a University Lodging House. She writes that she is mindful of the great sympathy shown to herself and the great respect shown to her husband'. The minutes also note that she has provided them with a statement of account totaling £48. 9. 8.[174]

Kate Styles supported her children for nearly ten years with her income as a lodging-house keeper. The rooms were more expensive than average, costing 30/-, 23/- and 23/- per week per set; an average set of rooms would have been about 18-20/- per week at that time. Her eldest daughter was eight when she moved into the house and slept upstairs with the maid. By 1900, the inspector noted that 'the daughter helps her mother with the day-to-day work of looking after the lodgers'. The two boys were sent to a children's home in the Cotswolds for at least part of the year, likely in the academic terms. Kate Styles gave up the house and her career as a lodging-house keeper to move to London with her grown children in the early 1910s.[175]

Kate Styles was just one of many women in Oxford who supplemented the family income or provided its sole support through lodging-house keeping. In 1912, W. Duke, the chef at Worcester died, aged 49, leaving a wife and four children, the two youngest, aged 14 and 17,

[173] LHD RP/8/13
[174] BL:Dep d. 825, 2 March 1894.
[175] LHD RP/8/13.

still lived at home. In addition to his college work, the family provided licensed university lodgings at 31 Wellington Square. At the time of his death, Duke had no money in the bank, having spent £100 on improvements to the lodging house. The college gave the widow £20 and she carried on with the help of her daughter.[176]

Inspections were intrusive.[177] Lodging-house keepers were asked about sleeping arrangements, which rooms and beds were occupied by various family members. If the arrangements were deemed unsuitable, the license would be contingent on the adoption of recommended changes. The LHD was keen to prevent overcrowding, and inspectors ensured that families had sufficient space in the house for themselves. Arrangements where a family let out most of the house to lodgers and maintained minimal space for their own use were strictly prohibited. Older children, especially girls, were not allowed to sleep on the same floor as lodgers. Servants were also required to sleep on a different floor if they were female. When overcrowding of the family was observed, it was addressed promptly. The inspectors were less vigilant about the living conditions of servants.

Where possible, families occupied space physically separated from their lodgers. Ideally, they would take an upper floor of the house or rooms at the back, which would have given both the lodgers and the family some privacy and maintained the required separation of young women, either daughters or maids, from undergraduates. In practice, this often meant that the family lived in attics that were cramped and had poor ventilation. There were no corresponding minimum requirements for the living space occupied by the family or their servants, if they lived in.

[176] WOR/BUR/8/18/56, 16 April 1912.
[177] There was a similarly intrusive system of inspections in Cambridge, 'To hold a license meant the end of privacy indeed.' Margaret Holbrook, *Where Do You Keep?* (Great Malvern, 2006), p.71.

Standards for the accommodation of servants were demonstrably lower than that of family members and often, even if the inspectors noted living conditions that they found unacceptable, they did not always require corrective action. Mr. Knott, a servant at Magdalen, was reprimanded for having his servant boy occupying a store room in the middle of the house. He was instructed that the arrangement was to be discontinued and the 'boy, if kept, to occupy room with manservant'.[178] Thomas Stone, a buttery man at New College, was licensed to let two sets of rooms at a house on Holywell Street where he lived with his wife, two small children and a maidservant. The inspector noted in 1888 that the maidservant occupied 'an attic room without light or ventilation except on the staircase'; no action was recommended. In 1894 the inspector noted that now the 'very poor' attic was occupied by the children and the maidservant. In 1898 the house was taken over by another servant at New College, J. Bennett, who lived with his wife, five small children and a maidservant. The maidservant again occupied the attic, the inspector again noted that the attic was 430 cu. ft. and the windows were 'much too small'. This time though, nearly a decade after it was first observed, the inspector required improvements in the ventilation so that the windows could at least be opened.[179]

Occasionally the inspectors' reports detail improvements made in servants' living conditions. In 1895, the inspector ordered Charles Green, the head chef at Christ Church, to move his maidservant away from the room adjoining his lodger's dressing room, to the same floor as his family, in rooms next to his wife's. Later that year, Mr. Green had constructed a new bedroom in the attic for the maidservants, the inspector wrote 'a new bedroom has been formed in the roof at the back of the house. It is 12'6" long with an average height of 6' only

[178] LHD/RP/8/12.
[179] Ibid.

by 8'9" wide. It has no fireplace but is well-ventilated by a window 3'8" x 2'5" and a skylight 2'5" x 1'5". The staircase to this room is not well-ventilated.' A window that opened was fixed to the staircase in response to the inspector's request.[180]

Living in a college, undergraduates were subject to a significant degree of oversight. The regulations of the LHD attempted to replicate this level of supervision for students living out by shifting the responsibility onto the lodging-house keeper. The burden of supervision was not insignificant. Lodging-house keepers, like college porters, were required to record the precise time at which undergraduates returned to their lodgings in a 'gate book'; most colleges required undergraduates to be in their lodgings ten minutes after the gates were closed at their college, usually ten o'clock. Lodging-house keepers were obliged to wait up every evening to record the return of each lodger. Fines were assessed based on the degree of tardiness, increasing as the minutes and hours passed. An undergraduate who stayed out overnight would have to be reported to the college authorities the following morning. Lodging-house keepers were required to compile a weekly gate bill based on the gate books, and submit these to the college. Bringing the gate books to the porter's lodge each week created an opportunity for lodging-house keepers to develop a good working relationship with the lodge staff. Porters were well-positioned to recommend lodgings to undergraduates and their parents. It is also likely that these weekly visits were a source of information about college employment for lodging-house keepers who were interested in opportunities for themselves or their family members.

Gate bills were carefully scrutinized, not only for accuracy of the charges, but to determine if there were any discrepancies in timekeeping. Lodging-house keepers were also

[180] LHD/RP/8/31.

required to enforce any disciplinary measures taken against a student by their college. In October 1869, Mr. Jones, an undergraduate, was 'gated' to his lodgings for one month, which required him to be in his rooms every evening by 6:00 p.m., his lodging-house keeper was obliged to ensure that this curfew was met and to report any infraction immediately.[181] Failure to do so would have resulted in a warning and then a suspension of the license. Although the minutes do not provide any identifying information associated with Mr. Jones' lodgings, most of the lodging-house keepers had other full-time employment and the additional burden of supervising students and the requirement to appear before the LHD at short notice would have conflicted with their regular work. There was no additional compensation for carrying out disciplinary action, and if fines were assessed, none appear to have been passed along to the lodging-house keeper.

Lodging houses were required to lock the doors at ten o'clock and remove the keys from the lock; this rule was strictly enforced.[182] Keys were to be kept in an inaccessible location and reports of lodging-house keepers who were known to lock the doors promptly, but then secretly leave a key out for late arrivals were dealt with severely. Proctors patrolled the streets of Oxford, randomly checking the front doors of lodging houses and looking for infractions. On 8 February 1883, a junior proctor went out in the evening and tried the doors of 296 houses, finding 33 doors unlocked after ten o'clock.[183]

Anecdotal evidence suggests that porters and under-porters could sometimes be bribed to overlook a student's late return to the college, and it is likely that some lodging-house keepers tried to offer the same flexibility. It is easy to imagine a lodging-house keeper who would

[181] LHD M/2/1, 19 Oct 1869.
[182] Ibid, minutes from 23 September 1868. Original drafts of the regulations stipulate 9:00 pm, this was debated and changed to 10:00 pm before the term started in 1868.
[183] Ibid.

overlook a late arrival in exchange for a discreet payment, or simply one who felt uncomfortable in a position of such authority. In order to detect any circumvention of the regulations, the porter made a note of the time a student left college and this was checked weekly against the lodging-house gate book. If any irregularities were detected, the lodging-house keeper was notified by the college authorities and summoned immediately to provide an explanation in person at the offices of the LHD. This happened frequently, minutes often note that a lodging-house keeper was summoned to explain errors in a bill and warned against any further violations. These complaints frequently involved the college authorities at the highest level: it is not uncommon to see a report against a lodging-house keeper initiated by the president or warden of a college.

A satirical version of these regulations appeared in an undated student publication and pledged the following:

> 'That I will retire to bed every night at 8:30 p.m., that my Landlord may be able to pay due attention to the requirements of the curfew, and do promise never to attempt to get out of bed before 6 o'clock without his special permission.
>
> That I will keep a great book and enter in it the time I go to sleep, and will report the same to my Landlord daily.
>
> That should I pass a restless night I will attend in person and report the same to my Landlord before I get out of bed the following morning.'[184]

Considering the number of undergraduates who lived in lodgings, it is surprising how infrequently these relationships and experiences are explored in university and college histories. The lodging-house scheme brought together people who were otherwise divided by the rigid class structure. There are anecdotes about a few memorable figures: in 1981, Magdalen held a 100th birthday luncheon for Mrs. Eleanor Richardson, a popular landlady

[184] BL G.A. Oxon c.84, Items in the rest of the volume are dated around 1868. Note the use of the masculine 'landlord'.

who hosted scores of Magdalen undergraduates during decades working as a lodging-house keeper. Mrs. Spiller at 32 Iffley Road only took in undergraduates from University and was remembered fondly in college publications for the 'rogues' gallery' of student photos she kept on a wall in her home.[185]

A collection of memoirs of St. Edmund's Hall graduates offers several recollections:

Kenneth Oliver (1926), 'Our landlady was typical of the worst type of the breed, rapacious, mean and thoroughly unpleasant…';

Dougal Duncan (1939), 'Outside Hall I found lodgings at 10, Longwall Street for 32/6d (£1.62) a week. For this modest sum, the landlady who either slept in the kitchen or cooked in her bedroom - whichever way you chose to regard the performance - provided besides two rooms, a splendid breakfast, and a worn notebook in which one recorded one's late arrivals and fined oneself accordingly. The lavatory was literally 'up the garden'; but in wet weather, she was unfailingly to hand with a brolly, especially when one was entertaining a young lady. I never knew whether her motives for this exercise arose from consideration or curiosity; yet in all this, felt that both she and her charges were reasonable enough; until, that is, the morning of my departure from her house, when she suddenly produced an account for 12/- for 'fagots'.[186] This meant breakages, apparently; and it mattered not that there had been none.'

Tom Luke (1946) 'In my final year I had very cosy bed and breakfast digs at 19, St John Street, off Beaumont Street. The normal charge was £3.15.0 per week but I paid £3 only as I was continuously in occupation, vacation and all. '

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[185] Personal communication with University College archivist Robin Darwall-Smith, October 2015.
[186] These are spelled variously 'fagot' and 'faggot' in archival sources. Norman Dix described faggots in an interview, 'To light a fire, you had to have a faggot, which was a large handful of shavings [of wood] with little tiny twigs laid across there, and some larger pieces laid on top of that, and they were all bound up together with willow twigs', these were laid on top of coal and lit. They were commonly supplied to undergraduates living in colleges and billed in battels or sold by servants (W. Duke at Exeter, for example ran a small business supplying the college with faggots), but this seems an excessive charge.

Peter Keep (1943) 'Men in their second year gave place in Hall to their juniors and moved out into digs. Mine was 'passed on' to me by a friend who'd just taken his finals. I had a good bedroom and an excellent sitting room/study and was very well looked after by my landlady, Mrs. Betterton, a motherly body who cooked superb breakfasts. All this for 25 shillings a week (afternoon tea extra if required 1/6d). "If you wish to bring in a friend just let me know."'[187]

[187] Alan Jenkins, *Hall: Memoirs of St Edmund Hall graduates 1920-1980* (London, 1989).

2.4. College Servants' Sunday

College servants' worship habits in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a perennially vexatious issue. The failure of paternalistic management to effect a solution presaged collective action by college servants in response to similarly stubborn issues of wages and working conditions in the early twentieth century.

'We used to say, "Ah, they look upon us and say, six days shalt thou labour, but on the Sabbath thou shalt do a damn sight more."'[188] This is how Ben Standen characterized his experiences of working on Sundays while a scout at Corpus in the early twentieth century. Edmund Knox made similar observations, albeit from a different perspective. Knox was an undergraduate at Corpus in the late nineteenth century and later, a fellow and a curate who ministered to servants,

> 'That which impressed me most during my curacy was the effect of Sunday work on college servants. During vacations many of them were regular attendants at Church, and some of them communicants. When term began their duties shut them off from all public worship, and Sunday was for them the hardest and longest of their working days. Especially was this the case in Colleges where hot breakfasts and lunches were allowed on Sundays. Very naturally, Sundays being free from College lectures, the hot breakfast, begun at 9am, was protracted till nearly 11, and hot lunch lasted from 1.30 until nearly 3. The college servant, having to clear away the meal and put the room straight, did not reach home in the morning until 12, in the afternoon until nearly 4. His attendance took him back to college from about 5:30 until 8. He simply could not attend any place of worship for half the year. The wonder was that so many were found in church on Sundays during the vacation.'[189]

[188] Rose Whitton, 'Interview on domestic service at CCC with Ben Standen' Transcripts of interviews with "College Servants"', Harrison,'Transcripts', p.6251.
[189] E.A. Knox, *Reminiscences of an ctogenarian, 1847-1934* (London, 1935), pp.105-6. Knox was an undergraduate at CCC from 1865-8, a fellow and chaplain at Merton and later a fellow at St. John's. At the time, Merton's chapel also served as a parish church. He was elected Bishop of Manchester in 1903 and considered the leader of the evangelical party within the Anglican church.

The contradictions of paternalism were perhaps never better expressed than in the unresolved conflicts around the Sunday employment of college servants. During the nineteenth century, colleges were particularly concerned with how servants spent their time, inside and outside working hours, during the term as well as during the vacations. Idleness, especially among the younger male servants, led to mischief. '"What", exclaimed Rector Tatham, after hearing from Radford of thefts in the College, "have the idle bedmakers been about? Through the whole of the Long Vacation they have nothing to do and the thieves take advantage of their indolence and negligence!"'[190] College servants, especially the younger men, were seen as morally vulnerable, in need of firm guidance from the church, their employers, and from senior male college servants in order to develop good work habits and the strength of character that college employers valued.[191]

During the nineteenth century, servants' liberty to attend services, particularly on Sundays with their families, became inextricably linked more generally to servants' welfare and working conditions. Fellows who advocated reducing the demands on servants' time so that they could worship regularly also argued that during the academic terms servants were overworked and often underpaid. The complex issues underpinning the debate over college servants' Sunday: fairness, welfare, moral authority and the nature of paternalism would resurface throughout the period as subsequent generations of employers and employees negotiated and renegotiated the labour contract.[192]

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[190] LC/B/C/4 Letter from E. Tatham to subrector Radford, 9 September, no year is given. Also quoted in Vivian Green, *The Commonwealth of Lincoln College 1427-1977* (Oxford, 1979), p.417.
[191] This was a common view of domestic servants generally. 'The leisure of servants is called idleness, and jealously watched, and it is feared that if the mistress does not fill it up, Satan must.' Ellen Darwin, 'Domestic Service', *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, August 1890, 28(162), p.291.
[192] 'Their [servants'] morality and religion should be provided for them by their superiors, who should see them properly taught it, and should do all that is necessary to ensure their being, in return for labour and attachment, properly fed, clothed, housed, spiritually edified and innocently amused.' J.S. Mill (1848), pp.318-20, quoted in Howard Newby et al., *Property, Paternalism and Power: Class and Control in Rural England* (Wisconsin, 1978), p.27.

From the 1840s, some fellows expressed concern that the obligations of work on Sundays prevented or discouraged their servants from attending religious services. The failure to attend services during the term often led to lax attendance throughout the year, not only for the servants, but for their families as well. The colleges' dependence on family labour networks was always significant, but more so during the mid to late-nineteenth century with the growth of licensed lodging houses. Housing undergraduates outside the colleges necessitated a pool of trustworthy and morally upright lodging-house keepers, many of whom were college servants and their families. The conflicting expectations for servants to meet their usual morning obligations to residents and also to attend Sunday worship attracted the attention of many during this period. However, members of the colleges expected a certain level of comfort and were reluctant to forgo the attendance of their servants. 'Being woken by a manservant in College is one of the major pleasures of life, and it is a pity that everybody cannot come to Oxford to enjoy it.'[193]

Fellows and undergraduates who placed their need for the full complement of morning attendance: hot water for washing, a fire, their clothes made ready and a cooked breakfast served in their rooms – above the spiritual health of their morally vulnerable charges were seen by many as selfish and shortsighted. The colleges' fulfillment of their moral obligations to their servants gave them not only the right, but the responsibility to supervise, direct and ultimately attempt to control college servants' time outside work. The extent to which servants' accepted the colleges' authority in their non-working lives was negotiated over time, and characterized by periods of cooperation and resistance.

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[193] Dacre Balsdon, *Oxford Life* (London, 1957), p.55. Balsdon matriculated at Exeter in 1919, and was later a fellow at Keble and at Exeter, where he also served as sub-rector and senior tutor. 'Dr. J.P.V.D. Balsdon, Scholar and Novelist' *The Times*, 21 September 1977.

Colleges experimented with several strategies throughout the period to improve servants' regular attendance at religious services. Some of these policies addressed the work load: prohibiting hot food on Sundays, banning parties in undergraduates' rooms where scouts were expected to wait, and enacting rules that banned servants from colleges after a certain hour in the morning. Some of these policies expanded servants' access to religious services by offering additional services at more convenient times. Some policies took a more paternalistic approach and appointed individual fellows to monitor servants' attendance and provide personal spiritual guidance to servants. Most colleges tried some combination of these policies, but none appeared to enjoy any appreciable or lasting success.

Evidence of these efforts survives from the 1840s. In 1840, four fellows at Balliol seeded a fund of £360, the interest from which was to be used to appoint a servants' chaplain. He would be responsible for providing a service for Balliol servants each Sunday during term, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he would offer servants a short lecture and catechize the boys working in the college.[194] In February 1841, authorities at Magdalen ordered that no breakfast or luncheon parties were to be given in college on Sundays and that £30 was to be given annually to the vicar of St. Peter's to provide a catechetical lecture for college servants.[195] This order affected scouts more than other servants as scouts received gratuities for serving at these parties, and they were entitled to take away the remaining food and drink. The college order made no mention of the money and payment in-kind, particularly food, that the servants were expected to forgo, but it would have been a significant sacrifice.[196]

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[194] BC GOV C, 2 June 1840. These fellows were A.C. Tait, W.G. Ward, R. Scott and E.C. Woollcombe.
[195] MC CP1/12, 2 February 1841.
[196] The practice of hosting parties on Sundays was widespread and not limited to undergraduates. Doris Gammon recalled that while working as a housemaid for the president of Corpus, Thomas Case, in the 1920s he regularly hosted a 'free tea' for undergraduates on Sundays, attended by as many as forty undergraduates. Brian Harrison and Richard Rose, 'Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Bob Gammon' 24 June 1969, Harrison, 'Transcripts', p. 6263.

Magdalen reviewed the compensation of their servants in the mid 1850s, and these discussions indicate that for many servants, especially scouts, gratuities and leftover food formed a large part of their pay. It is not surprising then, that without some provision for recompense, the 1841 order was largely ignored by the servants. Servants' preferences with respect to Sunday worship are only rarely expressed in archival sources.[197] The college tried to enlist the support of a senior servant, the manciple, by paying him to act as a superintendent at the services. Although the records do not specify, it is likely that he was asked to collect and report attendance information back to the college. In this case, the college's choice of the manciple, William Cattle, to encourage an improvement in other servants' behavior was unfortunate. Cattle was later found to have embezzled a significant amount of money from the college, a fact that was probably known among the other servants at the time.[198]

A college order of February 1853 discontinued the payments both to Cattle and to the incumbent of St. Peter's. The college may have also erred in assuming that most of Magdalen's servants would want to worship at St. Peter's. While many college servants, from Magdalen and other colleges, lived in the parish of St. Peter's, many did not and would have preferred to continue attending services in their own parish. For example, one of Magdalen's scouts at that time, William Gunstone, was a member of the vestry in his parish of St. Clement's.[199] The same order established a committee of the president, vice-president, senior fellow and three deans to determine the best way to offer a Sunday service for their servants and to facilitate their attendance.[200]

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[197] The nature of record-keeping makes it difficult to estimate the extent of non-conformism among college servants, although anecdotal evidence suggests that only a small number of college servants were known by their contemporaries to be non-conformists. Charles Bancalari, a servant at Corpus in the early twentieth century was a nonconformist preacher.
[198] MC CP/9/46, see also Sheppard, *Gunstones*.
[199] Sheppard, *Gunstones*, p.8.
[200] MC CP1/12, Feb. 25, 1853.

Later that summer, the college modified their strategy. In July, the president, Routh and the vice president, Pearse presided over a meeting that established a new position, chaplain of the college servants. The duties of the chaplain were as follows:

> '1) To keep an account of all the servants of whatever description, who are employed about the college; of the Parishes in which they live, their families, circumstances and the like, and to make himself acquainted personally with them all.
>
> 2) To make arrangements (if possible) with the clergymen of each parish in which any servants reside, according to which such clergyman may report to the Chaplain the attendance of each servant at church and the Chaplain may be allowed to visit the servants at their several homes and look after the temporal and spiritual welfare of themselves and their families.
>
> 3) To use any other means which he may think most effective for the instruction, proper control, and general advantage of all and especially the junior servants, such as catechizing those who have not been confirmed and that he be provided with the means of establishing a lending library for the use of the college servants.
>
> 4) to report to the President, if he find it necessary, the habitual non-attendance at church, drunkenness and other immorality.'[201]

This order also conceded that previous orders had been ignored and instead stated that servants could come into college but had to leave in time to attend morning service 'at least every alternate Sunday'. Servants were also t o have the opportunity to attend services at least once every Sunday, Good Friday and Christmas Day. Presumably, the college would contact local parishes to verify attendance. The new order addressed the porters, who had been left out of previous discussions, acknowledging that they had similarly been unable to attend services because of their responsibilities. Porters also received gratuities and faced some loss of income for leaving the college to attend services, although less than scouts. The order suggested that to facilitate this, servants should divide up their work accordingly but gave no

[201] MC:VP1/A1/4, 26 July 1853.

further specifics regarding how this should be accomplished.[202] The college expected the staff to make arrangements themselves, something they were able to do before these orders were issued, but crucially failed to acknowledge or address the immediate economic cost of leaving the college on a Sunday morning.

Until Magdalen rationalized the payment of servants later in the 1850s, partially replacing the system of gratuities and perquisites with an increase in wages, the servants had a compelling economic incentive to stay away from church on Sunday. During this period, scouts were still reliant on gratuities and perquisites for their pay because they had traditionally been directly employed and paid by college residents. Gradually they became fully employed by Magdalen, but until this transition was completed in the late nineteenth century, scouts operated with considerable independence. They hired, supervised and paid their own assistants, often employing their wives and children. This also resulted in looser employment relationships between the college and scouts during this period. Instead, the most important attachment was between the scout and the resident. The social control and influence colleges could exert in the employment relationship was still significant, but mediated by the additional links in the chain of command. In order to carry out these regulations, assistant servants were barred from admission to the college unless they had received the prior consent of the president or vice president.[203] This order was one of the first steps towards the direct employment of all servants by the college and demonstrated a willingness, although limited, to give up the benefits of having this work subcontracted by senior servants for more control over the domestic arrangements of the college.

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[202] Ibid.

[203] MC:VP1/A1/4, 26 July 1853. It is not clear from the college records how long the position of college servants' chaplain was funded, how long Rigaud held the post, or if these efforts to encourage regular worship were successful.

Magdalen's efforts to monitor and improve the spiritual welfare of its servants were concentrated in the appointment of John Rigaud as the college servants' chaplain. The prescriptions of the 1853 order that established the chaplain's position were intrusive and heavy-handed, but the appointment of Rigaud suggests that the implementation would be more moderate in its approach. Rigaud was, by all contemporary accounts, a compassionate and caring member of the community who was interested in improving the circumstances of working-class people in Oxford, not just in his own college.[204] At the same meeting where Rigaud's appointment was discussed, the college set aside £10 for the establishment of a servants' library and pledged an ongoing annual contribution of £2.2.0 for its upkeep. Additionally, £30 was approved to make repairs to a room for the use of the servants.[205] It is very likely that the lending library and the leisure space were Rigaud's suggestions; he served as the local secretary for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) for over thirty years, which published a large selection of books intended to appeal to the working-class reader.[206]

Despite the efforts within individual colleges to promote servants' attendance at Sunday services, little progress appears to have been made. In 1876, Rev. Knox was asked by the servants to speak at a dinner celebrating the annual Oxford and Cambridge servants' boat race and cricket match. Knox expressed his frustration and called for servants to take collective action,

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[204] 'The pall was borne by Messrs. Brucker, Carr, Adams, and Luker, servants of the College, these having been especially mentioned by the deceased to officiate in this respect, as the oldest servants, and other servants carried the body.' 'Death of the Reverend John Rigaud' *JOJ* 4 August 1888.
[205] MC CP1/12, 2 February 1854.
[206] The SPCK was closely associated with evangelicalism, which, according to V.H.H. Green '…could hardly be said to be representative of clerical Oxford'. V.H.H. Green, *Oxford Common Room A Study of Lincoln College and Mark Pattison* (London, 1957), pp.24-5.

> 'His friends or enemies called him[Knox] Conservative; he did not know why but he confessed he was not one of those who were very fond of strikes; nevertheless he thought he should like to see a strike at Oxford among the College servants in favor of a better Sunday. (Hear, hear and cheers). He did not know whether the same end could be effected by other means; if so, so much the better. He had done what little he could do by talking to gentlemen in college and persuading them and in putting before them the wrong they did to servants in exacting more work from them on Sundays than on any other day of the seven. (Hear, hear). They expected their day of rest and why should not all connected with them have their rest as well? He should like to know the answer to the question which he proposed just now, "What would the colleges do without college servants?" Mr. Knox then glanced at the multifarious duties of the class to whom he was referring, showing that in sports, in amusements, in all their domestic arrangements, the University men were entirely dependent on their servants, who anticipated their every wish.'[207]

Like Rigaud, Knox worked to improve servants' attendance at chapel. He forged personal connections during several years of service as the president of the College Servants' Society, a working men's club for servants founded in 1872. Knox offered Sunday evening services for servants and their families from 7:45-8:30 p.m. at Merton for several years.[208] He continued this practice at St. John's and wrote of his evening services there, 'But with the help of my little parish choir, trained by Mr. Priest of Alban Hall, and supported by servants of several neighboring colleges to whom I had become known by the formation of a College Servants' Society and Club, in which I had taken great interest, my Sunday evening services became very popular. Many undergraduates dropped in and a few graduates.'[209]

Knox knew well that changing the hours and frequency of services, along with his other efforts, were not enough to effect any significant change. He also appreciated that the efforts

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[207] *OT* 22 July 1876.
[208] 'College Servants' Sunday Services' *OT* 26 January 1878.
[209] E.A. Knox, *Reminiscences of an octogenarian, 1847-1934* (London, 1935), p.106. The services at St. John's were also held in the evening, from 8-9 p.m.

of individuals like himself, other concerned fellows and servants had enjoyed limited success. Knox's suggestion of a strike was radical, and his involvement as a vicar and advisor to the CSS gave him ample opportunity to support collective action among college servants. However there is no evidence that colleges were concerned about the possibility of collective action in this period, nor is there any evidence that it went any further than Knox's speech.

By the late 1870s, the secularization of the university was well underway. The issue of servants' attendance at services was now linked to a wider trend of falling rates of attendance at services among lodging house keepers and their servants, as well as undergraduates. A memorandum was submitted to the Hebdomadal Council and the heads of colleges and halls from the Oxford Clerical Association and Parochial Clergy of Oxford in 1878, in response to requests from the university, offering recommendations for measures to improve attendance of all those members of the university community. The memorandum recommended rearranging the time of services on Sunday to 10:00 a.m., which would effectively curtail the practice of breakfast parties and allow servants and lodging-house keepers more time to attend services.[210]

These recommendations were not widely adopted and the issue of servants' worship was dragged into the 1880s, where discussions of the matter seem somewhat resigned compared to earlier decades. In December 1882, the servants' committee at Corpus met to consider 'the operation of the rule obliging servants to leave college on Sunday before 10:30 a.m., and the time of evening service on weekdays.'[211] By February, the committee had reached a decision. Minutes state, '…having examined several of the college servants as to the operation of the above rule were unanimously of the opinion that the rule confers no benefit upon the servants

[210] BL G.A. Oxon b.140-1, October 1878.
[211] CCC B/4/7/1B, 8 December 1882.

and should be rescinded' and '…on the subject of evening chapel the committee resolved to make no recommendation'.[212]

A sermon preached in the university church on 3 April 1892 by another fellow of Magdalen, the Rev. H.E. Clayton demonstrates that the regular attendance of college servants at church services was still a concern.[213] Clayton called on members of the university community to honor their obligations to college servants, 'Our Lord's example in taking upon Himself the form of a slave affords much help in determining the proper relations of Master and Servant in Christian family life.' Clayton compared the responsibilities of the colleges to that of large country houses towards their staff and reminded his audience, 'These servants are domestic servants, not day labourers; they form part of the family life of the college; they are great protectors of College property, and great helpers in the control of young men's morals.'[214]

Clayton's observations would have been familiar to his audience; it was widely acknowledged that servants had access to valuable property, not only that of the colleges but of their residents. Servants, particularly senior servants, could provide informal and valuable guidance for undergraduates. His appeal to their self-interest is telling, he did not expect that the colleges would provide for the spiritual well-being of their servants solely out of obligation.[215]

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[212] CCC B/4/7/1B, 3 February 1883.
[213] BL G.A. Oxon 8° 705, 'The Master & the servant, or, The College Servant's Sunday'.
[214] Ibid. In preparing this sermon, Clayton sent letters to colleges asking about the provision for servants' attendance at Sunday services. Notes from college meetings at Trinity show that the letter was discussed and the college 'did not feel bound to answer the questions in detail'. The president, Henry George Woods reported that he had interviewed senior bedmakers and determined that they could attend 11:00 a.m. services once a week. TC Coll. Govt. III/c/1, 24 February 1892.
[215] BL G.A. Oxon 8° 705, p.8.

Clayton dismissed what he obviously felt was an often-repeated litany of excuses: the terms only lasted for half the year; and servants were merely employees, they were the responsibility of their parish, not the college. At many colleges, a separate service for servants was held, and unless these were compulsory, they were often poorly attended. Clayton was familiar with the failure of these attempts, 'Another point that has been made a good deal of is this: 'College servants (it is said) do not desire special services in College chapels: they do not like being treated as a class. They prefer their parish churches.' These services would have undoubtedly been conducted outside servants' regular work hours and would have been separate from the services attended by the rest of the college community. Clayton does not mention it explicitly, but archival sources reveal very few examples of college servants and members of colleges worshiping together.

Clayton also addressed the inadequacy and impracticality of previous attempts to encourage the attendance of servants at services and the hypocrisy of allowing 'strangers' to attend some services that college servants were specifically prohibited from attending, 'Even in those College Chapels where there is an elaborate musical service, it should be considered whether it is fair to exclude the servants, while you find places for outside residents and strangers, who have no sort of claim to be there – many of whom might attend on a weekday and ought to be at their own Parish Churches.'[216]

His message was clear: it was not entirely the fault of the servants if they failed to regularly attend services – blame also lay with their masters. His accusations were pointed, 'You arrange your Chapel services and your meals and your servants' work to suit your convenience and comfort, but utterly without regard to the parish churches and

[216] BL G.A. Oxon 8° 705, p.11.

Parochial Clergy: and so you deprive a large class of honest, industrious and loyal citizens from performing any religious duty during the larger part of the year'.[217]

To a community that prided itself on the cultivation of loyalty and long employment relationships, Clayton's sermon must have stung. Yet Clayton's arguments had considerable merit: colleges were unwilling to bear the true cost of fulfilling their moral obligations as employers. The system of indirect employment with its payments in-kind and dependence on perquisites largely benefitted the college, saving both time and money, however it did not afford colleges like Magdalen the moral authority apparently required to enforce the orders of 1841 and 1853.

It is likely that in 1841, authorities at Magdalen did not know how much a scout earned on a Sunday and were likely unaware that a scout's family depended on the food he brought home each day. By 1853, a review of the scouts' compensation had been completed and the college would have had a much better idea of their circumstances. By 1892, when Clayton delivered his sermon, colleges could no longer reasonably claim ignorance.

By 1895, William Warner, a Student at Christ Church and the president of the College Servants' Society believed collective action offered servants the best chance of securing their right to attend services on Sundays during terms.[218] He agreed with Clayton, but did not believe that the efforts of servants and fellows scattered among colleges could effect the desired changes. He advocated the amalgamation of servants' social and recreational clubs into a college servants' 'institute'. In his report to the annual general meeting of the CSS, he said,

[217] Ibid.
[218] A Student at Christ Church is comparable to a fellow at other Oxford colleges.

> 'College servants were a very large and very important number of people. He hoped some day they would be an organized body. And they did not know yet their own power…. A question that had been thought about a great deal was that of the college servants' Sunday – a question upon which many of them felt very strongly. It appeared to him that the chances which college servants upon the whole got of attending a place of worship on Sunday was a very small one and as things were going now, a diminishing chance. From various considerations, Oxford was becoming a place to which more and more people came to spend the week end. This must involve more work, more entertainments, and therefore more work for servants on Sundays. It was of no use for one person here and there to complain of this and suggest it was a bad state of things, Mr. Clayton preached an admirable sermon, and some people in various colleges were feeling strongly about it but if they had got their 800 college servants banded together in one institute, with a strong public opinion that they were not going to stand being prevented from going to church on Sundays, they would have a power in their hands that would be practically irresistible.'[219]

In this speech to college servants, Warner went further than Knox had advocated nearly twenty years earlier. Unlike Knox, Warner effectively advocated the formation of a union rather than one-off strike action. Like Knox, Warner's relationship as a close and trusted advisor to the CSS left him well-placed to support servants' collective action.

Warner's efforts to organize servants during this period were heroic, but ultimately unsuccessful. His crucial error seems to have been attempting to leverage servants' existing networks and organizations around sports to support collective action. Many servants resented the conflation of these two issues. By 1895 when Warner gave his speech, the question of college servants' Sundays seems to have been the concern of a smaller number of servants and fellows. However, they continued to press the issue and advocate strategies for individuals to promote the welfare of college servants. In the 1890s, a pamphlet titled

[219] BL Dep.d.825, 23 January 1895.

'Practical Suggestions for Members of the Christian Social Union Resident in Oxford' offered this advice,

> 'I can behave as a Christian towards my scout or landlady: by keeping reasonable hours (late rising disorganizes the household work); by not wearing unnecessary boots; or entertaining on Sundays (in such a way as to hinder church-going); or in other ways giving unnecessary trouble to hard-working and sometimes underpaid servants.'
>
> 'Also it is worth remembering… that it is important, whether in Oxford or out of it to take every fair opportunity of getting to know people of different station of life to my own.'[220]

Whether or not the issue received continued attention seems to have been largely the result of individual efforts. Without advocacy, some colleges seemed resigned to stasis. In the late nineteenth century, Charles Heberden, the principal at Brasenose, wrote to H.D. Harper, the principal at Jesus, 'I am afraid that the servants do not get out of College on Sunday morning in time to go to church. I believe they probably could do so if they were very anxious to do so, at any rate and leaving their assistants in College: but the Sunday morning question is a difficulty and I do not think we have yet solved it satisfactorily.'[221]

Despite earlier efforts, Magdalen still struggled to find an effective solution to the problem. In November 1892, Robert Ottley, the dean of divinity, proposed to the servants' committee the question of providing their servants with a service in the college chapel or elsewhere. The committee could not reach a resolution. They decided to collect more information, this time, quantitative as well as qualitative: Clayton was asked to attend a meeting and offer his opinions; the servants were instructed to form a committee and report their conclusions; and the porter, H. Kingston, was tasked with collecting statistics on

[220] BL MS. Top. Oxon c.200, undated.
[221] JC SV Correspondence 1880-90, 19 March 1885.

servants' arrival and departure times on Sundays. This represents a rather different approach than the straight-forward paternalism of the college orders from the 1850s. In March 1893, the committee comprised of servants reported that they could not reach a consensus. Some servants preferred to make no changes to the present system, some wanted to change the hour of hall dinner, and some suggested an additional service in the college chapel at 2:30. Facing such a disparate range of opinions, the servants' committee resolved to take no action.[222]

Perhaps the most effective catalysts for reform were not appeals to paternalistic obligations, but changes in patterns of domestic service. These came about in part through efforts to reduce the demand on servants' labour on Sundays, but also as part of a drive that started in the mid-nineteenth century and accelerated after the Cleveland Commission in 1872 to increase the efficiency of college kitchens. By 1894, breakfasts at Balliol were no longer served in members' rooms, but in the hall from 8:30-9:30 a.m. No breakfast commons were permitted to leave the kitchen or the buttery and all of these departments, including the kitchen and stores were closed until 1:15 p.m.[223]

These issues remain unresolved into the twentieth century. The Bishop of Reading summoned the heads of colleges, clerical tutors and others to a meeting at Christ Church on 5 June 1900 to discuss the provision of religious services for college servants during term.[224] A late evening service had been held at 8:30 at All Saints for the previous six terms. Although not exclusively for college servants, the time was fixed to allow their attendance after their regular Sunday work was completed. The services were not well attended. It was suggested that college servants 'would prefer to attend their ordinary Parochial Morning Service if it

[222] MC:CP/9/24/i-ii, 24 November 1892 and 6 March 1893.
[223] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Books 1893-1900
[224] BL:G.A. Oxon b.140-1.

could be made easier for them to do so.' A committee was formed to enact the recommendations discussed in the meeting and contacted the heads of all colleges and halls with their proposed regulations.

In order to facilitate college servants' attendance at their parochial services, many of the same efforts employed unsuccessfully by Magdalen over fifty years earlier were again tried. Breakfasts were to be served in hall or other large rooms within colleges, rather than in private rooms; servants were required to leave the college by 10:30 am; and a later opening time for the kitchen and the buttery were fixed to ensure servants would not return to their colleges until after 1:15 p.m.[225] There is no further documentary evidence of the success or failure of these initiatives, but it is likely that unless these recommendations made some compensation for the income lost from abolishing Sunday breakfast parties, they would have been unsuccessful.

In 1922, the subject of a separate service for the college's servants was again proposed at Balliol and the income from the fund established in 1841 was earmarked for this purpose, along with the provision of catechism for boys working in the college service twice weekly.[226]

Working on Sundays and late into the evenings during the week, as well as the unpredictable nature of the working hours, was increasingly identified as a source of dissatisfaction for college servants after the Great War. From the interwar period, weekend and evening work was routinely cited as a reason for the difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees, particularly junior servants. Several interviews conducted with servants employed in the mid to late-twentieth century highlight the cost to servants and their families of forgone

[225] Members of the committee included: J.R. Magrath, W.W. Jackson, C.B. Heberden, L.R. Phelps, H.L. Wild and E.J. Palmer. BL G.A. Oxon b.140-1.
[226] BC GOV C 12 December 1922 and 17 February 1923.

hours in the evenings and on weekends with their children, spouses and friends. Mrs. Lyne, the wife of Alec Lyne, the SCR butler at Corpus Christi, said,

> 'I would have liked him to have done anything where he could have been home at weekends. I mean he never saw the children as small children, you see. … I mean, I've lived with this such a long time, but now the children have grown up and I'm on my own, I resent Sundays. … You see this was always a college servant's nightmare really. He could never fix up to go out on a week-end. … You see, in an ordinary office job or anything you knew that you would be off Sunday at least.' Mrs. Lyne believed that this made the job much less attractive to younger workers, '…they wouldn't work Sundays, no; I don't think any young people would… this is why they don't get good college servants… you seem they can do five days a week and earn double what Alec earns.'[227]

Alec Lyne remarked to Harrison that he had always been a member of the Church of England but rarely had the chance to go to church on Sundays. When asked if he had attended the chapel at Corpus between the wars, Lyne said 'Oh no, that was a bit out of bounds, yes, I rather think so.'[228]

[227] Lyne's son did not follow him into college service, at the time of the interview he worked at the Cowley Motorworks. Brian Harrison 'Interview with Alec Lyne' 8 May 1969 in Harrison 'Transcripts'',pp.5573-5,
[228] Brian Harrison 'Interview with Alec Lyne' 8 May 1969 in Harrison 'Transcripts', p.5578.

3. Remuneration

From the early nineteenth century to the Second World War, the remuneration of college servants came under constant scrutiny. Cash wages were criticized as excessive for some workers and wholly inadequate for others. For most servants, cash wages were supplemented with discretionary in-kind payments and cash gratuities; these were condemned by the public, undergraduates, fellows and servants alike.[229] Despite their seemingly universal unpopularity and repeated attempts at restricting or abolishing them outright, the payment of these perquisites and gratuities persisted throughout the period.[230] This chapter explores how college servants were remunerated, considers how and why colleges experimented with various forms of the wage and methods of pay, and describes the range of bargaining strategies that developed around the negotiation of servants' remuneration, and finally considers why, at some colleges in the early twentieth century, these institutions failed.

Neoclassical economic theory predicts that the supply and demand of labour explains servants' compensation. In this labour market, the complicated system of remuneration makes it difficult to even identify wages. Where good income data exists for college servants, it is clear that the traditional neoclassical framework fails to adequately explain variation in servants' remuneration. Colleges do not seem to respond by systematically increasing or decreasing wages in response to changes in labour supply.

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[229] I use 'cash wage' to describe a payment in currency from the institution to the employee; these are usually, but not always, input-based; for example, a time-based payment, 12/- paid by a college to a kitchen woman for one week's labour.

[230] I define perquisites as in-kind payments and gratuities as cash payments, both are assumed to be discretionary. Usage of these terms by colleges varied, but broadly followed this categorization. Generally, cash gratuities are output-based payments, made both from the institution and from individual members of colleges; for example, tips offered to scouts who attend at private parties. Gratuities are usually based on subjective criteria, the level of attentiveness, for example.

Other theories of labour markets and employment contracts offer some insights. In many ways, colleges resemble internal labour markets: competitive wages at defined points of entry; rigid administrative rules governing wage increases; and promotion from within.[231] Yet, the persistence of perquisites and gratuities resulted in highly individualized contracts that are not predicted by ILM theory, where remuneration 'was determined by impersonal rules'.[232] Deferred compensation, as proposed by personnel economics, explains why senior servants might routinely be paid in excess of their marginal product of labour.[233] This is a particularly useful theory for college servants– manual labourers who experience declining productivity as they age. Younger, and presumably, stronger servants were typically paid less. Again, personnel economics offers the theory of workplace tournaments, where a number of junior servants compete with one another for promotion to lucrative senior roles.[234] While ILM and personnel economics offer useful framing devices for considering these questions, these theoretical frameworks fail to accommodate the effects of social and cultural norms in this employment relationship.

Determining college servants' remuneration from archival sources is difficult. Wages and payments are recorded variously by name or position. The prevalence of family labour meant that one payment or wage might be compensation for the work of two or more people. Even if remuneration is recorded against a name, the diffuse and fragmented system of compensation combined with the idiosyncratic nature of college accounting means that one servant may receive income from multiple sources within a college. Records of these arrangements may or may not have been created, and survival varies.

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[231] Doeringer and Piore.
[232] Seltzer and Sammartino, p.107.
[233] Lazear, 'Retirement', pp.1261-1284.
[234] Lazear and Oyer, pp.8-11.

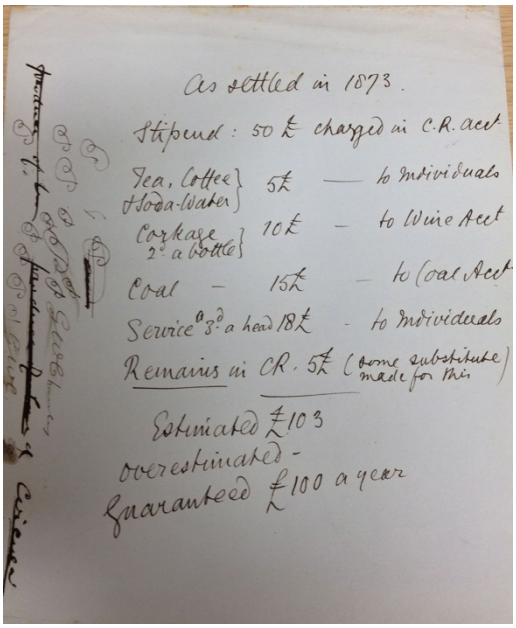

As settled in 1873.
Stipend: 50 £ charged in C.R. acct
Tea, Coffee } 5£ — to Individuals
Soda-Water }
Corkage } 10£ — to Wine Acct
2° a bottle }
Coal — 15£ — to Coal Acct
Service 3° a head 18£ — to Individuals
Remains in CR. 5£ (some substitute made for this)
Estimated £103
overestimated -
Guaranteed £100 a year

Figure 9 John James's remuneration, 1873 (UC:GB4/A1/1-4)

John James, the common room man at University, offers a good illustration (seen in the figure above). James' pay included: a cash stipend from the common room account; another cash stipend from the coal account; fees charged to individuals through three other accounts – possibly charged in battels; and in-kind payments of leftover food and drink from the common room, valued at £5. The college guaranteed that all of these together would yield an annual income of £100.[235] This arrangement was recorded on a scrap of paper found in a ledger, with a summary recorded in governing body minutes.[236] Two years later, he was given the additional responsibility of several lecture rooms, for which he received an additional £10 annually, paid out of still another account, the bedmakers' fund.[237] James also received additional gratuities while working in the common room, but there is no mention of these.

[235] UC:GB4/A1/1-4, 24 March 1873.
[236] See Appendix, image 9 for this paper.
[237] UC:GB4/A1/1-4, 28 October 1873.

Relying on wage books would not reveal most of this information. James's contractual arrangements are typical, but the level of detail provided by the documentation here is rare. Often, only summary accounts survive and as a consequence, much detail is lost. In James's case, assuming no changes in record keeping, an accurate accounting of his remuneration as stated requires the survival of records associated with at least six accounts. It is usually necessary to piece together these contracts from a variety of sources. Correspondence, diaries, minute books and other sources are informative, but the analysis is time consuming. This research shows that a comparison across colleges yields much more information than individual college histories can offer.

Consider the example of a college porter, a position that is fairly comparable across all colleges. Porters were responsible for the security of the college, monitoring and controlling the flow of people and goods into and out of the college. The job carried considerable responsibility and the head porter was typically one of the most highly compensated senior servants. All colleges employed porters year round; yet annual cash salaries for head porters in 1927 ranged from £120 to £250.[238] It would be reasonable to anticipate that some of the variation in salaries could be explained by the size of the college, and perhaps the college's wealth. The table below compares salary data collected by the domestic bursars' committee in 1927 with annual college revenues and the number of resident undergraduates, and shows no clear relationship among these variables.[239] By 1927, gratuities and perquisites were still

[238] PC Miscellaneous 20th century papers, these spreadsheets were created using data collected by the domestic bursars' committee and distributed to its members.

[239] 1927 is the only year for which information on wages and employee housing is available for all of these colleges. Data protection restrictions preclude a more complete analysis, which would have considered length of service. Based on sources for previous decades, it is highly likely that a significant percentage of the variation in senior servants' salaries can be explained by tenure. This is consistent with patterns of wage determination predicted by internal labour market theory. On wage determination in internal labour markets, see Doeringer Piore, esp. ch. 4.

important, but less so than they had been in previous decades, so while a porter's total remuneration included some extras, the cash salary provides a valid basis for comparison.[240]

1927 Porters' Cash Wages

College	Annual Cash Salary	Salary Rank	No. of Resident members	Members rank	College Revenues (£)	Revenue Rank	Housing included?
Merton	£250	1	117	19	41,908.00	5	Two rooms
University	£240	2	179	10	17,684.00	13	No
Christ Church	£220	3	326	1	91,451.00	2	Yes
Worcester	£220	3	128	18	7,731.00	18	Reduced rent
Corpus Christi	£200	4	81	20	25,039.00	9	No
Magdalen	£200	4	194	6	92,172.00	1	No
Queen's	£195	5	245	4	48,155.00	3	Yes
Exeter	£170	6	183	8	11,200.00	15	Yes
Jesus	£169	7	176	11	21,437.00	10	One room
Keble	£169	7	232	5	2,706.00	21	No
Brasenose	£166	8	180	9	27,566.00	8	No
Balliol	£161	9	264	3	20,246.00	11	Yes
Oriel	£160	10	175	12	18,025.00	12	No
St. John's	£160	10	190	7	38,676.00	6	Yes
Hertford	£156	11	130	17	4,060.00	20	No
Trinity	£142	12	153	16	13,656.00	14	Yes
Wadham	£141	13	157	14	8,657.00	17	Yes
New	£125	14	273	2	48,037.00	4	No
All Souls	£120	15	4	21	36,518.00	7	Yes
Lincoln	£120	15	165	13	9,865.00	16	Yes
Pembroke	£120	15	154	15	7,693.00	19	No

Table 10 1927 Porters' Cash Wages, source: PMB Misc 20th century papers; College revenues and members from 1922 Royal Commission report

Similar variation is seen in the cash wages of other workers in the 1927 survey: senior bedmakers, from £88 at Trinity to £186 at Balliol; and of charwomen, 10/- weekly at Lincoln

[240] Porters usually received entrance fees when a student matriculated and all or part of the gate fines collected by the college, a fee levied when undergraduates returned to the college after curfew. Housing is more difficult to evaluate. Usually, housing was a particularly desirable benefit of college employment. Unlike other servants, porters were typically offered housing in the college, rather than elsewhere in the city. Colleges often stipulated that if the porter lived in the lodge, the preferred candidate was a middle-aged married man with no children living at home. On the importance of housing in the paternalistic employment relationship, see for example R. Morris and J. Smyth 'Paternalism as an Employer Strategy 1800-1960', in Rubery and Wilkinson (eds.) *Employer Strategy and the Labour Market* (Oxford, 1994), pp.195-225.

to 30/- weekly at Queen's. Even for workers where it is reasonable to anticipate a spot or auction market for labour - substitute waiters at hall dinner – there is no market rate, nor is the wage quoted in a standard unit of labour hired. Workers were paid by the meal, by the day, and by the week – from 7/- weekly at St. John's to 50/- weekly at Magdalen. Interpreting the wage data of these workers is less straightforward. Unlike head porters, we cannot be confident that all of these workers had similar contractual arrangements, particularly that they were employed for the same number of weeks annually. Some of these workers received meals, while others did not. Seniority was still important in these employment contracts, but the wage differential between senior and junior positions appears to have been smaller. It is more likely that seniority for bedmakers, charwomen and other servants implied a corresponding increase in cash wages, but perhaps more importantly also included an increased number of weeks of employment annually and expanded entitlement to perquisites and gratuities. In 1874, the senior kitchen woman at University worked for 52 weeks annually and was paid 8/- weekly. Her two assistants were paid 7/- weekly, but their contract only offered 30 weeks of work annually. All three women received beer and board supplied by the cook, at the rate of 1/3- daily for each.[241]

3.1. Perquisites and Gratuities

Perquisites were common in many occupations in Britain: coalheavers' sweepings, shipwrights' chips, tailors' cabbage, weavers' thrums, all comprised part of workers' remuneration.[242] Domestic servants, particularly those who lived in, received a significant

[241] UC:EB4/J1/6. Layton concluded that beer allowances for domestic servants in London had fallen out of fashion by 1900, '…(B)eer, which was always given fifty years ago (or in lieu there of 1s. a week or 50*s*. to 3*l*. a year), is now practically never given.', Layton, p.516.

[242] Leonard Schwarz provides a good overview of these types of in-kind payments and the historiography on perquisites in L. Schwarz, *London in the age of industrialization: entrepreneurs, labour force and living conditions, 1700-*

proportion of their remuneration in-kind. The experiences of college servants, because of the quantity and variety of surviving evidence, can offer considerable insight into perceptions and practices around perquisites. Schwarz observed that 'Perquisites only emerge when…the perquisite is under attack.'[243] Throughout the period, college servants' perquisites came under attack with surprising frequency, details of these practices are revealed as a result of the increased attention. Details of these payments also emerged as part of the overarching interest in college and university reforms, particularly those associated with the royal commissions during this period, and generated significant interest in wage forms and methods of pay.

The perquisites in other occupations listed by Schwarz are generally byproducts of production. Domestic servants similarly received cast-off items, but also received in-kind payments that were originally linked to their subsistence, usually food and drink.[244] By the nineteenth century, nearly all college servants lived out and maintained their own households. Over time, these perquisites were less closely linked to subsistence and entitlements expanded. Perquisites were consumed at work, brought home for the family's use, and monetized. The range of goods that a servant might receive varied considerably by their position, the college, the time period, and their individual ability to maximize access to these items. Scouts are most closely associated with this type of remuneration and this section considers their in-kind compensation in detail. Scouts received a wide variety of perquisites, including: food and drink, both for immediate consumption at work and to take home; cast-off

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1850 (Cambridge, 1992), pp.161-8; and Schwarz, L., 'Custom, Wages and Workload in England during Industrialization', *Past & Present*, (No. 197, 2007), pp.143-75.

[243] L. Schwarz, 'Transformations of Labour and The London Hanged: a reply to Paul Carter' *The London Journal* (1998) 23:1, pp.63.

[244] On perquisites and subsistence, Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England , 1260-1850' *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (June 2015), p.413. On domestic servants' perquisites, Hecht describes similar patterns for the eighteenth century as I observe for Oxford college servants in the nineteenth century. J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956).

items taken away from the college, including clothing and furnishings; and furnishings sold on to other residents in the college, including a variety of items required for living in college, like crockery, glassware, and cleaning brushes.

Provisions for servants' meals while at work varied considerably, and most archival evidence concerns scouts, or bedmakers. Traditionally, these servants were employed directly by resident members and were not employees of the college until the early to mid-nineteenth century. As such, their meals were provided by the men they directly served. By the nineteenth century, this practice had evolved into an entitlement to the 'commons'. Commons was a meal served to undergraduates consisting of bread, butter, cheese and beer, although this varied over time and by college. For undergraduates at many colleges, taking commons was required by college authorities to demonstrate physical residence.

Scouts were typically responsible for serving two meals daily in the rooms of eight to ten men, who resided on their staircase. These were ordered from the kitchen and brought to the rooms by the scout, or sometimes cooked by the scout over the fire in the resident's rooms. Some scouts raised poultry and sold eggs in college, these could be served with toast and tea. The leftover food from the commons provided at least one meal for the scout and his assistant, often two each. The practice was well-established enough by the mid-nineteenth century to feature in humorous fictional accounts of college life. Verdant Green, the hero of a classic Victorian novel about an undergraduate's experiences at Oxford, learned from his scout Robert Filcher, that gentlemen did not eat leftover food, it was always left for the servants.

> 'The reading and re-reading of these [letters] occupied him during the whole of breakfast-time; and Mr. Filcher found him still engaged in perusing them when he came to clear away the things. It was then that Verdant discovered the extended meaning that the word "perquisites" possesses in the eyes of a scout; for, to a remark that he had made, Robert replied in a tone of surprise, "Put away these bits o' things that as is left, sir!" and then added, with an air of mild

> correction, "you see, sir, you's fresh to the place, and don't know that gentlemen never likes that sort o' thing done here sir; but you gets your commons, sir, fresh and fresh every morning and evening which must be much more agreeable to the 'ealth than a heating of stale bread and such like. No sir!" continued Mr. Filcher, with a manner that was truly parental, "no, sir! you trust to me, sir, and I'll take care of your things, I will." And from the way that he carried off the eatables, it seemed probable that he would make good his words.'[245]

As the nineteenth century progressed, colleges came under increasing pressure to reform internal management practices in order to make the cost of living at the university more affordable. The price of commons came under scrutiny; it was easy for undergraduates to compare the prices charged in the college for commodities like bread and butter with prices charged in the local market. At several colleges, undergraduates complained that not only were the unit prices charged excessive, but that the commons were too large. This was a thinly veiled criticism of the practice of supplying a sufficiently large portion to feed the undergraduate, his servant, and possibly the servant's assistant as well, all at the expense of the undergraduate. A petition submitted by undergraduates to the master and fellows of University College in 1864 demanded that the price of commons be reduced and that the charges no longer be compulsory, although undergraduates at University paid a reasonable sum of 4d. for their commons.[246]

A few months later, undergraduates at Christ Church launched a similar campaign for reform. In the mid-nineteenth century, an unusually complicated system existed at Christ Church, where the butler supplied the bread, butter and beer, the manciple supplied the meat

[245] Cuthbert Bede, *Mr. Verdant Green* (London, 1853). Cuthbert Bede is the pseudonym of Edward Bradley, who attended Durham University and then spent a short time studying in Oxford.
[246] UC:D41/N/2 'A Petition of the Resident Bachelors and Undergraduates to the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford', undated.

at dinner, and the cook supplied the meat at breakfast and lunch.[247] With little oversight, each servant determined the prices they charged a captive audience for these items, effectively running little fiefdoms within the college.

In March 1865, exasperated with this system, 108 undergraduates at Christ Church signed a petition submitted to the dean complaining of excessive charges for food and the overall dissatisfaction with college catering.[248] Each commons of bread weighed 1lb., 3oz. and was served with 2 2/3 oz. butter. The petitioners found that the retail price of these was 5d., while they were being charged 8d. by the butler, which would have yielded a profit of 60%, but the butler was paying wholesale prices, and the petitioners estimated his profits at 160%.[249] The petition asked that the entire system be reformed, that the butler and all college servants be paid a wage, rather than take profits on items sold to residents.

Frustrated by the college's response, a few months later undergraduates provided the petition to the *Times*, where it was published, to the embarrassment of the college.[250] For two months, letters appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *London Review*, the *Morning Post*, the *Saturday Review*, and *Punch*. Public criticism was scathing:

> 'In Christ Church, aristocratic Christ Church, where lives the genuine "swell", whose utterances are helped out by the sacred monosyllable "haw"; in Christ Church, where "money mayketh man", at the doors of the august Deanery, whose tea-fights are spangled with earls, there is a protest made against extortion, a complaint that the rules of the College should compel its Members to buy their bread and butter at about 160 per cent. above the market-price, in order that on this profit the College Butler may wax fat, and kick.'[251]

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[247] E.G.W. Bill and J.F.A. Mason, *Christ Church and Reform, 1850-1867* (Oxford, 1970), pp.132-41. The manciple was traditionally responsible for the provisioning of the college, by the nineteenth century, at some colleges this role was combined with the cook's.
[248] A copy of the petition does not survive in the college archives, but was published in a pamphlet, BL:G.A. Oxon 8Â °92. The number of resident undergraduates at Christ Church in 1842 was approximately 154, and was likely similar in 1865, which suggests the petition enjoyed broad support.
[249] BL:G.A. Oxon 8Â °92; The fifty-four page pamphlet is a collection of reprinted newspaper and magazine articles, with no additional commentary.
[250] Ibid., *The Times*, 11 November 1865 in BL:G.A. Oxon 8Â °92.
[251] Ibid., 'Quarreling with One's Bread and Butter' *The London Review*, 18 November 1865.

The anonymous author made reference to the French Revolution, and concluded that it was '…the existence of police regulations, which has saved the portly Butler from the indignity of swinging at the gateway of Tom-quad'.[252] Replies from the college treasurer and the senior censors soon followed. The 'Bread and Butter Row', as it became known in the press, focused attention on the internal arrangements of the college, particularly the management of servants. The butler, along with the cook and manciple, were paid no salary, but effectively acted as contractors and were free to set prices as they wished.[253] Most of the letters published took issue not only with the excessive, compulsory charges, but with the mismanagement of all servants by the college, not only cooks and butlers, but 'scouts or gyps proved over and over again to be drunken and dishonest, but as irremovable as Her Majesty's Judges'.[254] It was commonly held that a lack of oversight on behalf of the college had allowed these abuses to persist for decades.

Similar types of arrangements, where the kitchen was essentially managed by a contractor rather than a salaried employee, existed at many colleges and by the late nineteenth century, were replaced with direct management of the kitchen and buttery by the college. Similarly, the cost of food and service was scrutinized at all colleges. Christ Church enacted several reforms in the aftermath of this scandal, including commissioning audits of the kitchen. The remuneration of senior servants was reorganized and the remuneration of servants through profits was replaced by an annual salary. A buttery tariff survives from 1866 and shows that

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[252] Ibid.. Henry Grant, the butler, was a prominent local figure. He was a an official with the University Boat Club, poor law guardian, a member of the city council and at the time of the Row, was the city's sheriff. In 1876, Grant died suddenly in college; at the time of his death, he was supervising a large construction project in the grounds and meadow of the college in his capacity as a college servant. *OT* 14 October 1876, *OC* 14 October 1876. Grant left an estate of approximately £6,000. *NPCE&W* 1876, p.374.

[253] Wage records from this period do not survive to provide confirmation of their remuneration.

[254] *The Times*, 22 November 1865 in BL:G.A. Oxon 8Â °92. Gyps were the Cambridge equivalent of scouts, purportedly from the Greek *Aegypius* for vulture.

the price, and likely size, of the commons had been significantly reduced. A commons of bread was now 1d., butter was 1 1/2d., and eggs were 1d. each.

Just a few years later, in 1869, similar issues were raised again in an anonymous letter to the editor, published in the *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduates' Journal*, reprinted in the *Daily News*, then in the *Saturday Review* and again in the *Oxford Times*.[255] The first letter, signed 'Fair Play' offers an exaggerated portrait of a college servant taking his perquisites of food back home. 'I write to call attention to the fact that every day, and frequently two and three times a day, men I believe to be scouts are to be seen coming from certain colleges and making their way homeward, with heavily laden baskets, huge parcels, and crammed pockets. … A few days ago I say one of these men so heavily laden that he had to stop a tramcar, and had great difficulty getting in.'[256] A reply, penned by 'An Old College Servant' took issue with the characterization. A more accurate description, he argued, would note that servants usually had 'a few crusts and pieces of bread … and a few bones for the favourite dog or cat'.

Another letter signed 'A Bed-Maker in a Large College' responded that his cash wages were £70 annually, out of which he had to pay an assistant and purchase cleaning supplies. After this, plus rent of approximately £16, £2.6.0 for rates, £3 for life insurance, he estimated that he had about £45 to live on. The perquisites of broken meat he estimated at about £6 annually. 'Half the College places are only fit for single men, and were it not for the Long Vacation, when a large number of us are driven to all parts of England, we must certainly perish as a respectable class of servants.' He concluded that a mechanic who earned 25/-

[255] These included: 'College Servants' *OT* 28 June 1884; 'Scouts and Their Critics' *The Saturday Review* 28 June 1884, pp.847-8.; 'College Servants and Their Critics' *OT* 5 July 1884; 'The Alleged Slander Against College Servants' *OT* 15 November 1884.
[256] *OT* 28 June 1884.

weekly was better off than most college servants, who had to keep up a respectable appearance on similarly low wages, which was not an insignificant expense.

Contemporary observers, both internal and external, remarked on the close relationship between these in-kind payments and the low wages paid by colleges, as they had at Christ Church in 1865.

> 'The College servants lived in a similar atmosphere of tradition, threaded by a for the most part benevolent paternalism. Often illiterate and of humble birth, living in a hierarchical society and in receipt of necessary gratuities, they appeared outwardly deferential, sometimes to the point of servility, but they used their native cunning to obviate the low wages and long hours by scrounging perquisites both from the men they served and from the kitchen.'[257]

The opacity of these wage forms combined with the idiosyncrasies and inadequacies of college accounting during this period meant that colleges frequently had no real understanding of a servant's total remuneration. From the 1850s, even before the Bread and Butter Row laid bare the inefficiencies and wastefulness of the indirect system of managing college kitchens, interest in catering reform prompted reviews of servants' remuneration. As part of a proposed reorganization of the kitchen in 1852, Magdalen asked some senior servants to provide an estimate of the value of their place. Thomas Mundy, the college butler, offered the following:

'Average yearly amount of Butter, Cheese &c for 3 years	£239.9.0
Profit upon do at 30 per cent	71.14.0
Napkins	15.12.0
Lucrum Promi	18.14.8
Salary	67.17.1
Total	£173.17.9

[257] V.H.H. Green, *The Commonwealth of Lincoln College 1427-1977* (Oxford, 1979), pp.416-7; Green matriculated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge in 1933 and was elected a fellow of Lincoln in 1951.

From this is deducted	
5 per cent on 239.9.0	11.19.0
Do. – 18.14.8	0.18.0
Man's wages	39.0.0
	67.17.1

Total £173.17.9'[258]

The system appears similar to Christ Church where the butler's remuneration depends largely on the profits of the commons sold from the buttery. It is not clear whether the college set the profit figure of 30%, or whether the butler controlled these prices.

William Gunstone, a senior scout, similarly provided an estimate of his remuneration, which included a cash salary of £70 and his annual perquisite of the remains of the hall and common room dinner tables, which he valued at £30 annually. Out of this he paid cash wages for a charwoman of £1.6.0, and £10 for his assistant John Brooker, who also received meals which Gunstone estimated cost 8d. daily or £18.5.0 annually. There were nine servants besides Gunstone who were entitled to perquisites, valued at £5 each annually, the total value of all leftover food from the hall and common room was valued at £75.[259]

The cook, Henry Whiting, similarly provided his estimates, although his figures are much less precise. He described his income as 'Stipend arising from various small sums and additions made from time to time', £145.19.0; and poundage £13, for a total income of £158.19.0. From this, he deducted an assistant's salary of £10; £25 for the board and lodging of his apprentice; and listed incidentals as 'paper and string supplied' and 'breakage of dishes' with no amounts assigned.[260]

[258] MC:CP/2/63, 29 March 1852.
[259] MC:CP/2/63, this may not have included the value of leftover wine. Gunstone's estimates are written on a separate, undated scrap of paper, but enclosed with the minutes from March 1852 and presumed to date from approximately the same time.
[260] Ibid., poundage is usually a percentage of total revenues, although the precise calculation is not made explicit in these notes.

Fellows at Magdalen made enquiries regarding the management of other college kitchens and found similar arrangements. John Coxe, the cook at St. John's, described a system similar to Magdalen's, a fixed charge for meals with the leftover food divided among servants, 'fellows dined for two shillings a head not including pastry, which was dealt out as Commons at the rate of from 6d to a shilling. Dinner usually consisted of fish or soup and a joint.' Undergraduates had commons for dinner at 10d each and could order additional dishes if they chose. Coxe reported 'the Servants just as well satisfied with this mode as with direct payments'. [261] Queen's had a system that combined indirect and direct payments, the cook received a cash salary from the college, but was allowed to make a profit on vegetables and sauces 'which he provides at his own discretion and with his own capital'.[262] The butler had a fixed salary and earned no profits on the sale of items. Servants were entitled to divide the leftover food from the meal, however, only the porter and the common room man were entitled to the food left from the high table.[263]

Servants were well aware of the cash value of their compensation. Brokers dealing in secondhand goods, including leftover food, were common in the city. Members of colleges also had some understanding of how these markets operated and the ways in which servants monetized in-kind payments.

> 'I had asked some friends to come to my rooms at 9 pm (when supper bell rang) for a light refraction of oysters and lobsters, and mulled Brasenose ale. I found the table laid by Harry and a pigeon-pie and two cold ducks in addition on the table besides the shell-fish. Next morning, I asked him how he came to mistake my order, and to bring those solids from the kitchen which no one wanted and no one touched. Harry replied, "There would have been nothing for me, sir. Lobsters and oysters is no good the next day, they don't keep well."

[261] Ibid..
[262] Ibid..
[263] Ibid..

> It would have been cheaper to me if he had asked me for a half-crown cash, which is about what the perquisite would realize, second hand at some minor Oxford cook shop: whereas in my cook's bill the wasted victuals figured perhaps at 10s. Even at the cheaper prices of the sixties.'[264]

Woodgate's memoir evinces a familiarity with the resale of college food: the ubiquity of the practice, the income a servant could expect to achieve and the depreciation of the value of the food as it traveled from the kitchen to the cook shop. Other historical accounts show that the sale of leftover food extended to those who could not afford the cook shops.[265] The accumulated fats from roasted meats served in colleges were collected and sold, whether in bulk to commercial enterprises or in smaller quantities to individuals, in any case, the proceeds were understood to be the chef's perquisite. Samuel's history of village life in the environs of Oxford recalls that when carriers drove their carts from Headington to deliver laundry to the colleges, they called at the buttery to buy drippings by the pound, 'a favourite relish'. '…That was a big item in the diet at that time of day, College dripping…They'd sell it to anybody. Not very dear…'bout sixpence a pound, I suppose.'[266]

Woodgate's account also reveals frustration with the inefficiency of the process and the tendency towards abuse. The type of overordering described by Woodgate was not uncommon, particularly at wealthier colleges, and appears in other life-writing from the period.[267] College servants were not unusual in this practice. Schwarz describes how workers

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[264] Walter Woodgate, *Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman* (London, 1909), p.116. Woodgate matriculated at Brasenose in 1859.
[265] On the sale of leftover food in the nineteenth century, see for example, Janet Beizer 'The Emperor's Plate: Marketing Leftovers in Nineteenth -Century Paris' (2015).
[266] Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Village Life and Labour*, (London, 1975), pp.196-7.
[267] The problem of excessive ordering by servants and the relationship to low wages is briefly discussed in L.W.B. Brockliss, *Magdalen College Oxford: A History* (Oxford, 2008), p.296.

shifted the boundaries that defined their perquisites, maximizing waste, and as a consequence increasing their remuneration wherever possible.[268]

In May 1888, an undergraduate at Christ Church brought an accusation against his scout, Richmond, to the steward. Warburton, the undergraduate, charged Richmond with taking away an untouched 'gelatine' of beef leftover from luncheon. Warburton explained that he intended to have it for supper and told Sadler, the steward, that he could produce witnesses that the dish was untouched at lunch. Implicit in Warburton's accusation is the understanding that at the conclusion of a meal, the scout was entitled to take away any food that had been partly eaten.[269] Untouched food remained the property of the gentleman. Sadler's notes indicate that Warburton, whom he called 'a man of irregular habits', was likely confusing a 'gelatine' for a galantine of beef. Hearing of the accusations against Richmond, another resident on the staircase, Walker, wrote to Sadler in support of Richmond and expressed his 'thorough confidence' in Richmond's honesty. Sadler could find no previous complaints against Richmond and the matter was dropped.[270]

Disputes over the remains were a constant feature of the nineteenth century. In 1895, the steward was called upon to arbitrate in a disagreement between the head waiter, George Hunt and the head cook, Charles Green at Christ Church; both claimed the leftover food served at a lunch given by the bishop of Oxford.[271] The steward decided in favor of the cook, presumably in an effort to economize, so that the remains could be returned to the kitchen and used in

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[268] Schwarz, *London*, p.162. Here, Schwarz also cites T. S. Aston, *An Economic History of England: The Eighteenth Century* (1955), p.208.
[269] These rights were granted explicitly at some colleges. At Trinity in 1895: 'Any broken meat left over from meals in rooms is the usual perquisite of the bedmaker, but what is left untouched will be reserved unless orders are given to the contrary'. TC Coll. Govt III/A.5 'Regulations for Undergraduates'.
[270] CCA S.xxxi.a.2.
[271] CCA S.xxxi.a.3 1 October 1895.

other meals.[272] By the late nineteenth century, the college provided meals from the kitchen for staff, and waiters at Christ Church were no longer entitled to leftover food from dinners. At the start of Michaelmas term in 1898, the steward noted in his diary that waiters and hall men should keep 'nothing at all back from dinner and everything over should be sent back to the kitchen … The Cook will send up some supper to the Hall for the hall men in addition to the Lunch which he has now for a long time sent them.'[273]

Frequently these disputes involved the entitlement as well as more ambiguous objections, for example, the failure to offer an acceptable performance of deference around the receipt of the perquisites. In the mid-nineteenth century, undergraduates at University complained of unseemly behavior by servants after hall dinners. Undergraduates objected to the spectacle of hungry servants outside the hall every evening, eagerly awaiting the conclusion of the meal. In a petition submitted to the master and fellows of the college, students requested that,

> 'The Hall door be kept closed, after the Fellows have retired, till dinner be over. When Fellows have left the Hall, the Scouts, with the kitchen servants, crowd round the open door: this is a very unpleasant and unseemly sight at any time, and still more so on Strangers' nights.'[274]

The presence of servants at the door signaled not only the servants' base interest in 'scrounging' perquisites, but their disrespect for undergraduates. Servants waited only for the master and fellows to leave, they did not seem particularly concerned that their presence may have embarrassed the undergraduate members of the college in front of their guests. Petitioners at University demanded that the entitlement to the remains be abolished and

[272] CCA S.xxxv.a.4 1 October 1895. The steward noted that Hunt was 'rude and overbearing, but thought his rights were infringed'.
[273] CCA S.xxxi.a.3 10 October 1898. The position of steward at Christ Church was similar to a bursar at other colleges and he was responsible for the management of college servants.
[274] UC:D41/N/2 'A Petition of the Resident Bachelors and Undergraduates to the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford'.

suggested that the servants were highly compensated, the obvious implication that no further compensation was required for the loss of the remains. [275]

In response to the undergraduates' petition at University, the college addressed the perquisites in the hall and the compensation of the cook, which proved more difficult to resolve. The minutes note that 'the existing servants should receive an equitable compensation for being deprived of the remains'.[276] The college recognized that the remains were an important part of the servants' remuneration, but they believed the cook was responsible for the payment under the existing arrangements for the management of the kitchen. The college proposed to return the remains to the cook, who would make an appropriate reduction in the cost of the dinner. The cook would then pay the college for the remains and the proceeds would offset the payments to the other servants. No agreement could be reached and the matter was left for another year. College authorities were frustrated by the situation and expressed their displeasure with the cook. At the same meeting, the college passed a resolution to discontinue a long-standing entitlement of the cook, a tradition called 'chopping the block'.[277] As part of the ritual, on Easter Sunday residents of the college gave cash gratuities to the cook.[278] This punishment was both financially punitive as well as humiliating.

A year later, the college decided to offer cash equivalents to all servants entitled to the remains from hall dinner. Six scouts, the porter, the under butler and the kitchen woman were

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[275] Ibid..
[276] UC:GB4/A1/2, 19 March 1864
[277] Ibid. This was clearly intended as a rebuke: Easter Sunday fell on 27 March 1864, the following weekend.
[278] 'On Easter Sunday, the kitchen staff decorated their chopping block with flowers, and placed it in a passageway for members of the foundation to strike at with a cleaver. After each member struck the block, he tipped the cook. Some claimed that guests could chop the block, and even that, if a guest chopped the block right through, he could claim a large part of the College's estates.' Robin Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College, Oxford* (Oxford, 2008), p.370.

entitled to equal shares in the remains, which were valued at £7 annually per servant. The common room man was entitled to 'the remains of all luncheons and dinners in the Common Room, but in lieu of his share of the remains in the Hall, and the 8d a day when there is no dinner in Hall or Common Room, to receive the sum of £12.2.8' annually.[279] The kitchen woman was still entitled to take the leftover bread, and the leftover beer was still the perquisite of the servants, although only one servant was to go into the hall after dinner to fetch it.[280]

As colleges moved towards a direct system of managing their kitchens, the entitlement to the remains of the hall dinners was replaced with cash payments at most colleges. This was made possible by the standardization of accounting practices and the employment of professional bursars, which occurred from the 1870s onward. Entitlement to leftover food served in rooms persisted until all meals were served in the hall, these arrangements varied by college. Perquisites of alcohol were still in evidence well into the interwar period, and appear to have endured through the late twentieth century.

Alcohol as a perquisite

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries alcohol, which had always comprised part of servants' remuneration, came under increasing scrutiny.[281] Employers' attitudes regarding servants' consumption of alcohol highlight the tensions inherent in this employment

[279] UC:GB4/A1/2, 21 March 1865.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Beer was a common perquisite for domestic servants, Hill finds that over the eighteenth century, employers frequently replaced this perquisite with beer money. Bridget Hill, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1996), pp.71-2. Hecht similarly finds that in the eighteenth century, employers variously provided servants with tea money as well as perquisites of tea. J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956), p.156.

relationship. As paternalistic employers, colleges were responsible for providing servants with moral guidance, which in the mid-to-late nineteenth century included the promotion of temperance.[282] Alcohol consumption was viewed as a primary cause of poverty among the working class. Alcohol was also an important ingredient in social gatherings at the colleges, it was ubiquitous at meals, in the common room, and at private parties. The presence of servants was an integral part of these occasions, servants not only waited on men, they acted as genial hosts. Some, like Richard Gunstone, were celebrated for the convivial atmosphere of their common rooms, butteries and pantries.[283]

Perquisites of alcohol, like food, varied by college. Servants were usually entitled to beer while they were working and the leftover wine remaining in bottles after a meal was served in common rooms or in the hall. Some servants were allowed to purchase additional drinks while at work from the buttery; to be allowed to charge these drinks to college battels was a privilege given to a few senior servants at some colleges.[284] For example at Balliol in the late nineteenth century, only the following servants were allowed to battel: the butler, under butler, common room man, hall man, head porter, store keeper, and head cook.[285]

Servants were allowed to consume beer and cider at work, and often expected to, with other choices, like lemonade and soda water only supplied for a fee. The consumption of distilled alcoholic drinks, like whisky, by college servants in the nineteenth century was usually discouraged or forbidden entirely. Until the late nineteenth century, clean drinking

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[282] On the history of drink and temperance in the nineteenth century, see Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The temperance question in England, 1815-1872* (Keele, 1994). There was an active college servants' temperance society that met regularly during this period, usually at Keble.
[283] Sheppard, *Gunstones*.
[284] See for example, LC/B/AB/SER Servants' Battels 1895-1902.
[285] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Book 2, memorandum notes that from June 1895 those servants had permission to battell.

water was not always available. Oxford suffered three serious cholera epidemics in 1832, 1849 and 1854.

Beer drinking was popularly thought to impart physical stamina and acted as a temporary stimulant. Drunkenness, however, was not tolerated. Defining drunkenness was subjective, but colleges usually settled on a state where servants were too inebriated to work. For example, in 1892, J. Moody, the butler, reported F. Bennett, the head cook to the college authorities for 'being drunk and incapable of performing his duties on Nov. 29th'. Minutes recorded that 'Moody was called and also stated that on a previous occasion he had seen Bennett the worse for drink and had warned him; but he said that until Nov. 29th he could not have proved his inability to perform his duties.' Four other servants were called in and confirmed Moody's account. Bennett admitted that he had been 'the worse for liquor' and was immediately dismissed.[286]

Sometimes problems with a servant's performance at work were attributed to excessive alcohol consumption, but the servant was not strictly incapable of work, so the college usually tried to resolve the issues through interviews, sanctions, and behavioral modifications, like 'taking the pledge'. In 1857, the treasurer at Oriel received complaints that a scout, William Beasley, was inattentive, slovenly and drinking excessively.[287] This was at least the second time in 1857 that Beasley had been warned about his behavior and he was summoned to the treasurer for an interview.[288] Beasley was asked about his childhood, some of which was spent at an asylum for soldiers' children at Enfield where his brother died; his life at home, as his

[286] MC CP/9/24/I, 1 December 1892.
[287] See Appendix, image 12.
[288] OC GOV B1/1/6, May 1857. The catalogue describes these documents as memoranda and notes by Edward Hawkins, but the text suggests that at least some of these notes about Beasley were written by one of the treasurers, either Drummond Chase or John Burgon.

wife was ill and could not work; and his personal and work habits. Beasley denied the charges of inattention, and said that he stayed downstairs doing the 'dirty work' of attending to the

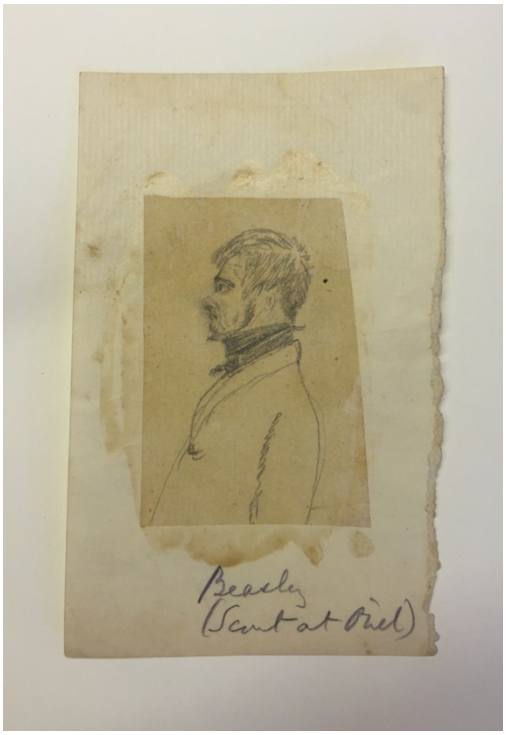


Figure 11 Sketch of William Beasley, undated (OC STA 4 A/1)

kettles, poaching eggs, looking after the kitchen and downstairs. His boy kept clean and worked upstairs, attending to the men.[289]

Inattention was a common complaint leveled against scouts, men all wanted service at approximately the same time in the mornings and it was practically impossible not to keep at least some of them waiting. As for his drinking, Beasley said that he 'drinks only what a man requires – never intoxicated'. 'He goes out at the back gate and gets ½ pint at 11 – quite tired + wants it – has his half pint or it may be a pint at dinner at one at home – sends for a ½ pint again after Hall dinner – has his ½ pint of mild beer from his own cask at night.'[290] The

[289] Ibid., May 1857.
[290] Ibid..

treasurer had obviously made enquiries in college and some of these accounts contradicted Beasley's statements. Beasley was indignant and said 'he supposed himself watched and attacked – says he will only drink water'. To this the treasurer wrote, 'that he certainly will not, his whole air and appearance and demeanor bad – unfit for a college servant'. Beasley was given an opportunity to improve and later notes suggest that he was 'improved in sobriety and attention, but very dirty'.[291]

When servants were found to have drunk more than was acceptable, although it was grounds for immediate dismissal, more often they were disciplined. This typically included a warning, demotion or fine. After receiving several warnings, William Harris, a bedmaker's assistant at Corpus, was again reported to the bursar for being drunk at work. He recently received an increase in his wages of £1 per quarter, this was rescinded as punishment and he was put back on £9.1.0 quarterly.[292] A few months later, another underservant at Corpus, James Lee, was fired from his position for 'being largely in debt at various public houses'. Lee had also 'given his pledge', which he had clearly broken.[293] Similarly, a third underservant at Corpus was dismissed for 'drunken and disorderly conduct and foul language'.[294]

Asking servants to 'take the pledge' or commit themselves to sobriety was a common approach in the late nineteenth century. The temperance movement began in England in 1828, with teetotalism following in the 1830s.[295] Harrison finds the first inclinations to treat habitual drinking as a medical condition, rather than a moral failing, arrive from the U.S. in

[291] Ibid. undated but appears to be from later in the same term.
[292] Ibid.,18 June 1892.
[293] CCC B/4/7/1B, 5 December 1892.
[294] Ibid., 10 December 1892. After this incident, clearly exasperated, the servants committee decided to 'do away' with nearly all of the junior servants. The work was reorganized and they hired an additional senior servant. Because these workers were not all directly employed by the college, it is not possible to determine from archival sources if they were immediately terminated or gradually replaced.
[295] Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The temperance question in England, 1815-1872*, 2nd ed. (Keele, 1994)

the 1860s and 1870s, but a variety of opinions on the spectrum of behavior from drinking to disease persisted.[296] Robert Fowler, a kitchen scullery man at Christ Church, was reported to the steward for relatively minor infractions related to alcohol. He had been an employee of the college for approximately seven years when in 1894, he 'took the pledge' for six months in front of the steward, Michael Sadler, and kept it. The steward asked him to come in and periodically renew his pledge, which he did. In December 1894, Sadler noted that there was 'much improvement in work and regularity & that he [Fowler] can be recommended for other work in College'.'[297]

No college proposed policies abolishing or significantly restricting servants' consumption of alcohol at work. However, from the early twentieth century, evidence shows that it became more common for colleges to replace this perquisite with a cash equivalent. In 1907, the newly appointed under cook at Oriel was offered an annual salary of £60 with beer or £65 without beer.[298] From 1923, Hertford exchanged the beer allowance previously given to several servants as part of their remuneration for an equivalent contribution to their pension fund. The beer money 'reckoned as 7 pints a week for each term of 9 weeks, that is at 6d a pint as £1.11.6 terminally or 1/10 a week during the whole year' was paid into the pension fund and accumulated 3% interest annually, paid by the college.[299] In this circumstance, Oriel was both discouraging the consumption of alcohol and promoting retirement savings.

Throughout the period, servants could also receive perquisites of alcohol from undergraduates. As colleges began to limit discretionary cash gratuities, buying servants

[296] Ibid., pp.21-4.
[297] CCA S.xxxv.a.4 6 December 1894. M.E. Sadler was steward from 1886-1895 and later master of University College from 1923-34.
[298] OC GOV/4/A4 Minutes of the Governing Body, 6 March 1907.
[299] HC 4/5/1.

drinks became more common. In 1928, the bursar at St. John's, Ronald Hart-Synnot, began scrutinizing the buttery accounts and created spreadsheets to analyze the practice. In contrast to the nineteenth-century investigation of Beesley, by the late 1920s, standardization of college accounts and the professionalization of bursars like Hart-Synnot, made possible a completely different approach. From information recorded in college accounts, Hart-Synnot created spreadsheets to analyze how many drinks each undergraduate purchased and how many each servant received. He was also interested in patterns of consumption, whether servants took the drinks or the cash equivalent.

Hart-Synnot's analysis found that the practice was widespread. From January 29th to March 4th, 116 of 138 undergraduates in college purchased a total of 719 drinks for 30 servants. 427 of these were taken as cash, with the remainder consumed as beer, valued at £24.0.2. A few senior servants exchanged the drinks for bottles of wine, which they consumed at home. He found that the junior servants were far more likely to take the cash value of the drinks rather than in-kind. This led to an expanded review of servants' wages, with Hart-Synnot increasingly convinced that the wages paid to junior servants were too low to support themselves and their dependents. The wages of several junior servants were increased and Hart-Synnot proposed that the college consider a formal pension scheme for servants[300].

These new approaches were combined with traditional strategies of information-gathering. Hart-Synnot wrote to several other bursars to ask if similar practices existed and how they were managed. Several colleges reported that the practice existed, but not to an extent that caused concern.[301] Servants at Keble could exchange their drinks or 'chits' for items at the college stores, including cigarettes. At Oriel, however, P. Lyon, the treasurer replied to Hart-

[300] SJC ADMIN VIII C7, 5 March 1928.
[301] Ibid., these included Balliol, Magdalen, Pembroke, Hertford and Trinity.

Synnot that although 'very little advantage is taken of the custom', it was 'dangerous' and 'liable to abuse', and would therefore be henceforth banned.[302] The custom had been banned at Brasenose, but the bursar, H. Ware, seems to have suspected that these rules were occasionally circumvented. Ware explained that at Brasenose, no servants could order drinks to be billed to an undergraduate, and no undergraduate could order a drink for a servant, but 'the final destination of a drink received by a man for himself, is I fear, beyond our knowledge'.[303]

In a letter to Hart-Synnot, P. Roberts, the junior bursar at Worcester wrote,

> '… the custom of undergraduates telling servants to get a drink at their expense is a very old one. Although I think it would be better if it did not exist, I do not think that much harm is done. As we have stopped tips, and the rule is (with the modifications which we allow) observed, I feel that it would be unwise in our case to try to stop the practice you refer to. For if one closes every aperture, the flood is likely to sweep away the whole dam.'[304]

St. John's had recently forbidden tips as well and Hart-Synnot's analysis agreed with Roberts' assessment, and concluded that this decision was likely 'a mistake, and is probably the chief cause of the far less desirable gift in kind which has developed in the Buttery.'[305] As a result of these findings, several new rules were instituted. Servants were still allowed to purchase beer through battels at their own expense; however undergraduates were no longer permitted to buy drinks for servants. The college recognized that undergraduates should still be allowed to give servants gratuities, which 'serve as recognition that duties have been rendered pleasantly and well' and amended the college regulations to include the following:

> 'Every member of the College pays through battels each term to his Bedmaker £4.10s. This payment is intended to remunerate the Bedmaker for all his normal duties, and an Undergraduate is not under any obligation to provide

[302] Ibid., 2 March 1928.
[303] Ibid., 6 March 1928.
[304] Ibid., 2 March 1928.
[305] Ibid., 5 April 1928.

> supplementary gratuities, although it has been customary to give £1 to the Bedmaker on taking a degree.'[306]

Gratuities

The payment of gratuities to college servants was customary on many occasions: when an undergraduate matriculated, took a degree, moved in, moved out, hosted or attended a party, received a message, and for any extra services rendered. At some colleges, particularly in the early to mid-nineteenth century, gratuities comprised most of the cash income received by underservants. Archival evidence shows that servants were willing to exchange the right to receive gratuities and perquisites for equivalent increases in their cash wages throughout the period.

It was common for domestic servants to receive cash or goods at Christmas, from tradespeople as a reward for the custom of the employer, and from employers themselves.[307] Pressure mounted from all sides to abolish the practice: tradespeople found the custom burdensome, colleges believed it encouraged corruption among servants and increased the cost of goods purchased, and servants did not uniformly enjoy access to these gifts.[308] Yet, the custom stubbornly persisted. In 1840, a brief article appeared denouncing Christmas boxes as 'degrading and demoralizing' and praising the 'respectable servants of Brasenose' for abolishing the practice.[309] The praise appears to have been premature. In 1847, Brasenose again forbade Christmas boxes, which at this college appears to have been limited to the hall men. The college denied that these servants had any customary right to a Christmas gratuity,

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[306] Ibid., memorandum dated 5 March 1928, new regulation adopted 14 March 1928.
[307] The practice was both well established and widely criticized in earlier periods as well. See Bridget Hill, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1996), p.75.
[308] By some accounts, the customary gratuity from tradespeople to college servants in Oxford during this period was £1. See for example, *The Standard*, 10 January 1844.
[309] *OC* 4 January 1840.

offered compensation only to the existing hall men, and warned that any violations of these orders would result in dismissal. The hall men received £10 each annually as compensation, a considerable sum.[310] The issue was taken up again by the College Servants' Benefit Society a year later, by John Bossum, the society's treasurer and Brasenose's porter, suggesting that the college's previous efforts were not entirely successful.[311]

Although there is little archival evidence of how other colleges managed this particular custom, it was clearly a widespread practice. In 1848, it was reported in the local press that fifty college servants signed a pledge agreeing not to collect Christmas boxes. The article suggested that this would not cause servants any pecuniary loss, as tradespeople could better support servants by contributing to one of the servants' friendly societies.[312] The public notice of this information was clearly intended to embarrass colleges and servants who had not agreed to forgo these payments, and pressure them to comply. It is not clear whether the society's actions had immediate effect, however ample evidence shows the practice of gifts and payments from tradespeople to college servants, both regular and discretionary, continued well into the twentieth century. Relationships between servants and local businesses were longstanding and mutually beneficial, and rather than separating and formalizing relations between the two, the policy regarding Christmas boxes appears to have had the opposite

[310] 'Abolition of Christmas Boxes to College Servants' *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, January 20, 1849; In 1847, the hall-men at Brasenose were given £10 each to relinquish their claim to the annual Christmas box gratuities. March 11, 1847, BNC The Principal's Register 1843-1857. The senior hall man at Brasenose, William Swatten (1803-1875) left an estate valued between £1,500 and £2,000. *National Probate Calendar* 1875, p.287.
[311] John Bossum (b.1797 d.1863), his effects were valued at less than £1,000. *National Probate Calendar* 1863, p.258.
[312] *JOJ* 14 October 1848, A few months later, a list of colleges whose servants had agreed to abolish the practice was printed in the *JOJ*, and included Christ Church, Brasenose, Exeter, Balliol, Pembroke, Merton, Jesus, Oriel, Corpus and Trinity. It was observed that while servants at Queen's and Wadham did not offer the guarantee, 'a majority of servants expressed the same determination'. *JOJ* 20 January 1849.

effect – further demonstrating that the patronage of friendly societies was an acceptable, even respectable, way to bring both parties closer together.

Fees paid to servants when an undergraduate matriculated, or a member of the college was appointed to a new position, were well-established by the nineteenth century.[313] Colleges began in earnest to abolish these after the 1850s, but only the wealthier colleges could absorb the increased cost of replacing these fees with wage increases.[314] In 1867, Magdalen abolished these entrance fees, paying £30.4.0 in compensation annually as an increase in cash wages only to these servants, declaring that their successors would have no entitlement to these payments.[315]

Servant	**Name**	**Annual compensation for fees (£)**[316]
President's Butler		10.0.0
Senior Cook	Arnold	4.12.0
Senior Porter	Skinner	4.12.0
Buttery Man	Hewer	4.0.0
Second Cook	Hutchins	2.0.0
Groom	Clarke	2.0.0
Second Porter	Keen	2.0.0
Junior CR Servant	Harrison	1.0.0

By the nineteenth century, demanding payment was perceived as an affront. It violated expectations of deference and likely monetized aspects of the relationship which employers found challenging and uncomfortable. Undergraduates were often inexperienced managers of servants and felt awkward and ill-prepared to navigate the payment of cash gratuities.

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[313] These fees are similar to those traditionally collected by porters at the entrances of large country houses in the eighteenth century described in J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956), pp.170-2.

[314] It seems that opposition to servants' gratuities arrived at Oxford colleges several decades later than in the rest of England, where it was widespread in the eighteenth century. J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956),ch.6; Bridget Hill, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1996), pp.77-81; and Leonore Davidoff, and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London, 1987; repr. 2007), p.390.

[315] MC CP1/12, 1 February 1867.

[316] MC CP/2/63, 2 April 1867.

Domestic servants were expected to be motivated not only by payment, but by loyalty and fidelity. They were also expected to conform to the behavioral norms imposed by a rigid social order. These norms seriously constrained servants ability to bargain, sometimes completely eliminating their agency in a negotiation for pay. For domestic servants, wage forms like gratuities depended on both parties in the transaction following the established customs around payment and receipt and offered little or no recourse for servants when these customs were ignored. As a consequence, these wage forms became increasingly unpopular as the decades passed. Of course, it is also possible that they were always unpopular and that the open expression of servants' dissatisfaction became more acceptable as time passed. Records like committee minutes and petitions usually only show evidence of unsuccessful transactions, and it is impossible to estimate the number of successful transactions, where both parties were satisfied with work and pay, or the number of unsuccessful transactions that went unreported or undocumented, and how the relative proportions of each changed over this period.

Archival evidence shows that expectations around the emotional labour of domestic service collided with the cash nexus on several occasions in the nineteenth century. In 1888, Charles Dodgson clarified the nature of a complaint he had made against the college messenger, whom he had accused of asking his nephew, Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, an undergraduate at Christ Church, for a gratuity:

> 'Dear Sampson,
> Here are the facts of the case I named to you – of messengers asking for gratuities.
> My nephew had <u>not</u> paid, at the time, for taking his things to his rooms when he arrived.
> Consequently, 1/-, I presume, might be fairly expected. No "book" was shown to him. He gave 2/6, because he knew that another freshman had done so - He does not state (as I thought he had) that the messenger suggested the amount.
> The Messenger does not seem to have named the carrying of the luggage or anything else, as a ground for remuneration – but merely to have said he had come for "something for the Messengers"
> Yrs ever C.L.D.[317]

This letter illustrates the complexity of the customs around the payment and receipt of gratuities. Dodgson initially believed that the college messenger had asked for a specific payment for specific services rendered. His letter also indicates that he originally believed this request came after his nephew had given the messenger a gratuity of some sort, implying that the messenger found the initial offer inadequate and asked for more. In Dodgson's opinion, it was acceptable for the messenger to make the vague request of 'something for the messengers' but not to have attempted to bargain or to ask for a specific payment tied to a service. At Christ Church, servants were prohibited from asking for any gratuity in the 1880s, with one exception:

> 'Scouts, Waiters, Messengers, and all College Servants are paid by the Steward and have no right to ask for any gratuity from Undergraduates.
>
> The House however recognizes a terminal payment from each Undergraduate of £1 to the Scout and of 10s. to the Boy. These payments are not to be made unless the Undergraduate is satisfied with the attention he receives.
>
> When an Undergraduate employs a College Messenger to carry luggage to or from his rooms, such messenger is entitled to a small remuneration.'[318]

[317] CCA S.xxxi.a.2 Letter from C. Dodgson to Rev. E.F. Sampson, underlining in the original. This letter was previously unknown and does not appear in existing catalogues of Dodgson's correspondence.
[318] From the 'blue book' issued to undergraduates, which is likely the book Dodgson refers to in his letter. CCA 'Regulations &c. Christ Church, Oxford November 1881.', p.22.

Dodgson knew that his complaint, if left uncorrected, could result in the messenger's termination; after making further enquiries, he was keen to clarify the facts of the case. The subjective nature of the phrase 'small remuneration' invites negotiation; yet negotiation was explicitly prohibited. Servants were expected to understand the subtle distinctions between the behavior Dodgson complained of in his original complaint and the behavior described in his correction, and predict how these interpretations might vary by individual. Messengers who did not receive payment could not expect the college to intervene on their behalf. In 1896, a messenger complained to the steward when a guest failed to pay the appropriate gratuities for carrying luggage. After discussing the matter, the dean and censors concluded 'we can't interfere in the matter of the messenger's complaint respecting tips for their trouble in respect of strangers' luggage'.[319]

If messengers were reported to the steward for requesting a specific payment, the punishment was a swift summons to the dean's rooms for a reprimand. These are described variously as 'serious' and 'severe', although there are no accounts from the servants' perspective. In 1900, Frank Woodford, a scout at Christ Church, was sent 'to be reprimanded by the Dean for asking a stranger on whom he had to attend in college as E.D.H. Currie's guest for money … he was seriously warned'.[320] Although regulations stipulate that a servant's employment could be terminated as punishment for any explicit requests for payment, there is no evidence to suggest that any servants were fired. As in Woodford's case, the college recognized that the servant could not refuse to work if they were not assured payment.

[319] CCA S.xxxiii.a.1 22 June 1896.
[320] Ibid., 22 February 1900. Woodford, who appears to have begun his employment in the college as a personal servant to one of the censors in 1889, had been before the committee twice before in his career. He was reproved in 1895 for an 'indiscretion' where he spoke of some items left by an undergraduate as his perquisites, although he was not accused of taking anything, and again in 1897 for failing to report damage to the walls in his staircase 'by cream & sauce thrown about', CCA S.xxxv.a.3.

However, there is not enough evidence to consider whether the college adjusted messengers' wages to compensate them for the risk of nonpayment, and there is no suggestion in the minutes of these meetings that the college believed this risk should be shared.

These policies varied significantly by college, by period and by individuals. Occasionally if a college believed a member had neglected to pay a gratuity where one was due, they would order payment. In July 1892, servants' committee minutes at Magdalen note that 'The Committee was of opinion that W. Fisher should be asked to pay something towards the payment of the extra Bedmaker's service which his state of health rendered necessary on No:4 staircase in the New Buildings'.[321]

Both college servants and their employers expected that over time reciprocity was motivated at least in part by genuine regard for one another, rather than merely transactional. Traditionally, domestic servants participated in funeral processions when a member of the college died. In 1854, an account of the funeral of the late president of Magdalen, Martin Routh, listed the members of his procession, noting that college servants carried the coffin, following the university undertakers and preceding the pallbearers.[322] This expression of filial duty, the loyal servants' final, performative fulfillment of responsibilities towards their master's body, was apparently not always motivated by genuine feeling towards the deceased. In 1892, following another funeral at Magdalen, this time for a young demy, Eustace Bebb, J. Clapton, the undergardener was reported to the servants' committee for 'having solicited gratuities for himself and possibly other servants for acting as bearers'.[323] Minutes of the committee suggest not only affront at Clapton's inappropriate grasping, but offence at the idea

[321] MC CP/9/24/i, 18 July 1892.
[322] *JOJ* 30 December 1854.
[323] A demyship is similar to a scholarship.

that a servant would be either compelled to participate in a funeral or expect compensation for doing so. The committee resolved to inform servants that in the future, bearing at funerals for members of the college was not obligatory and 'the College does not recognize any claim upon them to so do or any title on their parts to receive payment'.[324] Clapton was reprimanded and warned that 'his next grave offence would be punished by his dismissal from the College service'.[325]

Termly Gratuities

Scouts' termly gratuities were a vestigial relic of earlier wage forms and methods of pay. By the nineteenth century, most senior scouts were directly employed and paid a cash wage by the college, compared to earlier contracts negotiated individually between the resident and servant. However the termly gratuity paid by members of the college to servants remained an important part of scouts' cash remuneration. The rights to these payments were contested throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[326]

An informal survey of domestic bursars from 1885 conducted by Dr. Daniel Harper, principal of Jesus, shows a variety of payment methods. Some colleges paid an annual salary and allowed servants to collect termly cash gratuities, other colleges paid no salary but collected the gratuities from members of the college through battels and passed it onto servants. At Merton, the college paid scouts a salary of £35 annually and the termly gratuity from members was £1.10.0. Merton paid nothing to their assistants, who worked only for

[324] MC CP/9/24/i, 5 November 1892; Clapton was reported to the committee by Rev. L. Bebb, the deceased's brother, to whom Clapton made this request. In the same meeting Clapton was also reprimanded for fraudulently soliciting contributions for a glass eye. E.W. Bebb's death was particularly tragic. 'An Undergraduate Cut to Pieces on The Great Western Railway' *JOJ* 22 October 1892.
[325] Ibid., 24 November 1892.
[326] See Appendix, image 13.

gratuities and £2.10 termly if they waited at hall dinners.[327] Corpus paid scouts from £29 to £56 annually, and authorized a termly gratuity of £1.10.0. Similar arrangements existed at Brasenose and Hertford, where scouts received £40 annually, £1.10.0 termly in tips. At Brasenose 'all the bedmakers have some assistance either from their wives or boy employed by them. The College does not pay anything to such assistants.'[328] Lincoln paid scouts a college salary calculated at £5.5.0 per room, and authorized a termly gratuity of £1 to the scout and £0.5.0 to the assistant, who received no other remuneration from the college.[329] Oriel employed men as scouts and women as assistants, the annual salary for men was £64 and £12 for women, with the termly gratuity apportioned as in other colleges, £1 to the scout and £0.10.0 to assistants.[330]

Some colleges had arrangements closer to the older system of traditional payments made by individual members of the college. At Wadham, scouts received £1 per room quarterly from the college and £1 termly from each occupant.[331] Closest to the traditional method of pay, Worcester had a system where the college itself paid no annual salary; scouts received £5 per annum, charged to each member of the college through battels. The college also authorized a termly gratuity of £1 paid to the scout. Similarly at St. John's, servants were paid per room by the members of the college, but payments were made through battels. Undergraduates were charged £1.10, fellows £3.[332]

By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, regulations forbidding servants to ask for any gratuity began to include language that challenged servants' rights to these payments. Most of

[327] JC SV Correspondence 1880-90, letter from T. Bowman to D. Harper 5 March 1885.
[328] Ibid., letter from C.B. Hebeden to D. Harper 19 March 1885.
[329] Ibid., unsigned and undated notes.
[330] Ibid., undated letter from A. Butler to D. Harper.
[331] Ibid., letter from G. Thurley to D. Harper 6 March 1885.
[332] Ibid., letter from J. Bellamy to D. Harper 6 March 1885.

these statements and regulations included some language reassuring members of the college that servants received ample wages and had no need of supplementary payments. The customary termly gratuity remained £1.10.0 throughout the nineteenth century, and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that at some colleges it was the same through the interwar period. Colleges threatened servants with instant dismissal for any infraction; while there is no evidence that any servant was fired for asking for a gratuity, many were disciplined. As criticism continued and interest in reforms increased, both internally and externally, colleges deliberately and conscientiously sought to project an image of themselves as efficient and disciplined managers.

Rights to these gratuities were insecure and servants had few options when the termly gratuity was unpaid, beyond complaining to the bursar. Sometimes the labour contract was specifically negotiated to include not just the right to receive the gratuity, but the right to collect this remuneration. In 1896, Oriel appointed two new bedmakers, James Wilkins and Arthur Coleman, at a salary of £56 annually and 'the right of charging the occupants of rooms a fee of £1 a term'. Two women were similarly appointed as assistants to bedmakers at £12 annually and the right to a fee of 10/- per term from each resident.[333]

Some servants spelled out their expectations when a new undergraduate moved onto their staircase. Paul Vowles, who matriculated at Corpus in 1938 recalled, 'Soon after my arrival in Corpus a friendly man with a ruddy face appeared to explain the domestic arrangements, providing the answer to the unasked, embarrassing question in his peroration — "and you

[333] OC GOV/4/A4 Minutes of the Governing Body, Michaelmas 1896.

pays me ten bob". This was my first meeting with John Plowman, who was to be my scout when I joined the College, and a good friend as well.'[334]

From the servants' perspective, the optimal arrangement was one where the entitlement was explicitly recognized, the college collected the gratuities through battels and added these monies to servants' regular wages. This was the case at Balliol in 1895.[335] In the late nineteenth century, scouts at Jesus petitioned the college to collect the termly gratuities through battels.

> 'To the Principal & Fellows of Jesus College
>
> Gentlemen the undersigned learn that the impression existing generally among the undergraduates of the college is that our wages of one pound per term instead of being a part payment of our wages is nothing less [sic] than a voluntary tip owing to the above existing impression, many of the undergraduates go down at the end of terms without paying us our wages which we find to be a serious inconvenience, these circumstances being a fact, Gentlemen, we do humbly & earnestly ask you Gentlemen, to give us your kind and favorable consideration as to some arrangement being made that our wages wholly be paid through the bursar of the College.
> We beg to remain
> Gentlemen
> Your most humble & obedient
> Servants
> William Slay
> Frederick W. Jenkins
> Alfred Cripps
> George Paske[336]

Here, servants offer the expected performance of deference, astutely pitching their request for the explicit recognition of their right to this remuneration by rationalizing methods of

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[334] Brian Harrison, *Corpuscles: a history of Corpus Christi College, Oxford in the twentieth century, written by its members* (Oxford, 1994), p.133.
[335] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Book II, January 1895.
[336] JC SV Correspondence 1880-90, undated. This petition could have prompted Dr. Harper's 1885 survey. In 1885, the college also abolished servants' rights to the remains of hall dinners and prohibited all servants from having any business interests, other than a keeping a lodging house, without the permission of the college. It does not appear that the policy on the payment of gratuities changed as a result of this petition.

payment collection. Their message is clear: the right to the gratuity is a 'fact' and the college, having given undergraduates the impression that it is optional, ought to rectify the matter.

3.2. Methods of Pay

Over the nineteenth century, colleges experimented with a variety of wage forms and methods of pay. Discretionary payments, whether cash or in-kind, were common throughout the period. As accounting practices were standardized, colleges became increasingly interested in matching internal expenses with internal income, and in some cases, monitoring profitability. Rather than traditional paternalistic payments based on entirely subjective criteria, colleges began to offer servants contracts tied to quantitative measures of performance and efficiency.

Bonuses were discretionary cash payments made by the institution to servants. These were used to reward extra work and good behavior. In April 1892, Poutsford the college gardener at Balliol, was given £2 'having saved the college a considerable sum by discovering a store of gravel in the garden'.[337] Bonuses were also used explicitly as part of a retention strategy. In 1897, George Bower the coal and ashes porter at Keble, received a one-off bonus of £2.10.0 to mark fifteen years of employment with the college.[338] At Balliol in the late nineteenth century, regular retention bonuses were paid at the start of the new academic year. These would have been a welcome addition to servants' pay after the lean summer months. Servants received £4 'compensation money' after completing one year of service, £6 after the second, £8 after the third and for every year afterwards.[339] In 1946, Oriel instituted a policy of paying year-round

[337] BC:English Register of College Minutes, 23 April 1892.
[338] KC/GOV 1/C1 19 October 1897.
[339] BC:Junior Bursar's Memoranda Book II, notes suggest these were paid from at least 1895 to 1904.

bonuses based on seniority, 2/6- weekly to servants after they completed ten years of service and 5/- weekly after completing twenty years of service.[340]

Christ Church regularly paid discretionary termly bonuses to most employees, with the notable exception of scouts. In the mid-to late 1880s, these appear to have been determined at the discretion of the steward, dean and censors, but by 1897, they were explicitly tied to departmental profitability. Notes from the steward on bonuses to be paid at Christmas 1889 show payments to the servants who worked in the kitchen, from the most senior servants, £10.10.0 to the manciple and the head cook, £5.5.0 to Farnell who assisted the manciple. Each of the subordinate cooks received £1.10.0, the kitchen porters and scullery men received correspondingly lesser amounts from 15/- to 5/-.[341]

These bonuses appear to have been calculated by dividing up a sum, which was presumably determined by the college authorities, allocating payments to servants based on seniority and rank in the hierarchy. By 1897, the steward appeared to have to calculated the profitability of each of the three departments, the buttery, the kitchen and the establishment, to determine the amount available to be paid in bonuses. Individual bonuses were still determined by seniority and rank in the hierarchy. Profitability varied from year to year, as did the bonuses, and accordingly in some years no bonuses were paid.[342] In 1901, the steward, R. Baynes, noted that no general bonuses could be paid because college revenues and department profitability were both down. Baynes still recognized the importance of these payments as a management tool and he gave each head of department £10 to be paid 'in consideration of special work or trouble'.[343]

[340] OC:TF2/B1/2 11 October 1946.
[341] CCA:S.xxxv.c.3&4.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.

Paying a servant wholly or in part based on the revenue associated with their position was a common arrangement throughout the period. This type of remuneration enabled a position or even a department to be self-supporting, or at least minimized the cost to the college. In 1898, a new servant was engaged to supply tea to the baths, reading room and the lodge at St. Mary's Hall and was paid an annual salary of £60 along with 25% of the profits realized.[344]

As part of these arrangements, occasionally the college guaranteed a minimum salary. In 1864, University agreed to pay the messenger 'all that his office produces, but if this is less than an average of 15/- per week for the whole year, the college to make up the difference'. At the same meeting, the college reviewed and increased the rates that the messenger could charge for items delivered, 1d. for an area approximately .8 of a mile from the college, and 3d. for further away, with 'an extra charge for large parcels'. [345] In all cases, these employment contracts were designed in part to address a number of problems inherent in the employment contract. These policies were created to motivate employees, particularly those who were difficult to supervise because of the nature of their work. Varying methods of pay could encourage workers to expend more effort and to work conscientiously. All of these initiatives were intended to provide efficient service to members of colleges. In the early twentieth century, the messengers' contracts at Balliol illustrate these principles in practice. In 1899,

> 'The new telephone messenger was told that he wd have £25 in vacations (£1 a week) + ¾ of the book for the terms'. This contract provided a fixed rate of pay for the weeks when few members were resident, but the college still wanted to ensure service for those few residing over the vacations. The variable rate of pay was specified as ½ d. for each of the following tasks: putting one bicycle into the stable; delivering a phone message, either to or from a room to the telephone; delivering a note to or from a room; and 1d. for delivering a parcel. This included all parcels arriving by train, all tradesmen's parcels and 'in fact,

[344] OC:GOV4/A4 Minutes of the Governing Body, 17 June 1898. St. Mary's Hall was attached to Oriel.
[345] UC:GB4/A1/2, 4 May 1864. The messenger was to keep an account of all items, the charges were billed in battels, he was to make deliveries from 10:00-21:00 and from 14:00 on Sundays.

> anything not being luggage or heavy cases'. Beyond a specified geographical boundary, rates doubled for each service. [346]

The bursar explained the messenger's remuneration in a memorandum:

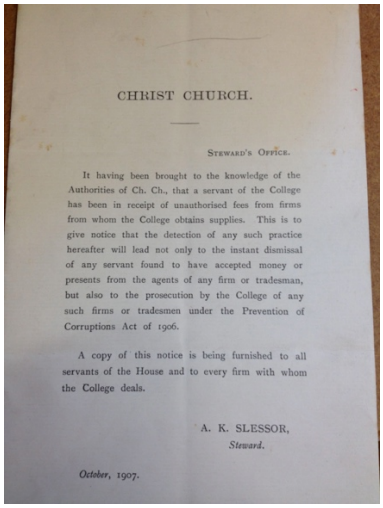
> 'It was said that he was paid in this manner partly by results in order to encourage him to be active & attentive & careful in keeping his book. From the point of view of the College this is also important as the putting away of bicycles is wearisome work and likely to be neglected if not done as piecework. Also the College reimburses itself to the extent of the sum by which the ¼ of the telephone messenger's book exceeds £4.10.0. As to the cost of the telephone messenger to the College, this is £25. This last named excess, which shld be not less than £5.10.0. Thus the telephone messenger shld not cost the College more than £19.10.0 per annum.'[347]

An analysis of the messengers' receipts from 1899 to the first quarter of 1904 showed considerable variation. The terms' revenues ranged from £7.8.10-£18.8.2; annual revenues ranged from £29.4.5 to £49.15.1. The college used 75% of this to pay the messenger and 25% to pay his substitute, another servant who worked two hours daily. From 1899 to 1904, three men held the post, J. Bateman, T.H. Reynolds and G. Strange. The bursar attributed the variation in the revenues of the post exclusively to the servants' individual efforts, noting that the lowest annual revenues were 'artificially low on acct of Reynolds' incompetence'.[348] Although personnel economics predicts that these contracts are efficient for employers and employees, the explanatory power of these theories are limited in a paternalistic employment relationship where employees are guaranteed a 'job for life' after completing a probationary period.

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[346] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Book 2, Easter 1904.
[347] Ibid.
[348] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Book 2. Lazear argues that output gains from these contractual arrangements can be broken down into two relatively equal components: the gain from increased productivity that results from 'incentive effects', and the improved quality of workers that are employed under these arrangements. This is in part because this form of remuneration allows the employer to identify more productive workers, but Lazear also proposes that more efficient workers are attracted to these types of pay arrangements. E. Lazear, 'Performance, Pay and Productivity' *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 90, No.5 (Dec., 2000), pp.1346-7.

Some practices associated with commissions or percentages, although they had likely existed for centuries, increasingly became viewed as a pernicious source of income. Servants commonly received payments from tradespeople, a percentage of the cost of goods purchased on behalf of the college and a percentage of the cost of goods purchased by members of the college. Mr. Pike a tailor sued Mr. Warwick, a college servant to recover a debt of £6.2.0. Warwick's defense was that the goods were not his, but purchased on behalf of an undergraduate who was away from Oxford, but would pay the debt on his return. Case heard in Oxford County Court, before J.B. Parry, Esq. who observed that Warwick's charges to the undergraduate G.R. Melly exceeded the bill produced by Pike. Warwick explained, 'Your Honor knows, it is customary for college servants to receive a bonus on articles purchased; it is always done.'[349]



CHRIST CHURCH.

STEWARD'S OFFICE.

It having been brought to the knowledge of the Authorities of Ch. Ch., that a servant of the College has been in receipt of unauthorised fees from firms from whom the College obtains supplies. This is to give notice that the detection of any such practice hereafter will lead not only to the instant dismissal of any servant found to have accepted money or presents from the agents of any firm or tradesman, but also to the prosecution by the College of any such firms or tradesmen under the Prevention of Corruptions Act of 1906.

A copy of this notice is being furnished to all servants of the House and to every firm with whom the College deals.

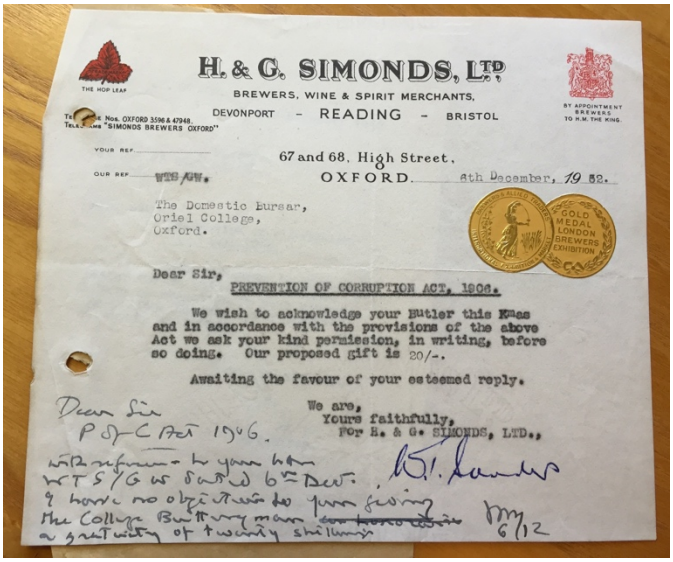
A. K. SLESSOR,
Steward.

October, 1907.

Figure 12 1907 Notice to college servants re: Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 (CCA S.xxxiii.a.2)

[349] *JOJ* 26 February 1870, the ruling was in Pike's favor.

Cooks and manciples were among the most notorious recipients of these payments. In 1893, Horace Davis, a fishmonger, appeared in court on his petition of bankruptcy. He claimed that his failure was in part due to the exorbitant fees that all traders were expected to pay college servants. Davis estimated that he had paid approximately 50/- weekly in these fees throughout the year. He also believed that the fees effectively meant that he was selling fish to colleges at less than he had paid for it, in an effort to gain their business.[350] These fees became illegal after the passage of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1906.[351] If tradespeople wanted to offer a member of college staff a gratuity, they were required to ask permission from the college as shown in the photograph below.



H. & G. SIMONDS, LTD.

BREWERS, WINE & SPIRIT MERCHANTS.

DEVONPORT - READING - BRISTOL

67 and 68, High Street,
OXFORD. 6th December, 19 32.

The Domestic Bursar,
Oriel College,
Oxford.

Dear Sir,

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION ACT, 1906.

We wish to acknowledge your Butler this Xmas and in accordance with the provisions of the above Act we ask your kind permission, in writing, before so doing. Our proposed gift is 20/-.

Awaiting the favour of your esteemed reply.

We are,
Yours faithfully,
For H. & G. SIMONDS, LTD.,

Dear Sir
P.C. Act 1906.
With reference to your letter
WTS/GW dated 6th Dec.
I have no objection to your giving
the College Butler my name
a gratuity of twenty shillings

Figure 13 Prevention of Corruption Act, 1932 request for permission to offer the butler a gratuity (OC TF 2 B1/2)

[350] 'Tips to College Cooks' *OT 7* October 1893.
[351] See Appendix, images 10-11.

Laundresses

Laundry work provides one of the most interesting opportunities for examining changing attitudes around work and wage bargaining, and illustrates how colleges experimented with wage forms and methods of pay to solve problems inherent in the employment contract. Necessarily, laundry work was difficult to supervise and it was prohibitively time consuming to monitor the quality of laundresses' work. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, all colleges hired laundresses who ran home-based businesses.[352] The precise arrangements varied, however, unlike in industrial workplaces, wage formation and methods of pay were not significantly influenced by transformations in the work itself, which remained relatively unchanged over this period.[353]

At the start of the nineteenth century, two basic contractual arrangements existed: colleges hired laundresses to do washing for members of the college and for the institution, and members of colleges hired laundresses to do their individual washing. By this time, traditional fixed annual stipends, as set forth in college statutes, had been replaced by other methods of pay. The most common was a fixed termly fee for washing and mending, paid individually by each member of the college. These were supplemented by extra charges negotiated separately between the laundress and her customer. Laundresses usually collected payment directly from members of colleges.[354] Institutional laundry, the napkins and cloths from the dining hall and chapel linen, was contracted separately at piece-rates.[355] Laundresses were typically

[352] There are indications that some laundry may have been done in colleges, but this comprised a small fraction of the quantity of laundry work contracted.
[353] On the role of technology in laundry work during this period, see Patricia Malcolmson, *English Laundresses : A Social History, 1850-1930* (Urbana, 1986). It is possible during this period that changing fashions or the price of clothing affected the work as well, but these sources do not offer much insight into these changes.
[354] Records from the Chancellor's Court show that these contractual arrangements were common for centuries.
[355] K. Crossley, 'Laundresses and Lodging House Keepers: Family Labour Networks and Female Labour Force Participation', unpublished conference paper, presented April 2018. Members of colleges traditionally supplied their own napkins, which they took with them to meals. Napkins supplied by the college in hall appear to have

responsible for paying all of the costs associated with their work, including: hiring additional labour; purchasing any supplies or equipment required; the cost of the work space required for washing and drying; and the transportation of laundry to and from the college.

College laundresses usually commanded a premium for their labour, in sharp contrast to traditional depictions of laundry work as menial and insecure. By the mid-nineteenth century, laundresses could still negotiate arrangements directly with members of colleges. Some laundresses also collected payment themselves, but most laundresses submitted bills to the college for both institutional and individuals' laundry. The bursar added these to the battels and paid laundresses monthly or termly. This provided security and removed the administrative and financial burden of debt collection, which was not inconsiderable. It also meant that the college exercised oversight in the amounts charged and the total remuneration of each laundress, sums which were not insignificant. In 1869, Oriel employed four laundresses whose annual cash remuneration totaled £374; these women received from £74-£111 individually. The college paid an additional £22 for high table laundry, presumably there was also some charge for chapel linen, but this was not recorded in the summary accounts. In this example, payments to these four laundresses represented approximately 20% of the total wage bill.

As part of the nineteenth century effort to economize, colleges again adjusted policies on flat termly fees for laundry services, nearly all were now paid through battels, presumably rescinding the ability of laundresses to negotiate supplementary charges. In 1864, University billed each resident £1.15.0 or £5.5.0 annually for their laundry. A new resolution abolished

been gradually introduced over the period. For example, napkins were first supplied to undergraduates at Exeter in 1892. The college paid £36.17.6 for the napkins and then paid a laundress £57.7.9 for washing napkins from Lady Day 1892 to Lady Day 1894, EC H.II.3.

the traditional, additional termly charge of 5/- for mending, under the assumption that the termly laundry fee was sufficient. It does not appear that any of the college laundresses were consulted in the restructuring of their remuneration. Although, at University, laundresses could still exercise some control over their rates of pay: the governing body allowed laundresses to continue under a previous arrangement whereby 'they charged each person for whom they wash according to the articles washed and mended and settle privately with him.[356]

These contracts did not provide much flexibility. Members of colleges had varying quantities of items to be washed, and these required varying quantities of effort to clean. In 1889, Harry Frost, a scout at Christ Church, was reported to the steward by an undergraduate, George Conford, for 'insolence', having suggested to Mr. Conford that in Frost's experience, gentlemen had their sheets washed rather more frequently than Conford seemed to prefer.[357] The need for more flexibility than was permitted under the system of flat rates led to experimentation with tariffs. Tariffs allowed colleges to control the prices charged for individual items, but still rewarded individual productivity and ensured that men who required more laundry services, paid correspondingly higher sums for washing.

From the foundations of the colleges, the character of laundresses was an important consideration. It is likely that colleges paid a premium to secure the services of more reputable laundresses and also likely that until the nineteenth century, many laundresses were able to maintain at least some part of this premium on their labour. Over the nineteenth century, this was eroded by two factors: the growing influence of the Charity Organization Society and the adoption of tariffs for laundry work. The COS frequently made any assistance to women,

[356] UC:GB4/A1/1-4, 19 March 1864.
[357] Frost was 'severely reprimanded' and 'told that the matter was very serious' on 11 November 1889. CCA S.xxxv.a.3.

particularly widows or single mothers, contingent on their taking employment, usually whatever was offered by the society. The organization's extensive network of university and college contacts meant that these women were frequently given washing for colleges, regardless of their experience or suitability for the work. Washing could be done at home, which was more convenient for women with small children.[358] This casualization of work that had been previously viewed as skilled likely devalued the labour of college laundresses over the late-nineteenth century, although the nature of record keeping puts a systematic quantitative analysis outside the scope of this thesis.

The introduction of laundry tariffs coincided with the widespread adoption of kitchen tariffs, an institution designed to reduce excessive profit-making by college kitchens and butteries. Not surprisingly, soon after the introduction of laundry tariffs, undergraduates complained that the cost of college laundry exceeded prices charged for laundry outside colleges. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a comparison of these prices usually implied the comparison of small, home-based laundry work with that of larger commercial laundries.[359] Some members of colleges found these comparisons and the resulting demand for reductions in tariffs to be unfair. A petition submitted to the steward at Christ Church addressed rumors that in response to undergraduate complaints, the college proposed a reduction in the laundry tariff.

> 'We the undersigned on nos. 6,7,8 Peck having learnt that you purpose [sic] reducing the scale of charges for washing generally at the House, desire to inform you that for our own part we wish to pay what we have hitherto done; for taking into consideration the invariable excellence of Mrs. Ockenden's

[358] On the unpleasant realities of domestic life co-resident with a laundry business, see Malcolmson, p.22-3.
[359] Although commercial laundries solicited the business of colleges during this period, all colleges preferred to maintain the traditional employment of laundresses.

> washing we think that any reduction in charges is both uncalled for and rather unfair.'[360]

Unlike methods of pay, the organization of labour does not show significant variation, although the sources offer limited insight. Throughout the period, colleges typically were satisfied with an arrangement where they hired a few laundresses, usually one to three, and these women hired additional labour, including family members, and distributed and supervised the work themselves. One of these laundresses, Maria Wakelin, wrote a character reference for one of her employees, Mary Manger, who was applying for a position as a laundress at University. Mrs. Wakelin wrote, 'I have much pleasure in recommending Mrs. Manger as a Laundress. I am a College Laundress myself, and Mrs. Manger was in my employ and trained under me for a period of three years and fully understands the routine of a [sic] College Laundry work. I have always found her honest and trustworthy and one who took an interest in her work.'[361] In one unusual arrangement, at Balliol, the college exercised close supervision over the division of labour. The college variously employed approximately five or six laundresses to wash residents' laundry. Charges were made according to a tariff and billed to members in battels. The college appointed a superintendent of the laundresses, which included keeping the accounts of laundresses and adding the charges to residents' battels. The superintendent was paid for this work by a deduction of one shilling per pound made against each laundress's earnings.[362]

'What are college servants' perquisites?': The line between perquisites and theft[363]

[360] CCA S.xxxii.c.1&2, 8 February 1888. Insufficient evidence survives with which to consider the intriguing possibility that rumors of the reduction in the laundry tariff came from Mrs. Ockenden herself.
[361] UC:ACC 1171, 28 June 1909.
[362] BC I.V Bursar's Laundry and Sundry Accounts 1873-1878
[363] 'What are college servants' perquisites?' *OT* 10 December 1870.

Cash and valuable personal effects were always assumed to be the property of the resident unless these items were explicitly given to servants. Other categories of items were treated differently, and the customary rules around these were constantly negotiated and renegotiated. E.L. Woodward recalled,

> '"I mean, there was a perpetual kind of mild dishonesty, you know. They wouldn't steal money, at all. But they'd steal cigarettes and help themselves to drinks… it was a thing you always expected them to do…. A perpetual, very mild, pinching." They would never take clothes and they were not dishonest, "they simply regarded certain things as perquisites."'[364]

Servants often had longer attachments to a college than fellows, and as a consequence, had considerable, but not final, authority regarding the legitimacy of these entitlements. During the Bread and Butter Row, much of the frustration concerned the apparently permanent nature of servants' employment and the entitlements that accrued as a result, not only to receive perquisites, but to determine the nature of these entitlements. One writer observed, 'There are few offices in England which are held by a more secure tenure than those of College servants. … Dons may come and Dons may go, but Cooks last forever. … The College servant becomes the depository, if not the inventor of certain traditions which form naturally around him as a nucleus.'[365] Newby et al described this phenomenon: '…it [paternalism] grants to subordinate individuals certain prerogatives which, while supposedly the gift of those in power, tend over time to be appropriated as "rights"'.[366]

Although the precise rules around perquisites were open to interpretation, colleges enforced regulations concerning behavior that fell outside these parameters. When servants

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[364] Interview with E.L. Woodward 6 March 1969 A.J. Purkis and Harrison, p.6336. Woodward matriculated at CCC in 1908 and was later elected to fellowships at All Souls and New College.
[365] 'University Economy' *Saturday Review* 18 November 1865 in BL:G.A. Oxon 8Â °92.
[366] Howard Newby, et al., *Property, Paternalism and Power: Class and Control in Rural England* (Wisconsin, 1978), p.29.

had clearly taken food to which they were not entitled, the consequences could be severe. Christ Church was a large college and employed a large waitstaff, in part because of the distance from the kitchen to the hall. This created opportunities for theft and several were reported. In 1889, after everyone, except four waiters, had left for the evening, the manciple, Mr. Salter found a 'soup plate full of the prime part of a leg of mutton cut right out'.[367] No one confessed and the manciple reported the incident to the steward, who gave all four a warning. In March 1889, Best, a scout's boy at Christ Church, was fired for taking food from the pastry larder 'without authority'.[368] A month earlier, Edward Grant 'made a raid on a chicken' on the way from the kitchen to the hall for dinner. The steward noted that Grant was 'insolent' when confronted about the chicken, and was consequently suspended from waiting in the hall for the rest of the term.[369] Although few details are recorded, the steward's humorous description suggests that he may have been more sympathetic to a man carrying a hot, roasted chicken at the end of a long working day than to a boy sneaking into the larder.

Schwarz observed, 'Particular conditions of work permitted particular kinds of appropriation, while the same conditions set the limits to such appropriation.' Arguably the most important characteristic to the college employer was a servant's trustworthiness. That employers could clearly observe the persistence of well-established customs regarding perquisites, that servants understood and abided by these rules, was foundational to the success of this employment relationship. Like Woodward, members of a college might have found some of these practices unpalatable, but it was critical in this employment relationship that employers could still have confidence that servants were honest.

[367] CCA S.xxxv.a.4, 20 February 1889.
[368] CCA S.xxxv.a.2.
[369] Ibid.

In 1870, William Allnutt, a servant at Exeter was charged with the theft of possessions belonging to an undergraduate, Francis Ady. Ady left Oxford at the end of the summer term in 1870 and left some of his personal effects, including crockery, thirty pieces of plate, bronze candlesticks, a teapot and some linen, in Allnutt's care, a common arrangement during the vacations.

Sometime in the summer, Ady asked Allnutt to have his things, except the crockery which he gifted to Allnutt, sent to his lodgings for the start of the next academic year. Allnutt agreed, but only sent a few items of linen, not the more valuable plate. Ady made enquiries about his belongings in college and heard that Allnutt had left Oxford. He reported the missing items to the bursar and information was then given to the police.

Accounts of the testimony given in court show that Allnutt disposed of the items by various methods and had carefully cultivated a network of buyers. He pawned some of the plate with a pawn broker and some informally, with a licensed victualler, Sarah Godfrey. Mrs. Godfrey gave Allnutt £1 for the plate and he promised to repay her the same, plus a half-crown for the loan. Allnutt sold the electro-plated teapot to another publican, Richard Humphreys, who said that he had known Allnutt for years; Humphreys also bought a tea tray, a coal box, two broken chairs and an old wine box from Allnutt at the same time; for all of these, he paid 12/6. Other items, including the candlesticks, some broken glass, old boots and shoes were sold to Joseph Parker, described as a broker who bought rubbish, 'what no-one else would have bought'.

These witnesses provided similar accounts, that they had previously purchased items from Allnutt, and there was nothing unusual about the transactions. College servants often had such things to sell, and all parties described these items as perquisites. Charles Hammond, the bursar at Exeter, testified that the college instituted a policy in 1868 that 'the servants should

demand no perquisites or payment from any of the men as a matter of right'. When questioned further, though, the bursar 'could not say what the custom of the college was with reference to giving articles away'.[370]

It is clear from this account that the court did not consider any of the brokers complicit for receiving stolen goods. Any of these items, from worn-out shoes to monogrammed plate could have legitimately been received and sold by Allnutt as his perquisite. This was precisely Allnutt's defense, 'what he had done was not with any intention of stealing the articles, as it was customary for gentlemen to leave such things to their servants. The way in which he had disposed of the property did not look as if what he was doing was with felonious intention.' Allnutt was convicted and sentenced, he served seventeen months in prison. Allnutt appears to have used the plate, and a clock belonging to another undergraduate, also mentioned in the testimony, as collateral, to borrow cash. Both undergraduates testified that they had given him cast-offs, but not the more valuable items. Allnutt saved documentation associated with the items and kept them in his lodgings, he maintained that he intended to redeem the tickets and retrieve the items when the term resumed. He testified that he had seen the rector at the end of the summer and asked for a loan, 'If the Bursar had granted him the money for which he applied after seeing the rector on Monday, he should have got all the things back before now, but as he had not got the money, he could not do so.'[371]

Allnutt's account seems credible, he must have known that his lodgings would be searched when he was charged, as indeed they were. All the receipts were recovered by police and used as evidence against him. Allnutt's wife Belinda died three years earlier in 1867, leaving him to

[370] 'What are college servants' perquisites?' *OT* 10 December 1870. Allnutt rowed in the servants' eight that won the inaugural Oxford Cambridge servants' boat race in 1850, BL:38442 d.27.

[371] Ibid.

care for their four children, who were aged approximately seven to sixteen when Allnutt was imprisoned. He pawned these items in the summer, when most servants found themselves short of both work and cash. Allnutt was likely not in a position to take employment away from the city during the long vacation, having both the difficulty of finding someone to look after his children and paying for their support, as three of them were too young to work. Allnutt's eldest son was employed as a college messenger, and any contribution he could have made to the household would have been significantly reduced in the long vacations.

Allnutt's story shows that college servants developed effective strategies for monetizing perquisites. He allocated items among brokers who specialized in purchasing and reselling different types of goods, as well as formal and less formal pawn brokers, in an effort to maximize the value of these goods and manage periods with little or no cash income from work. These networks could also be used, as Allnutt did, as an informal and risky way to borrow cash. His case also demonstrates the time and effort required to convert perquisites to cash, and supports evidence that suggests servants were prepared to give up perquisites in favor of the cash equivalent.

3.3. Seasonal Unemployment and Underemployment

Servants' income depended not only on the forms of the wage and methods of pay provided in their labour contract, it also varied considerably according to the quantity of work available. This was particularly true for servants who depended on perquisites and gratuities, income that was only available when members of the college were resident. Even when these servants were paid a cash wage by the college year round, their income fell in the vacations. Unemployment and underemployment outside of the academic terms, particularly in the long

vacation, which stretched from July to early October, was widely acknowledged to be 'the curse of the place'.[372] That some servants found work at hotels and resorts outside Oxford from the mid-nineteenth century has been briefly mentioned in histories of the city, colleges and of the university.[373] The origins of the institution, details of these arrangements, and how this complementary employment affected the labour contract have not previously been the subject of any detailed research.

In her social survey of the city, Butler suggested that by the early twentieth century, the local labour market was less dependent on the academic calendar than it had been fifty years earlier, but seasonality was still a significant problem.[374] She noted that there was significant variation in servants' vacation employment, some workers were paid regular wages year round, while others only had work in the terms. In the long vacation, some workers were paid a small stipend to make themselves available whenever members of the college were in Oxford and required attendance, and a few colleges paid board wages.[375] College servants who also ran lodging houses usually had some work out of term as tourism in the city increased. Casual and low-wage workers were the most affected by the seasonality of the labour market. She observed that workers who were paid weekly, particularly charwomen, earned a good wage,

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[372] Christopher Day, 'The University and the City' in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.) in *The History of the University of Oxford Volume VI Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1*, p.463. Day also mentions that the financial burden of providing relief to unemployed servants in the vacations was a source of conflict between the city and the colleges. During a particularly severe winter in 1871, at a meeting to discuss poor relief and the problem of unemployment in the city, Drummond Chase, the principal of St. Mary Hall argued that college servants deserved the city's support, 'There was a class of college servants, who naturally were out of employment during the Vacation and these deserved some help because of course they created no permanent source of distress'. *JOJ* 14 January 1871.

[373] For example, see C.J. Day (1997), C. Platt (1986), F. Bickerton (1953), and C.V. Butler (1912).

[374] Butler, *Oxford*, pp.81-96.

[375] For example, PMB/F/10/1. In 1869, Pembroke paid 9/- weekly to men and 7/- to women in board wages during the long vacation. The college was unusual in that all servants appear to have been provided meals at work and ate together daily in a designated servants' hall.

but were unemployed out of term and had difficulty finding other work. Butler briefly described the vacation employment scheme: '(A) large proportion of scouts and college cooks get hotel work in the long vacation, which may involve very hard work, but also secures a change of scene. One cook-boy who apparently worked for about fourteen hours a day in his summer hotel, but walked nightly by the seaside for an hour, explained that he felt the expedition to be the treat of the year.'[376]

The College Servants' Summer Employment Agency 1859-1914

In his travels around England, Scotland, and Wales during the summer holidays in the mid-nineteenth century, Thomas Randall, the mayor of Oxford, noticed that hotels in popular resort areas had difficulty finding employees, particularly waiters and porters.[377] Randall naturally thought of the large numbers of college servants available for this type of employment during the summer months. He discussed the idea with the vice chancellor sometime in late 1858, but it would be a year before any action was taken.

At a public meeting in December 1859, Randall recalled a conversation he'd had with 'senior members of the University' in January, and said that when he first broached the idea of facilitating summer employment for college servants, he was rebuffed. '[He] was sorry to say that an opinion then prevailed in their minds, but which he hoped was now frittered away, that it would be impossible to induce the junior college servants to leave Oxford to obtain employment until all their money was spent. Such an opinion then prevailed, but at that time, as well as now, he [Randall] entertained a better opinion of that class'.[378]

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[376] Butler, *Oxford*, p.83.
[377] Randall was also a hatter and ran a shop in Oxford. Local historian Mark Davies argues that Randall was the inspiration for Charles Dodgson's character the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland* in M. Davies, 'The Real Mad Hatter' *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 May 2013.
[378] *JOJ* 31 December 1859.

Randall was speaking not only as a mayor, but as a businessman and an associate of many college servants, some of whom were in attendance and were likely frustrated with the slow progress of this initiative. He may have been emphasizing the obstructive behavior of some in the university, but undoubtedly a low opinion of young, working-class men was not uncommon at the time.

Summer employment away from Oxford would appeal to younger and unmarried college servants rather than older workers with established households. Randall estimated the number of younger college servants who would be interested in this type of arrangement to be approximately 75-100. The meeting was well attended by members of the university and college servants alike, indicating significant interest in the initiative. Randall suggested that the benefits of this type of summer employment for young, male college servants were numerous. A junior servant could gain valuable experience waiting on tables, presumably serving a similar clientele to the men who attended Oxford colleges. Summer employment in a resort also offered a change of scenery and opportunities for recreation, although servants would still have worked long hours. The most important inducement was financial; based on conversations with a hotelier in Balmoral, Randall estimated that a waiter might earn £1 weekly with the hotel paying travel expenses at the beginning and end of the season. If this included room and board, it represented more than the regular wages a junior servant expected to earn in term time, especially as junior servants had less access to perquisites and gratuities.[379]

Summer employment could also help young servants develop responsible attitudes towards managing their money. Randall believed that most college servants were able to save

[379] Ibid.

part of their wages during the terms, and in addition to being able to keep those savings, he felt that a considerable percentage of their summer earnings could be saved as well, thus the benefits of summer employment would not only be immediate but would also help provide long term financial stability and promote the development of good fiscal habits. The mayor gave the following example, 'A young man 20 years of age might, by an annual payment of 2l. 15s. 11d., secure a payment of 100l when he reached 50 years of age or the payment of 100l to his family in the event of his death before that time. By the payment of 11l, the least which a young man might hope to save every Long Vacation if he obtained employment, he would be enabled to secure a payment of 400l when he was 50 years of age, or the same amount in case of death before that time. Was it right then to fritter away their best days when they were able to work without making some provision for their old age?'[380] Of course, these calculations are an exaggeration. No one could reasonably expect to have thirty years of uninterrupted savings accumulation, without illness or unemployment. It is also very unlikely that summer employment would have been attractive or even feasible for most servants after they married and had a family. This idea that younger workers were particularly able to save became associated with Canon William Blackley in the late 1870s when he argued that a national pension scheme could be funded through contributions made by workers when they were aged eighteen to twenty-one.[381]

Although Samuel Smiles' *Self Help* was published in the same year that Randall gave this speech, the idea of college servants' self help was in evidence long before, at least by 1812,

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[380] *JOJ* 31 December 1859; 'Employment of Junior College Servants in the Long Vacation' *The Morning Post*, 31 December 1859.

[381] Blackley's proposals are discussed in Pat Thane, *Old Age in English History* (Oxford, 2000), ch. 10. Thane describes Blackley's assessment of younger workers' ability to save as 'over-optimistic' and offers evidence from Rowntree's York study. Similarly, junior college servants were on low wages and often unemployed in long vacations, they would not have been able to accumulate any long term savings in the way Blackley envisioned.

with the establishment of the first college servants' friendly society. Similarly, encouraging thrift among the working class was a common theme during the nineteenth century. An advertisement for the Oxford Savings Bank from this period recounts an imagined conversation between two labourers, wasteful Ned and thrifty Will, who meet on the street while on their way to 'spend a trifle': Ned, at the pub and Will, at the Oxford Savings Bank. Ned explains why he goes to the pub, 'Nay, I hardly know what I go for. -Just for to pass the time. You know that I am a single man and have no wife nor family - and so I can afford to spend a trifle and so I do. First I stinted myself to a Shilling in a week, and then somehow it got onto Eighteen-pence, and then to Two Shillings, and now I commonly spend about a Half-Crown a week.' Will responds by detailing his savings habits, pointing out that although they are both single and the same age, he has accumulated between '*Thirty and Forty Pounds*' by putting in a half-crown a week, the same as Will 'puts in the Red Lion's mouth'. Will's goal is to save for five more years until he accumulates enough to marry. By the end of their 'conversation', Ned is converted and he restates his revelation in a way that a working man could understand: 'a man puts his shillings there and they seem to grow, and come out again, a great many more shillings - just as a potato, when you put it into the ground…'. Then, Will reveals the most important benefit of savings - self help, 'If, however, I am forced anyhow, to lose a day's or week's work, I need not go sneaking to the parish, like a beggar; but I can hold up my head, and help myself - like a man.'[382]

This advertisement echoes many of the sentiments expressed in Randall's speech, particularly the idea that young, working-class men spent their money mindlessly, ignorant of the true cost of their profligacy – to themselves, their families, and to society. These habits,

[382] BL:G.A. Oxon c.259

drinking and passing time at the pub, quickly developed into an expensive, unhealthy and corrupting lifestyle. It was the responsibility of the middle class to educate the working class, warding away these dangers. There is a sense of urgency in both the advertisement and Randall's speech, highlighting the perceived moral vulnerability of young working-class men and Randall intimated that some senior members of the university thought that these young college servants were already beyond help. Randall expresses frustration with this attitude, and while advocating for the interests of the servants personally, he suggests that it is the responsibility of the university and the city to do the same.

Several servants are quoted in the article, expressing their support for the initiative. Mr. Ward, a servant at Pembroke, said that he found it 'most gratifying … to see the University and City authorities using their best endeavors to advance their [college servants'] social and moral interests… For his own part, he should be happy to render every assistance to anything which was calculated to give them a better knowledge of each other, and to strengthen the relations between master and servant.'[383]

The initiative proposed by Randall required organizational support, and it was suggested that a committee of college servants be formed, with continued participation from the mayor and vice-chancellor. The committee would act as an employment agency, contacting hotels and resorts, then providing references of college servants who were looking for summer employment. The committee advertised in newspapers in England, Scotland and Wales, and by May, 1860 had sufficient interest to advertise these positions for waiters and cooks in Oxford newspapers. Mr. Owens, the butler at Queen's, was acting secretary for the committee, coordinating the employers and servants, matching offers and recommendations.

[383] *JOJ* 31 December 1859.

In its first summer, the College Servants' Summer Employment Society received 34 applications from servants looking for a summer position; jobs were found for only twelve of them.[384] Although it appears that the initiative was successful, the number of participants likely never reached the estimates Mayor Randall originally proposed. Actual figures for the numbers of men who found summer employment through the committee were later reported in the minutes of the College Servants' Society and range from 40-60 positions filled annually. By 1881, the CSS had completely taken over the work of the summer employment committee. Advertisements placed after 1881 suggest that the CSS tried to find work for a larger group of servants with a broader array of businesses. One such advertisement appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and offered that the CSS could supply 'proprietors of hotels and other places of business cooks, waiters, clerks, and porters from the present time until October'.[385] Despite this, in 1885, the minutes note that there were still not enough summer positions for servants who wanted them.[3] The CSS dissolved around the time of the First World War, and although the organization of summer employment was lost with it, individual servants continued to make arrangements for this work.

Existing records do not provide enough information to estimate how many days or weeks of work were available in colleges for servants during the long vacation, however it is possible to discern some patterns. Continuous employment was most often the privilege of senior servants; junior servants rarely, if ever, had enough work outside the terms. In his autobiography, Fred Bickerton recalled his experience as a junior servant at University,

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[384] *JOJ* 16 June 1860; Two servants from Wadham, two from New and one from Magdalen Hall went to the Castle Mona Hotel in Douglas; one from University went to the Royal Victoria in Swanage; one from Magdalen, and two from Exeter went to the Station Hotel in Hull; and three from Exeter went to the Burdon Hotel in Weymouth.

[385] *Pall Mall Gazette* 28 June 1882. The same advertisement appeared in the *North Wales Chronicle* on 1 July 1882.

> 'The under-scout had no salary from the College; he depended on what his undergraduates gave him, and the Term's emoluments rarely came to more than ten pounds. Moreover, there were only three Terms, and they left six months in the year during which we had to find alternative employment. It was the custom for us to take jobs as waiters in seaside hotels where there was a seasonal demand. I must say the experience was useful, as well as the money, and it certainly helped us to serve more efficiently in College. I went one year to Llandrindod Wells and two years to Lowestoft and busy as it was, I always enjoyed the change of place and the crowds of new faces. …After those three years the College always found some work for me to do during the Vacations, and so I remained in Oxford.'[386]

Seniority and Vacation Employment

Creating a clear association between the entitlement to year-round employment and seniority was a successful management strategy. Junior servants were more likely to accept unemployment in the long vacations if they believed that objective criteria, in this case, length of service, determined who could access regular work. Vacation unemployment and underemployment varied over time and by college. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, most subordinate cooks were unemployed in the long vacation, along with most scouts and their assistants. The kitchen did not need to be fully staffed in the long vacations, and the institution of resort employment for these servants endured after it faded for others. Seniority was often strictly observed, in 1895, the steward noted that 'having succeeded Hebborn, Gibbons [who was recently promoted to vegetable cook] thought that like Hebborn he would be on Long Vac staff: no justification for this, but I promised in any rearrangement to consider his claim first'.[387] In 1927, there were six men employed in the kitchen at Jesus, of these, two were employed year round: L.G. Clarke, the cook and the

[386] F. Bickerton, *Fred of Oxford : Being the Memoirs of Fred Bickerton, Until Recently Head Porter of University College*, Oxford (London, 1953), p.5.
[387] CCA S.xxxv.a.4 30 March 1895.

kitchen porter/vegetable cook, G. Curtis. The other four: W. Holton, kitchen porter; F. Winckworth, assistant cook; G.F. Drury, also a kitchen porter; and E. Organ, the cook's apprentice were employed for nine months annually.[388] Of these six employees, Clarke and Curtis had the longest tenure, starting at the college in 1909 and 1911 respectively, which suggests that seniority continued to determine opportunities for year-round employment well into the twentieth century.

Seniority did not always guarantee vacation employment with the college. As part of a push to cut internal costs in 1922, the servants' committee at Corpus decided to ask all servants to find summer employment outside of Oxford. The college approached these servants, starting with the manciple, who was encouraged to 'take an engagement at some hotel during the summer months, with a consequent reduction in his college salary'. The college then approached scouts with a similar proposal.[389] Although the minutes describe these efforts as 'proposals' and 'encouragement', it is clear that some servants felt the college compelled them to find work away from Oxford in the long vacations.

Colleges placed restrictions on servants' vacation employment away from the city, it required approval from college authorities and could not interfere in the regular service provided to the resident members of the college. Once this type of vacation employment became an accepted practice, colleges began to formalize these rules. 'Bedmakers who wish to get work away from Oxford during the Long Vacation must obtain the leave of the Dean and the Bursar and must arrange with other bedmakers to take the weeks for which they would otherwise be responsible.'[390] The division of this work could be contentious. In 1914, the

[388] JC Box 65 Uncatalogued items relating to pensions, from a list of staff dated October 1927.
[389] CCC B/4/7/1B 3 July 1922.
[390] Ibid. 'Rules for College Servants' 21 January 1893.

scouts' committee at Christ Church had a 'long and lively discussion' on the matter, minutes note that they discussed 'why should some be away for 5 or 6 weeks while others here each day?'

By the late nineteenth century, labour contracts included explicit provisions for vacation employment away from Oxford. Some of these appear to be in response to servants who received a stipend in the long vacation from the college, but accepted employment away from Oxford and hired an assistant to work in their place at the college. After the First World War, many servants were paid regular cash wages year round, but some still preferred to accept more lucrative work in hotels away from Oxford in the long vacation. Bob Dickens was hired to work as a scout at Corpus in 1932 at approximately £2.5.0 weekly, which he compared with his weekly earnings of £5-6 weekly as the head waiter at a hotel in Yorkshire.[391] Colleges were aware that this type of vacation employment was well-remunerated, and it is likely that college employers took this additional income into consideration when determining wages for these workers.

Colleges expected first right of refusal on a servant's labour, but policies on pay during the vacations varied considerably. At some colleges, if permission was granted for leave, a deduction was made from the servant's regular wages or retainer for those weeks. At about the same time, the gradual introduction of holiday entitlement during the vacations complicated matters somewhat. In 1919, A. Martin, a scout at Hertford, was paid 52/6 weekly with a deduction of 15/- weekly 'when leave of absence is given during the long vacation beyond the usual 4 weeks holiday'.[392] Other colleges paid no wages during the long vacations.

[391] Harrison, G.A. Jonge and A.J. Purkis, 'Interview with Bob Dickens' June 20, 1969, in Harrison, 'Transcripts' p. 6224.
[392] HC 4/5/1, 30 October 1919. Other scouts at Hertford had similar contractual arrangements.

In 1923, W. Skone, a scout at Pembroke, was hired by Keble for a similar position, his offer letter stated, 'Your normal term of engagement will be throughout the year but you will be paid weekly. Your wage to commence will be 2/2/6 weekly from which will be made a deduction vide enclosed pension scheme and 6d per week government health assurance. During the long vacation you will be at liberty to take an engagement elsewhere with my permission and will be allowed to return to the college employment at the end of the vacation. You will not receive wages from the college while so absent. You will be given four days holiday at Christmas and Easter and two weeks during the long vacation at full pay.'[393]

Many servants could not leave Oxford to find work and were left to manage long periods of unemployment; colleges usually only retained one or two charwomen during the vacations, the rest were laid off. How did colleges make work for those who remained? Servants often spent the vacations cleaning and decorating rooms in preparation for the coming term.[394] In the late nineteenth century, Dr. Daniel Harper, the principal of Jesus wrote to Evan Evans, the master at Pembroke and asked him how their college servants were occupied in the vacations. Evans replied:

> 'As you observe the want of employment for servants in the vacations is a great evil and its remedy is a problem which has only been partially solved. Many of our servants now go as waiters to watering places; but more do nothing. In the shorter vacations, the scouts are pretty well employed in cleaning the rooms and windows, which if well done occupies a fortnight or 3 weeks, but most of the long vacation is idle time. As far as our kitchen staff is concerned, work is made in the way of preserving, hams and bacon, curing and pickling - and the hall man and boots are turned on the little garden and plant grass for weeding, rolling, and mowing but this is rather exercise than profitable employment. Some few college servants have gardens; but none that I know of have shops. I

[393] KC/STA1/A4, 1 October 1923. The wages are not comparable, most scouts at Keble lived in during this period.
[394] Employing college servants in this way likely took work from professional decorators. In 1910, Thomas Baylis, secretary of the Oxford Trades Council wrote to the colleges asking that they help alleviate seasonal unemployment of painters and decorators in the two shorter vacations when 'they and their dependents have a precarious and meager existence with a good deal of anxiety and privation'. BL:G.A. Oxon b.140-1, 17 October 1910.

> forgot to mention the laying down and turning over of gravel in the grounds as good vacation work. Except this and the cleaning of now, I cannot suggest anything and all this is only an occasional resource. No, the problem still awaits solution and if you give your mind to it and discover a remedy for the evil you shall be enrolled among University Benefactors.'[395]

It is clear, however, that Randall's summer employment scheme changed the way colleges viewed the management of servants during the vacations. By the later decades of the nineteenth century, a servant's failure to find enough work in the long vacation could be seen as a moral failing; this continued into the twentieth century. How did servants who stayed in Oxford manage unemployment or underemployment in the long vacations? Evidence is scarce, but it seems clear that servants tried to find other employment, relied on contributions from other members of the household, and exhausted whatever savings they managed to accumulate during the terms.

In 1932, one of the cooks at St. John's was reported to the college by the local council as having fallen into rent arrears over the summer. Herbert Heaver applied for relief from the Public Assistance Committee of the Oxford City Council in late August or early September. Percy Hide, the vice chairman of the council, wrote to the bursar at St. John's:

> 'An application for relief from the rates has come to the Public Assistance Committee of the Oxford City Council from a man who states that he is employed during term time by St. John Baptist College. The man was reluctant to state the name of the college for which he worked and the Committee is anxious that the case like all other cases of relief should not attract public attention.'[396]

Hide noted that Heaver was paid £2.2.0 during term time only. He had a family of six at home, and was receiving in-kind outdoor relief, but no unemployment pay.[397] Heaver's rent

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[395] JC SV Letters 1880-90 Undated letter, likely 1884-5 from Evan Evans, master of Pembroke College to Rev. Dr. Hugo Daniel Harper, principal of Jesus College.
[396] SJC Admin.VIII.c.4, 11 September 1932.
[397] Heaver paid unemployment insurance at his summer job but not his college job because colleges applied for and received exemptions from the unemployment insurance scheme for their domestic.

was 13/6- weekly, and he had accumulated arrears of £4.12.6. The family's only income that summer was his wife's weekly wages of 8/-. The bursar's notes indicate that Heaver usually found vacation employment on the south coast, but was unable to find work that year. He had sold all his savings certificates and was now destitute. The bursar wrote back to Hide that Heaver was not a particularly good cook, but 'bore a satisfactory character' and was qualified for any subordinate position in a large kitchen.[398] The bursar consulted another fellow, Rev. T. Blockley about the matter,

> 'Heaver's case is puzzling. He has been employed as an undercook at this college for a long time and according to custom, has always found vacation employment for himself elsewhere. All enterprising cooks take the opportunity of the long vacation to improve their own experience and to make a little extra money. He is due to return to the College tomorrow the 23rd and I see no reason why he should not pay his rent arrears by installment before Christmas.'[399]

The bursar wrote back to Hide later that week:

> 'I have had Heaver before me today to explain his extraordinary behavior. He tells me that owing to a change in management in the hotel to which he had previously gone, he has lost this employment. He considered that as he paid Unemployment Insurance when not serving with the College, he was entitled to draw benefits and he thought he ought not to apply to the College for special assistance. I need hardly say that if the House Steward or the Cook, or I had any idea that any servant if the College owing to such circumstances was suffering hardships we would have made some arrangement for him. He has been in arrears with his rent but has promised to adjust this before Christmas. I am very sorry that two local committees should have been troubled with this case through the absence of common sense on the part of the man. I don't think he will repeat the mistake.'[400]

The college clearly considered Heaver's circumstances to be the consequence of his own personal failing. He should have been able to manage unemployment during the long vacation

[398] SJC Admin.VIII.c.4, 22 September 1932.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Ibid., 26 September 1932.

by securing hotel work, as he had previously done. Although he was not particularly talented, he was competent and employable. When he found himself in financial difficulty, he should have informed the college, and saved all parties from embarrassment. There is no evidence that Heaver received any assistance from the college in this instance, and the 1939 Register shows that he was no longer working for St. John's, but was employed as a cook in a canteen.

4. Negotiating Remuneration

4.1. Individual and collective bargaining strategies

The complexity of servants' labour contracts provided considerable scope for negotiation. Archival evidence shows that servants bargained individually and collectively throughout the period. Individual servants frequently approached their bursar to ask for an increase in pay or improvements to their working conditions. Collectively, servants frequently formed a committee, and met formally or informally. A representative, usually a senior servant was nominated to negotiate with the college, usually through the bursar. These negotiations do not always appear in college records, and it is difficult to determine the frequency with which they occurred. Servants committees, both comprised of servants and comprised of fellows, discussing matters pertaining to internal management were common throughout the period, but records frequently do not survive.[401]

When preliminary efforts were unsuccessful, servants submitted petitions to college authorities.[402] These were fairly common and several from this period survive in college archives.[403] Early requests from servants typically focused on the inadequacy of their remuneration to meet the cost of living. In the early nineteenth century, bedmakers at Magdalen submitted a petition to the college requesting an increase in wages:

> 'The Bedmakers of Magdalen College humbly presume to lay before the President the profits of their places, in the hope that he will be pleased to

[401] Although similar committees comprised of servants are mentioned in sources at several colleges, the only records associated with a committee comprised of servants to deal with employment issues are found at Christ Church, CCA S.xxxvi.a.1.
[402] Similar petitions or memorials were used as part of collective bargaining strategies by railway workers. Diane Drummond, *Crewe: railway town, company and people, 1840-1914* (Aldershot, 1995), p.63.
[403] Several of these are examined in K. Crossley 'Oxford College Servants and Reform 1850-1910' unpublished MSc thesis (2013).

consider how inadequate they are to the support of themselves and families under the advanced prices of the articles of Life and of the rents of houses. –

In representing their case to the President they hope he will be assured of their duty and respect towards him and the Society.

Baldwin has eleven members who pay 43 ½ per annum. This stipend is shared by his son who assists him and who has a wife and child.

Hodges has a Wife and a large family and has fifteen masters his stipend 58.16.0

Gunstone has a wife and five small children has ten masters and is obliged to keep a boy to assist him – his stipend 39.18.0 out of which he pays Mrs. Perkins 20£ a year –

Stevens has nine masters, is obliged to keep a boy – his stipend 32£ 11.0 out of which he pays Mrs. Taylor 10£ a year[404] –

These stipends are diminished by money paid to charwomen and for articles for cleaning shoes &c for which they have 3d per week allowed them from each master.'[405]

The rigidities of the administrative structure also constrained servants' ability to bargain individually. The college anticipated servants would share wage data with one another and colleges frequently raised the wages of all servants holding similar positions at the same time, so an increase for one servant often implied increases for their peers. 'For 17 years Gosling has had 26/- a week throughout the year. On Nov. 18, 1892 he asked for an increase. The Steward considered the matter and on 26 November, decided that his wages could not be raised without unduly raising the expense of the buttery establishment with the consequent increase of other wages in the same department. However, Gosling was promised an occasional bonus in addition to wage when at the close of a financial year it was found that the account of the Buttery permitted the expenditure. 26 Mch 95 wages rose to 27/6.' A note written by the steward shows that Gosling received a Lady-day bonus of £1.10.0 in 1893.[406]

[404] MC CP1/12, John Stevens retired in 1855, aged 75, on an annual pension of £50 having served as a bedmaker at Magdalen for 56 years.
[405] MC CS/24 undated.
[406] CCA S.xxxv.c.3&4.

Colleges often cited institutional financial constraints as a reason for declining requests for increased remuneration. The steward, Sadler made notes following a conversation with S. Eagleston in June 1883, he 'asked to be raised to £45 a year for service from the end of September to the middle of July in each year. Previous wages £1 a week for at least 40 weeks. Told him I wd consider his application next year but the strain on our funds was too heavy this year to enable me to take further steps at the present time. Told him I couldn't promise but that he might fairly look for an advance next year.'[407]

4.2. Trade Unions

Wages were often determined by systems of rigid administrative rules rather than labour supply and demand. Scheduled wage increases were common throughout the period and seriously constrained servants' ability to bargain. In 1949, University adopted a schedule for scouts that provided for their first wage increase of 5/- weekly 'after 20 years' service with the College or at the age of 40, whichever comes sooner, and to their second 5/- a week increment either after 30 years' service with the College or at the age of 50'.[408] These rigidities are characteristic of internal labour markets, however, internal labour market theory does not adequately explain the constraints imposed by social and cultural norms. Doeringer and Piore suggested that unions might offer a solution for improving discriminatory practices which were usually based on custom.[409] As this chapter will show, unions were an unwelcome intrusion in this particular employment relationship, and although union activity did result in wage increases, it did not improve working conditions, which were an equally important concern throughout the period.

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[407] Ibid.
[408] UC ACC 1171 Memo to bedmakers from P.F. Strawson, domestic bursar. These regulations to take effect from 1 October 1949.
[409] P. Doeringer, P. and M. Piore, *Internal Labour Markets and Manpower Analysis* (Lexington, MA, 1971), ch.7.

In January 1920, bursars of several colleges received a letter from Mr. J. Amos, a representative of the Amalgamated Society of Gas, Municipal and General Workers' Union requesting an increase in servants' wages. Only one of these letters survives, sent to the bursar at Worcester. The letter asked for an increase of 10/- in the weekly wages of all servants who are members and a minimum wage of £3 weekly, to address the 'abnormal' financial pressures created by the war and to 'promote a general upliftment of their Standard of Life'.[410]

These letters should not have been completely unexpected. Almost exactly a year earlier, in January 1919, a 'well-attended and enthusiastic' meeting of college servants was held at the Druid's Head public house to consider the question of union membership and representation.[411] The meeting was chaired by Mr. J. Horrobin, president of the Oxford Trades and Labour Council. In his speech, he listed college servants' 'many and peculiar grievances, pecuniary and otherwise' and argued that these could best be addressed by organization. He recommended that servants either formed their own union or a special branch of another union. Mr. Horrobin declared that in either case, his council, which represented nearly 4,000 workers in the city of Oxford, would offer their full support. Representatives of general workers' unions and railway unions also spoke, including Mr. Amos, who was in attendance representing the GM&GWU, which he said had a local membership of over 1,200. Several college servants spoke and enumerated their concerns which included:

'…(I)nadequate payment, long hours, no Sunday leisure, insecurity of employment, and absolute dependence on the Bursar. There was no uniformity of treatment, and their pension

[410] WOR/BUR/8/18/58.
[411] 'A Trade Union For College Servants' *The Oxford Journal Illustrated*, January 8, 1919; at various times both college servants' friendly societies regularly met at the Druid's Head.

funds were hopelessly out-of-date and inadequate. They were, as a class, notoriously badly paid. Even in pre-war days, being more or less dependent on tips and gratuities, which often failed to materialise. Their hours were often 12, 14, and 16 per day, and their complaints, when made individually, were not taken the slightest notice of.'[412] These comments echo the assertions of Knox and Warner in the nineteenth century over the issue of college servants' Sundays, that collective action was necessary to counteract the imbalance of power that existed in individual or collective negotiations within colleges.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a resolution was unanimously adopted: servants would join an existing trade union. Although no estimates are given in this article for the number of servants who attended the meeting, the article asserts that the proposition had widespread support among all college servants, who were estimated to number about 600. It was an exaggeration to suggest that trade unions enjoyed the support of all college servants, or even a majority. While it was widely accepted that college servants earned low wages and worked under demanding, strenuous conditions during the terms, during this period, there was considerable debate among servants about whether trade unions could effect meaningful change and at what cost. However, union activity during the interwar period was more widespread than historians have previously concluded. Colleges were demonstrably alarmed by the involvement of unions in the paternalistic employment relationship, whether significant numbers of their servants joined or not. Bursars held regular and frequent meetings to exchange information and coordinate their responses, servants similarly held meetings and debated the merits of union membership. Unions were most successful in the first drive in 1920, when their negotiations produced increased cash wages for many servants, including

[412] A Trade Union For College Servants' *The Oxford Journal Illustrated*, January 8, 1919.

most scouts. The second union drive in 1937 appears to have been limited, compared to earlier efforts. Unions were somewhat successful in improving working conditions, but neglected almost completely the subject of pensions. Pension schemes designed in the late-nineteenth century offered no protection against inflation, and during the Great War, retired servants were seriously affected by rising prices, especially for food.

The First Union Drive: 1919-20

The first college servants' union drive in 1919-20 likely had its origins not only in a wider working class movement, but also in the variation in wages that resulted from colleges' responses to the rapid rise in prices caused by the Great War. Many colleges attempted to address the increased cost of living by paying war bonuses to servants. Records show that at Corpus, for example, the same thirteen servants worked at the college from 1914 through 1918. The total wage bill was £1,135 in 1914, £1,295 in 1917 and £1,450 in 1918.[413] In most cases, however, wage records from this period are often difficult to interpret, salaries were affected not only by cost of living increases, but by the rearrangement of work. Staffing levels were significantly reduced, few undergraduates came up to study and many servants were away serving in the military. Servants who remained in Oxford took on more responsibilities and roles were often combined. Wage levels and bonuses were reevaluated periodically but the increases varied, particularly according to colleges' ability to pay during a period when both internal and external sources of income had contracted significantly. Servants paid attention not only to any absolute variation in wage levels, but also to the frequency of these adjustments. Colleges that made more frequent adjustments were perceived as more attentive

[413] CCC:B/4/7/1B Minutes of the Servants' Committee 1879-1932, 1 November 1918.

to the difficulties faced by servants trying to manage the increased cost of living, and as a consequence, were seen as fairer and better employers.

How did colleges and servants respond to reports of the January 1919 meeting with union representatives? Records from various college archives throughout 1919 show that wages were frequently discussed, although the motivations are nearly always unclear: whether these discussions were prompted by the colleges or requests from servants, as a response to the threat of union activity in January or a general concern over rising prices, or some combination of these factors. On 5 October 1919, railway workers reached an agreement with the government to end a nine-day strike over the stabilization of wages at existing, rather than pre-war, levels. Railway workers in Oxford joined the strike and news of this dispute over the cost of living and workers' wage levels must have come to the attention of college authorities.[414] At the same time, in November 1919, members of the third royal commission on Oxford and Cambridge Universities were confirmed and publicized; colleges were certainly anticipating the reporting requirements associated with this investigation and were likely organizing and reviewing data in preparation.

College bursars paid increasingly close attention to wages, particularly demonstrating an interest in comparative data, not only making these comparisons among colleges, but within their own college, across functions. On 15 March 1919, the servants' committee at Corpus agreed to increase servants' wages; in order to cover the cost, establishment charges to members of the college were increased accordingly. Scouts were to be paid £2.10.0 weekly,

[414] For example, see the 'The Railway Men's Strike' *Oxford Journal Illustrated*, 1 October 1919 and 'The Railway Strike' *Oxford Journal Illustrated*, 8 October 1919. The agreement included the stabilization of wages at not less than 51/- weekly for an adult male worker as long as prices remained not less than 110% above the pre-war level. These rates were guaranteed until September 1920.

women were to be hired as their assistants at £1.3.0 weekly, rather than hiring boys as they had done previously.[415]

On 18 March 1919, the scouts' committee at Christ Church held a 'very important General Meeting' to discuss increasing wages. The secretary of the committee opened the meeting with a discussion about wages, Mr. Haithwaite 'explained what he knew about what other colleges were doing'.[416] After this discussion, the committee resolved to ask the steward for £2.15.0 per week.[417] This increase was granted in June 1919, and the steward noted their annual pay had been raised from £60 before the war to £90 and then this increase brought the annual pay of scouts to £108. The question of pay for all other servants was deferred.[418] In November 1919, Christ Church awarded a further 25% increase in wages to its servants, making the total increase 50% since the war began.[419]

Location may offer insight into patterns of early union related activity in 1919, but insufficient documentary evidence survives on which to base any firmer conclusions. Four colleges where records survive regarding union activity are in close physical proximity to one another: Christ Church, Oriel, Corpus Christi and University. During the war, colleges increasingly shared resources, including staff, and these circumstances, coupled with existing patterns of social activity, likely facilitated wage comparison among these servants. On 24 October 1919, scouts at Christ Church held a special meeting to discuss joining the 'Gas and College Servants' Union', which indicates that by this date, a college servants' branch of this

[415] CCC B/4/7/1B Minutes of the Servants' Committee 1879-1932, 15 March 1919.
[416] CCA S.xxxv.a.3 Scouts Notebook, Albert Edward Haithwaite was the censor's private servant and then in June 1893, he was nominated by the censor to become a scout.
[417] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1 Christ Church Scouts' Committee Minute Book 1895-1950, 18 March 1919.
[418] CCA S.xxxiii.a.1 Minutes of Steward, Dean & Censors' Meetings 1892-1920, 21 June 1919.
[419] Ibid., 20 November 1918.

union had been officially formed. Minutes report that the meeting was well attended and there was 'a good deal of varied opinion', but there is no mention of a decision.[420]

The unfolding of events prompted by Mr. Amos's letters a few months later in January 1920 was extraordinary. Within days of receiving the request from the servants' union representative, college bursars, who typically held a formal meeting once or twice annually and usually in the summer term, scheduled a meeting for January 28th. The meeting was convened by Mr. Cronshaw[421] and held at Queen's, 'the chief question before that meeting was the question of wages – particularly Scouts' wages'.[422]

Some colleges did not wait until the bursars' committee meeting to act. The servants' committee at Magdalen met on January 21st and approved an increase of wages for the kitchen staff, most received an increase of 5/- weekly. The two kitchen porters, who were the lowest paid employees in the kitchen, were to receive 40/- weekly, up 12.5%. The other kitchen employees also received a raise, but were already earning more than the £3 weekly minimum wage requested by union members at Worcester. Wages of the gardening staff were similarly increased, the head gardener from 40/- to 50/- weekly and the undergardener from 38/- to 45/-weekly. Wages of the most junior servants were also reevaluated, the bicycle boy received an increase from 20/- to 22/6- and the messenger received a raise from 20/- to 25/- weekly.

Perhaps the most interesting item from the meeting at Magdalen is the reconsideration of women's pay. Their wages were recalculated 'to bring them to conformity with the standard rate of 8d. per hour'. Charwomen were to receive not less than 16/- weekly for working

[420] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1 Christ Church Scouts' Committee Minute Book 1895-1950, 24 October 1919.
[421] George Bernard Cronshaw (1872-1928), senior bursar of Queen's College.
[422] CCC B/4/7/1B Minutes of the Servants' Committee 1879-1932, 6 February 1920.

twenty-four hours and plate women were to receive 26/- weekly, whether they worked during the term or in vacation.[423] Calculation of an hourly rate and setting a minimum hourly wage were novel, and were not previously mentioned in committee minutes. The specificity with which employees were evaluated in this meeting and the mention of a 'standard rate' one week before the first bursars' committee meeting suggests that some servants at Magdalen had joined the union and the bursar at Magdalen had likely received a letter from Mr. Amos, although there is no mention of Amos or the union in any surviving sources.

The servants' committee at Corpus, whose regular attendees included the vice-president, dean, bursar and the bursar's assistant, addressed the issue of wages two days later, on January 23rd. Minutes show that 'the whole body of male servants, - with the exception of the Butler, Porter, Manciple and 2nd Cook' asked for an increase in wages, although 'without having in any case specified any particular sum'.[424] Rather than an increase in regular wages, they offered the scouts a guaranteed entitlement to a gratuity of 3/6- weekly when they were required to attend in college during the long vacations. This amount was unchanged from the late nineteenth century. A copy of the college's 'Rules for College Servants' from 1893 states that 'In Vacation, a servant is allowed to make an extra charge of 1s per night, or 3s 6d a week, four days or over to count as a week.'[425] In 1920, the college also specified that for this purpose, the length of terms should be reckoned at ten, rather than eight weeks. There is no mention of the means by which servants were paid this fee, presumably they were left to ask members to pay them directly. It seems likely from the general nature of the servants' request compared to more specific requests at other colleges, that servants at Corpus were not

[423] MC CP/9/24/i-ii Servants' Committee Minutes of Meetings, 21 January 1920.
[424] CCC B/4/7/1B Minutes of the Servants' Committee 1879-1932, 23 January 1920.
[425] Ibid., 21 January 1893.

represented by the union, but were negotiating on their own behalf, timing their request to coincide with the letters from the union representative.

It seems unlikely that this proposal would have satisfied the majority of servants at Corpus, as it represented not an appreciable improvement but rather a guarantee of an existing entitlement. Vacation employment and pay were perennially vexatious issues at many colleges, but these were not concerns raised in Amos's letter to Worcester. Worcester had a policy of charging fees in battels for members staying during the vacations, which effectively guaranteed servants would receive these payments. An item in the minutes from 1911 show that the committee at Corpus had previously considered this issue: 'F.E. Williams complained that he did not receive a gratuity when one of the Fellows was up in the Vacation. No action'.[426]

Records do not survive to confirm the details of Williams' position at the time. If he was an assistant, it is likely that his only pay would have been the gratuity, effectively compelling him to work without remuneration. If he was a scout, the loss of gratuities would have represented perhaps a quarter to half of his wages, similarly expecting him to work for a substantially reduced rate. Scouts and their assistants were expected to be available during the summer if members of the college were in residence. Failing to attend, or failing to find another servant to cover the work was grounds for dismissal. Some colleges paid a nominal 'retaining fee' or board wages in the long vacation, but the gratuities always comprised an important part of servants' remuneration, particularly in the summer months when unemployment and chronic underemployment were common. At the start of the long vacation, most scouts had no ability to predict how many days of employment would be available in college and most, if not all,

[426] Ibid., 23 March 1911.

tried to find other work. Members of the college were obliged to send notice of their visit and requirements for service to the porter in advance, typically a week ahead, so that the porter could provide timely notice to the servant. However these policies were rarely enforced by the college and servants were well aware that as their remuneration for this work was primarily comprised of gratuities, any complaints about the lack of sufficient notice could result in the withholding of this discretionary pay.

It is unclear why Williams did not receive the gratuity and by raising the issue with the servants' committee in 1911, he was expressing his belief that the treatment was unjust and was asking the college to arbitrate in this dispute between himself and the fellow he had served. Williams was not just drawing attention to an underpayment, rather that he and the fellow, and by extension the college, had a fundamental disagreement: Williams believed the 'gratuity' was not optional and the college believed that it was. William's request was a tacit acknowledgement that his ability to bargain directly with members of the college was constrained by regulations governing servants' behavior around remuneration. The decision of the servants' committee in 1920 to address the issue of vacation pay, both the entitlement and the amount, rather than the general level of wages as stated in Amos's letter, suggests the matter was not settled in 1911, and nearly ten years later, despite any further mention in the committee minutes, the college was fully aware that it was still a source of conflict.

The college's response also demonstrated that servants' union activity had quickly and effectively prompted a proposed resolution to the matter where traditional methods of bargaining had consistently failed. Paternalistic management practices enabled disputes like these to remain unsettled for long periods. It was acceptable and common for policies to be applied arbitrarily, based on subjective criteria. Nearly all the authority in the paternalistic employment relationship rested in the individual, rather than in fairly enforced rules, or

objective and transparent decision-making criteria. The lack of uniformity in the exercise of control in the employment relationship led inevitably to a perceived lack of fairness. Over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, workers became less likely to unquestioningly accept this seemingly arbitrary expression of authority in the workplace. This was particularly true in the case of domestic service, an employment relationship that in the early twentieth century was increasingly shaped by changing ideas about the social order, authority, class and masculinity.

After the first bursars' committee meeting on January 28th, the matter was taken up again at Corpus on February 6th. Minutes report that the most junior member of Corpus's servants' committee, the bursar's assistant, attended the meeting at Queen's. These minutes also carefully and precisely note that the assistant 'was present by invitation, without participating in the discussions'.[427] The bursar's assistant was likely instructed by the college not to participate, in order to make it clear to the other attendees that the problem of unionized servants had not immediately affected Corpus. The bursar's assistant reported that the meeting at Queen's had reached an agreement to fix wages, 'under present conditions, £3.0.0 per week might be regarded as the "normal" amount of what a scout's place should be "worth" to him, i.e. including all gratuities and extra payments'. Corpus agreed to raise the scouts' wages by 2/6- weekly, making the total wage £2.12.6 weekly, year round.[428] Other servants' situations were considered and several increases awarded. The second cook, W. Stone, who had not asked for an increase in January, now joined the majority of servants and requested a similar rise. His annual pay was increased from £80 to £85. The under butler was given an additional £6.10.0 to bring his annual salary equivalent to the scouts'. To cover the cost of

[427] Ibid., 6 February 1920.
[428] Ibid.

these increases, the committee decided to terminate the post of messenger at the end of the term, the messenger was to be notified immediately.[429]

The issue of wages at Corpus was not yet settled and the subject was revisited on March 5th. The bursar's assistant reported that eight servants, four of them scouts, requested a further increase in their wages, to £3.0.0 weekly, the amount agreed at the bursars' meeting in January. The committee refused, and instructed the bursar's assistant to inform the servants that the request would not be granted collectively or individually.[430] An attempt at collective bargaining by women assistants was also refused. Mrs. Cook, one of the women who worked as a scout's assistant, asked for an increase in wages for herself and three other women similarly employed. A decision was postponed until the start of Michaelmas term, when it was rejected. The bursar noted that 'no actual sum had been mentioned', a phrase that seemed to indicate that the request was opportunistic.[431] At the time of the request, the rate for women assistants was still 23/- weekly, significantly more than charwomen and slightly less than plate women earned at Magdalen – but about half of the typical pay of a male underservant at the time.

On March 3rd, scouts at Christ Church met again to discuss wages. Minutes reveal that they were in possession of a letter with 'private information re wages of other colleges'.[432] After discussing the matter fully, the committee resolved to 'lay what facts they had before the steward', who promised to discuss the matter with the dean and censors. Although there is no explicit mention, it seems that the scouts at Christ Church were negotiating on their own

[429] Ibid. After confirming that he was prepared to continue without any increase, the messenger was allowed to stay on.
[430] Ibid., 5 March 1920.
[431] Ibid., 8 June 1920.
[432] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1, 3 March 1920.

behalf. The scouts' committee was a cohesive group that had met regularly since at least the mid-nineteenth century and they may have concluded that the union did not offer them significant additional benefits. The leadership structure of the group was well established and recognized by the steward, dean and censors, who preferred to negotiate with a senior representative from the committee, rather than conduct individual negotiations with each scout. The dean, censors, and steward met on March 13th, and the steward tabled the scouts' request for an increase. The steward was aware of the letter that prompted the request, which he described as 'a circular letter lately sent out by an Undergraduates Committee, which they [the servants] alleged had considerably lessened their tips from undergraduates'.[433] The request for an increase was denied, but the steward resolved to communicate to the scouts that the matter would likely be revisited again later in the year. It is not surprising that undergraduates had taken an interest in the ongoing discussions around servants' wages. Several colleges increased the charges made to undergraduates, both resident and non-resident, to cover the higher wage costs. Linking wage increases directly to increases in undergraduates' fees was common, and although there is no explicit mention in archival sources of a 'divide and rule' strategy, these policies would naturally dampen undergraduate sympathies regarding servants' union activity.

Other colleges waited until they had compared information with fellow bursars' committee members before determining their response to Amos's letter. The servants' committee at Oriel met on May 17th and 21st after the treasurer had attended both meetings of the bursars' committee called to discuss the matter of union activity. The report of the meeting at Oriel notes that the college now 'had the advantage of examining the statement which has recently

[433] CCA S.xxxiii.a.1 Minutes of Steward, Dean & Censors' Meetings 1892-1920, 13 March 1920.

been prepared, showing the general rates of pay given to Bed Makers by almost all the other Colleges in Oxford….At those meetings, the conclusion come to was that the general standard of pay for Bed Makers should be about £3 a week or £156 per annum.'[434] Bursars had agreed that senior servants 'who had done good work' might receive more, a maximum of £3.10.0 weekly, or £182 annually. The report noted that Oriel now paid their bedmakers £98 annually, plus 'authorized gratuities' that the college estimated at £30-33. The report then speculated that many residents paid more than the authorized amount of £1 termly, perhaps £1.10.0 and the amount of the gratuities could be estimated at £45. The report also added that occasionally, rooms were vacant, resulting in a loss of potential income from the gratuities, and in this case, the college would pay 5/- weekly or £13 annually in compensation.[435] The estimated total annual cost of this increase in bedmakers' wages for the nine employees affected was approximately £117. It is not clear if the college collected any detailed information on how many servants collected the larger amount, if this was consistent across terms, members and servants, or whether a servant would be compensated by the college in the event that the estimated gratuities of £45 failed to materialize.

Oriel expected that it would also be necessary to raise the wages of other similarly compensated servants to match the higher earnings of the bedmakers, the cost of these increases to the college was estimated to be approximately £41 annually. The expense of servants' labour in the college exceeded the revenue collected from members for this purpose, even before the increased wages. With the pay rise, the college estimated that the annual deficit would total approximately £850 against the £4000 total wage bill. It was proposed to

[434] OC GOV5/A1, the position of treasurer at Oriel is similar to that of a bursar at other colleges.
[435] Throughout the period, the question of whether scouts were entitled to compensation for vacant rooms was negotiated and renegotiated at several colleges. For example see CCA S.xxxvi.a.1, 15 December 1897, scouts at Christ Church petitioned the college to enact a policy of compensation for vacant rooms, which was rejected.

increase the service charge levied on undergraduates to cover the shortfall. This pattern of comparing wages across departments occurred at nearly every college and contradicts the idea that departmental divisions within colleges were an impediment to organization.

At least two colleges, University and Worcester, contacted Amos directly after receiving his letter, with very different approaches. In March 1919, servants at University submitted a memorial to the bursar, Arthur Poynton asking for a temporary increase of 7/6- in their weekly wages to last for one year, and for the college to reconsider the question of wages at the end of the year. The memorial was written in a traditional style and signed on behalf of all the servants by Allen, Bancalari, Bateson and Dix, who also attached a weekly budget to prove the impossibility of supporting a family primarily on the wages of a college servant:

'Expenditure per Week for Husband, Wife and 4 Children

Rent and rates per week	£0.10.0
Grocery	£0.18.0
Meat	£0.14.0
Bread and Flour	£0.07.6
Milk	£0.03.6
Vegetables	£0.04.0
Insurance	£0.00.9
Total	£2.18.3

Income

My wages per week	£2.04.5
Son	£0.14.0
Daughter apprentice	£0.05.0
Total	£3.03.8

Leaving £0.05.5 per week for the following:
Coal, wood, gas, fish, boots and clothing for 6, articles for the house, recreation club (rowing), Odd Fellows Benefit Club, tobacco, doctors bill and medicine'[436]

At a meeting held on March 21st, two days after servants submitted the memorial to the bursar, the college agreed to both the raise and to reevaluate wages at Christmas, the increase

[436] UC:ACC 1171.

to be payable retroactively from January 1919, which servants had not requested.[437] This is a nearly perfect illustration of successful wage bargaining in this paternalistic employment relationship. From the form of the request, a memorial, to the language used to appeal to the employer's concern for the servants' well-being – this petition demonstrates that servants understood precisely the obligations on both sides. The memorial and the budget are carefully worded to show responsible behavior: 'we would not have made this application if it had not been a necessity'; the budget included an explanation for the daughter's seemingly low wages and showed that despite their low income, the family prioritized friendly society membership. Three of the four signatories, Albert Allen, William Bateson, and Edward Dix were also among the eleven servants who had submitted a similar memorial asking for an increase in wages to the master and fellows in 1905.[438] Poynton's swift response similarly demonstrated that he appreciated the sincerity and significance of the request.

Minutes of college meetings do not show any further discussion of wages until February 1920 when Poynton informed the committee that the cost of service exceeded the revenues collected for that purpose. A balance sheet from 1919 revealed that the college's internal expenses exceeded internal revenues by approximately thirty-five percent, the projected deficit in 1920 was over fifty percent. University, like many other colleges, used external income to cover this shortfall and in 1919 after doing so, had a small surplus of £400. However in 1920, Poynton projected that they would not be able to meet their expenses in this way and would actually find themselves £400 in the red. Poynton proposed three

[437] UC:GB4/A1/1-4, 20 March 1919.
[438] UC:ACC 1171

remedies: increase undergraduate fees by £1.10.0 per person, reduce the number of servants employed and employ more women.[439]

There is no mention of the servants' union at University until March 20th, when Poynton informed the college that he had received a letter from Mr. Amos on the 19th. Poynton does not specify the month, but the absence of any mention in previous minutes suggests that Amos did not write to University until March. It is surprising that servants at University decided to enlist the aid of a union, rather than negotiate on their own, considering their efforts in 1919 were successful. They may have grown increasingly uncertain over the winter, having heard not just from servants at nearby Corpus, who were successful in negotiating collectively without union representation – but from servants at Christ Church, who did not receive an increase, or from servants at Oriel, who had not yet had a decision either way. However, if they were not members of the union in January, clearly something happened in those two months that dramatically changed how they felt about the likelihood of a satisfactory outcome in subsequent negotiations. The decision to bring the union into the discussion indicates a breakdown of trust and that servants may have become aware of the possibility of redundancies raised at the college meeting in February by Poynton.

Poynton wrote to Amos the following day and said that the college had decided to meet with its servants later that week to discuss the matter. Poynton asked Amos to forward any of the union's rules that would be relevant to 'our servants' in time for the meeting. The tone of the letter is business-like and brief, but in the two sentences comprising the communication, Poynton manages to use the phrase 'our servants' twice.[440] The presence of the union in the

[439] UC:GB4/A1/1-4, 13 February 1920.
[440] UC:ACC 1171 Letter from A. Poynton to J. Amos 21 March 1920.

negotiation may have represented a challenge to the college's paternalistic authority, but they would not cede control so easily.

Albert Allen acted as a representative for the servants at University, and together with Amos, provided the college with a scale of wages to be used as a basis for the negotiation. Servants quickly reached an agreement with the college on March 28th and Poynton wrote to Amos the following day with the details. The college agreed to pay scouts 55/- a week all year round and to add 5/- a week as a temporary bonus, effectively a raise of 10/-, or twenty percent. At the discretion of the college, senior scouts were eligible to receive more. Servants were not prohibited from receiving gratuities, but the college emphasized that they had no entitlement to those additional payments. Servants were admonished not to 'demand or extort it in any form of indirect pressure on their master'. Kitchen porters and scouts' assistants would receive 30/- weekly, with the kitchen porters also receiving a temporary weekly bonus of 5/-. Poynton closed the letter by stating that this agreement superceded the previous agreement reached in January 1919 'and which we should at any time have been ready to reconsider had our servants approached me directly'.[441]

At about the same time, Amos was also writing to the bursar at Worcester. It appears that the college responded directly to Amos's first letter on March 26th, asking for the names of servants who were union members. Amos replied that he would not provide the names but he confirmed that twenty-eight servants at Worcester were members and that the application for an increase in wages was to apply to all of them.[442] A week later, F.J. Lys, the senior bursar at Worcester, wrote to Poynton. Lys had received another letter from Amos on April 6th,

[441] UC:ACC 1171 Letter from A. Poynton to J. Amos 28 March 1920.
[442] WOR/BUR/8/18/58 Letter from J. Amos to F.J. Lys 27 March 1920. F.J. Lys was bursar until 1920, when he became the provost.

prodding him to respond. Amos baited Lys by revealing that he had already reached a satisfactory agreement with University: 'It may interest you to know that the University College scheme has been accepted by the college servants as a whole. I shall be pleased to send you the scheme if you would like it or perhaps you will get in touch with the Bursar at University'.[443] Lys sent back a terse reply, 'The Senior Bursar has received Mr. Amos further letter. The matter shall be considered when the College reassembles.'[444]

In the midst of that exchange, on April 6th, Lys wrote to Poynton, 'I have had three letters from the man Amos (is he the person who was cast into gaol for sedition during the war?)'. Lys goes on to say that Worcester will not agree to any further general increase of servants' wages and that if any servants have a particular grievance, they will receive no better result by applying through Amos. Any further increase in wages would have to be paid for by increasing undergraduates' fees and in Lys' opinion, 'many of them are less able to afford the increased charges than the servants are able to do without further increase of pay'. Lys asked Poynton to confirm if Amos was telling the truth, if University had 'yielded to his pressure'.[445] The bursars' committee had agreed to fix wages for scouts at £3.0.0 weekly, a fact which Lys reminded Poynton of in his reply, 'Our Junior Bursar told me that Colleges were pledged to act in concert and not to go above £3 but he must have misunderstood.' Lys warned Poynton of the consequences of breaking the pledge, which would be visited on all of them, 'If some College can be got to fix a minimum of £5, it will be quoted against University as University is now quoted against us, and so ad infinitum.'[446]

[443] Ibid., Letter from J. Amos to F.J. Lys, 5 April 1920.
[444] Ibid, Note from F.J. Lys to J. Amos, undated.
[445] UC:ACC 1171 Letter from Lys to Poynton 6 April 1920.
[446] UC:ACC 1171 Letter from Lys to Poynton 8 April 1920.

Just a few months later, further cracks appeared in the bursars' committee wage pact. Poynton received a letter dated June 10th from the bursar at Queen's, George Cronshaw, notifying him that at a committee meeting on May 31st, bursars unanimously expressed their regret that St. John's 'should contemplate raising the wages of their servants beyond a standard which is desirable and reasonable viz: a maximum of 70/- per week for fifty-two weeks in the year' and further, that 'the figure proposed by St. John's is in excess of what other Colleges are inclined to give, and that the Meeting thought such a standard quite impracticable for general use'.[447] St. John's had decided to offer most of their scouts the same wages that University paid to only their most highly compensated senior scouts.

The letter from Queen's also includes a copy of a letter that Worcester sent to their servants, presumably as an example of how to respond to servants' demands without acquiescing. Worcester began by reasserting the primacy of the paternalistic employment relationship and calling out the interference therein by the union. The college's reply to Amos' letters was quoted, 'Your letters have received our careful attention and while we are always prepared to consider sympathetically such individual case of our servants on its merits, we do not see that, where relations between employer and employed are so intimate and personal as in the case of a college and its servants, any good purpose would be served by departing from our accustomed method.'[448] Acknowledging the legitimacy of the union as a participant in this employment relationship as some colleges, like University had done, amounted to a fundamental rejection of the essential nature of the paternalistic employment relationship.

[447] Ibid. Letter from Cronshaw to Poynton, 10 June 1920. The letter is typed/mimeographed and not personally addressed to Poynton, it is possible that a copy was also sent to other bursars not in attendance at the May 31st bursars' committee meeting.
[448] Ibid. Circular sent to Poynton from Cronshaw 10 June 1920.

The union's demands for pay scales denied the paternalistic employer the freedom to differentiate based on subjective criteria. Lys attacked the applicability of pay scales as they pertained to colleges, '…(Worcester) cannot bind itself to accept either any cut and dried schedule of wages or the particular scale already adopted by any college.'[449] Colleges rejected any suggestion that there was homogeneity among them which could be used as a basis for the comparison of wages, an assertion that had already been fairly successfully challenged in the past. Bursars had exchanged wage and benefit information for the whole of the nineteenth century at least, if not for a direct comparison, then in the acknowledgement that enough similarity existed for the exercise to be useful. The introduction of standardized accounting methods in the 1880s facilitated the comparison of a wide variety of data across colleges, not only servants' remuneration.

The union's focus on cash wages, as opposed to other types of remuneration, including pensions, access to housing and security of employment, dramatically changed the conversation around servants' remuneration, which had been focused on other issues before the war. The most important issues prewar were related to uncertainty, particularly income insecurity associated with illness, old age and underemployment. College servants had always been willing to trade higher wages for more security.

The conversation around wages highlighted the disparity of incomes and wealth among the colleges. Poorer colleges like Worcester simply could not successfully compete in the same labour market as wealthier colleges like St. John's, based on cash wages alone. Wage-fixing was an agreement to tacitly address this inequity. Lys also pointed out that all colleges had suffered financially during the war, 'The scale of wages and salaries has been already greatly

[449] Ibid.

raised since 1913 and the increased cost amounts to about £1,900 a year. For some months, the College bore the whole of this addition in the hope that a fall in prices, or economies in other directions, might enable the enhanced expenses to be met without a large increase of charges to undergraduate members.' Of course, Lys went on, this was not the case: undergraduate fees were increased. If fees continued to increase, this would discourage undergraduates from choosing Worcester, further reducing income and threatening the very future of the college. Lys wrote, 'The College has always valued the excellent and loyal co-operation rendered by its servants, but its revenues being strictly limited, if the demand for wages is higher than it can afford, it may be compelled to …drastically reduce its staff or to fall back on service which is less expert and less highly paid. No course could be less desirable, but in fairness it must be remembered that the College has to consider the interests of its undergraduate members as well as of its servants and it is quite impossible to continue indefinitely the policy of piling up burdens on one class to improve the position of the other.'[450]

Union activity and its impact during this period were clearly more extensive than has previously been concluded. Union activity directly increased cash wages, particularly scouts' wages. It is more difficult to untangle the other effects. Undoubtedly it changed the employment relationship, certainly for some individuals and perhaps had lasting effects institutionally. In a letter to Lys in April 1920, Poynton revealed that he was somewhat taken aback by the union activity, particularly of senior servants. 'On the whole, having regard to family responsibilities and pre-war earnings of the servants, we thought we had met the demands fairly and in some cases generously.' Poynton went on to suggest that some senior servants were being excessive in their demands, '…but we were all clear that the money was

[450] Ibid.

none too much for our elder servants'. Poynton told Lys that the college was about to 'elect an Undergraduate Soviet to help us in these matters for servants are undoubtedly trying to have it both ways'.[451]

A few weeks later, the academic term ended, pausing the conversation. When undergraduates, servants and fellows returned in the autumn, the subject of wages was hardly mentioned in archival sources. Although the attention of bursars was focused on the Asquith Commission and the considerable administrative burdens it imposed, colleges were still preoccupied with servants' union activity.

Membership in unions was seen by many as disloyal, but colleges could not always agree on the relative apportionment of blame. Many college authorities, like Lys, seemed to blame the unions for their intrusion, recruiting members and fomenting discord. When the long vacation ended, the warden of Wadham, Joseph Wells wrote an editorial ridiculed the activities of the Oxford Trades Council which he said had 'hitherto done very little…the main activity of the Trades Council has been a very unsuccessful 'bus strike which has caused little inconvenience to the general public, but resulted in a number of men losing their places. An attempt has also been made to bring the college servants into the ranks of a general trade union. The attempt seemed unpromising, for scouts have not much in common with gas workers and general labourers, with whom they were to be united'. The warden described Amos's letters as 'threatening' and said that they were 'politely acknowledged and then ignored, for the bursars had already taken in hand the question of the increase of wages. This has been carried out in all colleges, and college servants have never been so well paid before'. The efforts of the union were clearly superfluous in the warden's opinion and represented an

[451] WOR/BUR/8/18/58, *7* April 1920.

intrusion in the paternalistic employment relationship. Wells continued, 'In Oxford colleges the good old tradition survives, according to which the servant is a real member of the family or the institution of which he forms a part. Masters and men alike recognize this. The scouts are friends as well as servants and they look on the interests of their college as their own interests and loyally support the institutions to which they belong.'[452]

However, individual servants' union activity was committed to institutional memory. In a letter written by R.W. Macan, the master of University, to Poynton in March 1921, Edward Dix's request for a college house was discussed. It appears that Dix was renting a house, his landlord raised his rent, and Dix asked the college for assistance in moving house. In his request, Dix pointed out the advantages to the college, as the college house he was asking for was closer to his employment. Macan considered his request and concluded Dix had to bear some responsibility for the circumstances and could not expect the college to come to his aid. He had refused a promotion that would have required more work, but would have improved his earnings, demonstrating a lack of ambition. 'Dix, if I am not mistaken, elected to stay upon the Kitchen Staircase when he had the offer of a harder and more lucrative one'. The college faced an ever-increasing wage bill, while Dix could enjoy the benefits of scheduled wage increases and falling food prices, 'I do not know, or at least I do not remember the xx years [sic] service rule; but if it means an automatic increase in wages may the more easily tide over – Prices of food are falling: is our wage bill of 70-90£ per week in fall?' Dix had also perhaps been less provident with his earnings than some of his peers, 'It would be a dangerous precedent if when servants' rents are raised they could come to us for the difference. Some are

[452] UC:ACC 1171, The newspaper article was clipped by Poynton and enclosed in the file, but with no date or title. The clipping is likely from a local paper republishing a letter Wells sent to 'The Democrat', from September-October 1920, based on surrounding documents. The original publication does not appear to survive.

wise and have bought their houses….Many people are moving into smaller and cheaper houses'. College housing was also a reward for loyal service - 'Dix is also, if I mistake not, one of our trades union domestics'.[453]

College servants who did not join unions expected their employers to take notice. In a petition for an increase in wages, servants at Lincoln stated, 'The Bedmakers wish to take this opportunity of assuring the college of their loyalty. None are members of the College Servants Union'.[454]

Union activity resulted in higher wages for many servants, but did not address other important features of the labour contract. Many positions still obliged servants to work for discretionary and in-kind payments. This was particularly true for junior servants, who increasingly turned to other employers as college service became less attractive. Time horizons had changed: younger servants were no longer prepared to trust in the internal labour market – that a decade or so of low wages but diligent service would eventually be rewarded with a well-remunerated senior position and security of tenure. College wages were still low and insufficient to afford commodities that increasingly signaled a satisfactory standard of living for the working class: a car, holidays, and home ownership. By the 1930s, college servants no longer enjoyed the status they had previously held for centuries in Oxford.

Although union activity rarely appears in archival sources at all, it is practically invisible after 1921 until the second union drive in 1937-8. The scarcity of evidence makes it difficult to consider how servants themselves interpreted and understood union activity in 1919-20 and again in the late 1930s. Bob Dickens was a servant at New College in 1920 and recalled the first union drive during an interview in 1969, when he was retired from his position in charge

[453] UC:ACC 1171, 23 March 1921.
[454] LC/G/M/5, undated petition p.51-2.

of the buttery at Corpus, where he completed his career. Dickens remembered another meeting to discuss the unions in the 1920s at New College, where the butler stood up and asked the servants assembled, 'Would you class yourselves with railwaymen and bus people?'. Dickens felt that opinions on the union were divided by age, with older servants like the butler 'dead against it'. Younger servants supported unionization, although Dickens recollected there were far fewer of them than of their older counterparts. He largely echoed the grievances listed in the 1919 article, but particularly the issues around vacation underemployment. [455]

Dickens explained that younger servants wanted unions because 'times were "really bad", [there was] discontent when they had to find other work in the vacations, when the College gave them only ten shillings a week retaining fee; 'and they found out that if people could get away in the summer… you could make half a year's wages in 3 months. It was hard work, but it paid them to do it.' Dickens and his father, also a servant at New College, left Oxford in the summers to work in the Lake District, and eventually Bob left New College to work there year round for nine years before returning to Oxford.[456] The interviewers did not ask, and Dickens did not offer, whether he had ever belonged to a union. Dickens's comments highlight the difference between the experiences of junior and senior servants. Senior servants largely had year round employment in the college, if not steady earnings, by the early decades of the twentieth century; junior servants still faced considerable insecurity. By 1920, it appears that many had lost confidence and patience in traditional methods of bargaining with paternalistic college employers: memorials, individual personal appeals and representation

[455] G.A. Jonge and A.J. Purkis, 'Interview with Bob Dickens' 20 June 1969, 'Harrison, 'Transcript', pp. 6228-9.
[456] Ibid., pp. 6222-34. It is not clear if Dickens received the retaining fee while he worked at New College, Corpus or both.

through a senior servant – and turned to trade unions. The transcripts of these interviews also suggest that fifty years later, even retired servants were still cautious about revealing their personal views on unions and guarded about their own union activity.

The Second Union Drive: 1937

A second union drive started in 1937 around the same issues of low pay and insecurity of employment. Again, archival evidence of union activity during this period is limited, but newspaper articles offer some insight. The second union drive started very much like the first, college servants approached a union or the trades council and they responded with an invitation for all interested servants to attend a general meeting. The National Union of General and Municipal Workers held an open meeting on 11 April 1937 to discuss a proposed College Servants' Charter. The letter stated that 'servants had appealed to the branch for help' and proposed acting together with servants to improve working conditions. 'Oxford is more prosperous now than formerly; do you share in this? Food, clothing, rent, etc. are all rising in price; are your wages rising or are they falling? Is there an Economy Committee at work in your College? Will these committees ever improve wages or working conditions of servants? Are you a youth who has displaced a Man? Are you a Boy who has displaced a Youth? Are you working at the rate of 3 1/2d per hour? Or 6d, or 7d or 9d per hour?'

After the meeting, an article in the *Oxford Mail* gave the example of an underservant's working conditions as precisely the sort of circumstances that union activity was trying to address. The servant, aged 19, worked for 'one of the richest colleges' and was 'doing a heavy job, carrying dishes from the kitchen to the plate room, up flights of stairs from 7am to 11am, 12:30pm to 2pm and from 6pm to 9pm. This was 8 ½ hours a day for a seven day week, and in

addition he had afternoon duties every third day. In vacation he worked approximately a 44 hour week of 5 ½ days on work round the college such as window cleaning. His wages were £1 a week, less stoppages for insurance. His weekly work in term time amounted to approximately 67 ½ hours weekly, giving a rate of 3 ½d hourly. As the matter stood, this servant had hardly a chance of promotion.'[457] Making explicit the refusal of the 'richest' colleges to pay a fair wage was new, there was little reference to colleges' wealth in the first union drive. This sentiment reflects changing ideas about class, wealth and inequality.

The employment of underservants, particularly as scout's assistants, had been problematic at least since the mid-nineteenth century. Most of them were hired and worked directly for senior servants, paid only in food and gratuities. It was commonly suggested that scouts pushed too much work onto 'their boys', a system that, according to college authorities, allowed senior servants to become lazy and complacent. Some colleges tried abolishing the practice, but without a systematic rearrangement of the work, including promoting or hiring more senior servants, any changes were typically short-lived. It was an issue in the first union drive and later in the second, after twenty years, little improvement had been made for many junior servants.

By 1919, the labour market had changed significantly and boys were in short supply. In March 1919, the steward, dean and censors at Christ Church discussed returning to the traditional breakfast service in members' rooms, rather than communally in the hall. It was agreed that the only impediment was the service, which depended on the availability of scouts' boys. The steward reported that 'boys were plainly unprocurable at the old rate, when they received from college no more than a daily shilling for waiting at dinner, it was resolved that

[457] "Works 67 ½ Hours a Week for £1' *Oxford Mail* April 12, 1937

scouts should be authorized to offer them as college pay £5 a term for beginners, rising to £10 a term, to include pay for waiting in hall'.[458] Under the prewar system, the college made no contribution to the pay of boys working on staircases during the day, only making a contribution to their pay for working in the hall in the evenings. During the day, boys worked for food and a percentage of the senior scout's gratuities. The decision reflects the steward, Arthur Slessor's understanding that now the college could no longer expect either the scouts or the boys, or both as had previously been the case, to assume the cost of their training period.

Young men in Oxford had more opportunities, both in education and in employment, during the interwar period than had been available in the late nineteenth century. Within the colleges, clerical work expanded over this period and nearly every college hired boys from the age of fourteen to work as clerks in the bursary or in the kitchen. Clerical work typically offered better working conditions and was viewed as more respectable, often with better career prospects. An undated memo from the 1920s at University shows that the college offered employment to 'boy clerks' at the rate of 10/- weekly to start, with regular increases scheduled over the first few years to 30/- weekly. Perhaps most importantly, the college saw the position as the start of a career path culminating in the job of second bursary clerk, at an annual salary of £120.[459] In the 1930s, the Cowley Motorworks offered an attractive alternative for younger men in Oxford and colleges faced increasing competition for their labour. Attitudes towards domestic service had changed, college service was increasingly feminized and with this change, came lower pay for subordinate positions.

[458] CCA S.xxxiii.a.1, 15 March 1919.
[459] UC:ACC 1171, written by Poynton sometime in the early 1920s. The increase in pay is also likely for the progression from part-time employment to full time employment.

Although Oxford colleges were notoriously slow to adopt most labour-saving technologies, the introduction of electricity for lighting, gas fires, better sanitary arrangements and vacuum cleaners meant that colleges believed fewer hours of labour were required to maintain the domestic arrangements. The responses of some colleges to these circumstances, a reduction in the quantity of labour required in the college, the shortage of younger men willing to work in college service under the current conditions and the threat of a second union drive, broke the fundamental promise of the paternalistic employment relationship – 'a job for life'. Norman Dix, the son of Edward Dix and a longtime servant at University, was interviewed in 1997 about his experiences working for the college. Norman started work at the college in 1931, but had been familiar with both the college and the work through his father.

Norman recalled that in 1937, rumors began to circulate about the employment of under scouts like himself. '…(W)e discussed it with other under scouts at Colleges, at Magdalen and at Queen's. Then we found someone over at Queen's, you see, a scout over there who had got access to the Bursar's notes and in these notes was the business about getting rid of all the junior staff, you see. It didn't give any reason. Then we left it at that. And then the one over at Queen's in the beginning of '38 he said "There's something between the head of Magdalen, the head of Queen's, Teddy Hall, and various other colleges, they are all getting together. And that's exactly what happened with Beveridge you see.[460] Beveridge sent for us at the end of summer term 1938 and I don't know whether I was the last to see him there, but I did say that I was very sorry to leave because my family had all been there, with my father and my half-

[460] William Henry Beveridge, Master of University College from 1937-40, also author of *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (1942). Examining national insurance payments from before and after this incident suggests that at least seven of twenty-five men employed as bedmakers or assistants were laid off, UC ACC 437/15.

brothers. He didn't relent and he said "No, there are plenty of jobs going outside and I am quite sure you will find something."'[461]

This decision, taken collectively by several members of the bursars' committee, stands in sharp contrast to Wells' earlier description of college service as a 'family' relationship. Norman Dix appealed to the traditional view espoused by Wells and others in their attack on union activity. Dix reminded Beveridge of his loyalty and appealed to Beveridge to remember his own, on behalf of the college. The decision of the colleges was in part based on the use of quantitative wage data to evaluate the relative benefits and costs of employing underservants.[462] Colleges likely also associated union activity with younger servants, which may have been misguided given the experience of union membership at University in the 1920s.

4.3. Unemployment Insurance

In the spring and early summer of 1937, at the same time that servants were meeting with union representatives, the domestic bursars' committee was actively campaigning against including college servants in the national unemployment insurance scheme. A letter from the chairman of the committee and the bursar at Trinity, Philip Landon to the secretary of the unemployment insurance statutory committee read in part, 'The status of a College servant under existing conditions is in practice one of permanency, and the risk of unemployment is almost non-existent. The intimate relationship between the College and its employees has no parallel in other types of employment: thus the Colleges make a universal practice of seeing to

[461] UC:Robin Darwall-Smith, 'Transcript of Peter Bayley's interview with Norman Dix' 25 March 1997
[462] Harrison briefly mentions these layoffs. 'University College's new deal – by installing electric fires and centralizing breakfast – cleared the way for drastic staff cuts, and hence for cuts in charges.' Brian H. Harrison, 'College Life, 1918-1939' in Brian H. Harrison (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford. Vol. 8, the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1994), p.106.

the welfare of their regular staff, so that, in such an event as a breakdown in health, steps are always taken by the College to secure other suitable work for the man concerned; and every College maintains a contributory pension scheme, which provides an adequate livelihood for its staff upon retirement.'[463]

College servants were exempt from unemployment insurance until the 1940s.[464] The inclusion or exclusion of domestic servants in these schemes more generally had been a complicated matter. From the 1920 Unemployment Insurance Acts, all domestic servants, 'except those employed in for-profit business or trade', were exempt.[465] The distinction between these categories was brought before the courts, investigated by a royal commission and debated in parliament. One of the first cases brought before the High Court would have likely attracted the close attention of the college authorities. In 1921, the court decided that employees of the Junior Carleton Club on Pall Mall, including a wine butler, hall porter, waiters, cooks and housemaids, were all exempt.

The High Court's decision defined domestic servant as 'servants whose main or general function is to be about their employers' persons, or their general establishments, residential or quasi-residential, for the purpose of ministering to their employer's needs or wants, or to the needs or wants of those who are members of their establishments, or of those resorting to such establishments, including guests'. The club had appealed the decision of the ministry of labour that these employees were not exempt based on a test of residence, as the club's employees

[463] KC/STA 2 B2/3, 29 May 1937 Letter from Philip Landon sent to the Secretary, Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee.
[464] Several categories of workers were granted certificates of exception. These included employees of railways, public utilities, employees of national and local government, and any employees who were enrolled in a pension scheme established by an act of parliament.
[465] The university had obtained exemptions for their employees from the weekly contributions of 7d. for men and 6d. for women in December 1925, on the basis that their employment was permanent. The university was also exempt from paying the employer contribution of 8d. and 7d. respectively, UOC/12/9/1.

were non-resident. Both parties to the case agreed that the club was operating as a not-for-profit. The decision of the court held that residence was not essential and that club servants were to be treated as domestic servants for the purposes of the 1920 Unemployment Insurance Act. Although occupations were not recorded consistently in the census, college servants were frequently classified as club servants and nearly all were non-resident.

Colleges evidently found the specifics of exemption confusing and occasionally records show that they paid in error or asked for clarification on the status of a particular servant.[466] In 1921, Keble asked for the refund of payments made on behalf of Woodward, the messenger; Evans, the shoeblack and baths man; Templeton, the baths and bicycle man; and Grundy, the servant in care of electrical light.[467]

In 1931, a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate unemployment insurance. On the definition of domestic service as it related to unemployment insurance, the commission's report listed a number of cases that had been put before the ministry of labour to decide whether or not they were exempt, including an attendant at a university museum (exempt), and a painter and decorator employed at a college (not exempt). The commission found that

[466] Some of this confusion may have come from familiarity with exemptions obtained by the university for its workers, not just domestic servants, under Unemployment Insurance Acts 1920 to 1923, part II (d) iv, that allowed exemptions for workers who were 'entitled to rights in a superannuation fund established by or in pursuance of an Act of Parliament for the benefit of persons in that employment'. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1923, Section II (1) established employee pension schemes for these universities. UOC/12/9/1. It also appears that the definition of 'domestic servant' was variously interpreted by the university. For example, Professor R. Southwell wrote to H. Lodge, the clerk of accounts at the University Chest, that his engineering laboratory would 'continue (until stopped) our practice of dispensing with Unemployment Insurance for laboratory mechanics, on the grounds that theirs is a kind of domestic service'. UOC/12/9/2, 4 March 1933. Southwell later joked about the status of these workers in a letter to Lodge on 7 March 1933, 'Can anything be done now to put Miss Castle on the same basis? Of course the greater part of her three years is now completed, but I wish I had thought of the plea of domestic service at the time when she came, because I think we could more easily disguise her as a house-maid than Dodd as a footman if an emergency occurred!', UOC/12/9/2.

[467] KC/STA2/B2/3

servants employed by the colleges and universities were typically exempt, but those performing exactly the same work in licensed university lodging houses were not exempt.[468]

The issue of whether or not college servants were exempt, and perhaps more importantly ought to be exempt, was debated back and forth for years. In the 1935 Act, the rules regarding domestic servants were the same as in 1920, however the schedule of exemptions listed several criteria that later drew the attention of the colleges. An employee could receive an exemption if it could be shown that they had an entitlement in a superannuation fund, or if they had been employed by the same employer for three years or, if in the opinion of the minister, 'the employment was, having regard to the normal practice of the employer, permanent in character'. An exception was also allowed if, in the opinion of the minister, it was unnecessary to insure employees under the Act.

From servants' perspectives, did the fact that college service was non-insurable make these jobs less attractive? When cash wages are relatively low, workers struggle to accumulate enough savings to self-insure against periods of unemployment. Occupations that do not offer the protections of social insurance are 'relegated to a lower economic status'.[469]

In 1937, a proposed draft of changes to the 1935 Unemployment Insurance Act, that would have brought all college servants into the scheme, came to the attention of college bursars. The chairman of the domestic bursars' committee, Philip Landon, penned the reply. On behalf of the committee, he listed several objections to the proposed changes.[470] Landon asserted that any intrusion by the state into this unique and intimate employment relationship would deprive the colleges of the incentive which 'moves them to stabilize all their employees

[468] Home Department, *Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance Final Report*, November 1932, pp. 200-1.
[469] Erna Magnus, 'The Social, Economic and Legal Conditions of Domestic Servants II' *International Labour Review*, (30, Issue 3, September 1934),p.342.
[470] UOC/12/9/2.

for life' and raised the possibility that all of these employees would become casualized, in work for only six months of the year. The cost to colleges and their servants would 'be out of all proportion to any advantages that could accrue' and the colleges would likely find those funds 'must be taken from funds intended and used for undergraduates who are unable to come to the University without financial assistance'. Landon suggested that a 'wide enquiry' into servants' opinions showed that the servants themselves were opposed to paying into the insurance scheme and that their real wages would be reduced, which would may 'weaken the strong sentimental bond which is the basis of their devoted service to their Colleges'. Landon conceded that 'ordinary domestic servants' might now be brought into the scope of the Act but even so, college servants should continue to receive an exemption. Landon asked the minister to meet with representatives of the domestic bursars' committee to discuss the matter further and closed his letter by adding that he had sent a copy of the same letter to the president of the board of education 'in order that he might be aware of the inroads which the proposed regulations will make upon charitable funds'.[471]

It appears as though the colleges' arguments were convincing enough and in 1937, the proposed draft legislation included very specific exemptions for college servants. The proposed legislation included domestic servants who worked in educational establishments, with the exception of those persons employed in an establishment where 'their employment consists wholly or mainly in in the rendering of services in any one or more of the undermentioned capacities, or for the benefit of persons residing at an educational establishment'. The list of exempted capacities included occupational descriptions that would

[471] Ibid.

include practically every college servant, some of these terms were unique to the Oxford and Cambridge colleges, including bedmaker, scout and gyp.[472]

The proposed changes were debated in the House of Commons a few weeks later, on February 15th. Jack Lawson, MP for Chester-le-Street, raised the issue and protested against the exclusion of those domestic servants working in residential colleges and schools saying, 'I gather that what happened was that Oxford and Cambridge colleges and other well-known schools protested that their domestics had a certain security of tenure which other domestics had not'.[473] Lawson summarized the long and problematic history of domestic servants and unemployment insurance, and restated the minority opinion given in the Royal Commission report in 1932, that all domestic servants, in private homes and public institutions should be insured. He argued that college servants were classed as domestic servants but were doing 'real manual work', and that honorable members who 'have lived in them in a way which most of us have not had the chance of doing – know quite well that it is much nearer the standard of service of a first-class hotel than that of a small, private domestic establishment.' Insurance was given to hotel servants, but refused to college servants. Lawson would not oppose the changes, because they did effectively bring into the scheme a large number of workers, approximately 170,000, but he called attention to the estimated 30,000 domestic servants who were still excluded based on these proposed changes and asked that the status of those workers be reconsidered.

Although they had been successful in obtaining these categorical legislative exemptions, colleges clearly understood that these could be rescinded. A few weeks later, colleges were

[472] KC/STA2/B2/3 Letter to the Secretary, the Curators of the University Chest from Alice M. Jennings, Ministry of Labour, 11 January 1938.
[473] [Hansard] *Parliamentary Debates*, vol.331 cc.1837-1854, 15 February 1938.

making arrangements to ensure that they qualified for the types of exemptions outlined in the 1935 Act, in particular, membership in an approved superannuation scheme. Christ Church, like several colleges, managed its own pension fund and as such, its servants were not members of a qualifying scheme. A letter from H. Percival, the steward at Christ Church to Cecil Emden, a fellow at Oriel, makes clear his reasoning, 'I am asking the [University] Chest to take in our servants into their scheme of contributory pensions. The reason is that by so doing we get exemption of contribution to the Unemployment Fund if and when the provisions governing the latter are made applicable to College Servants.'[474] Enrollment in a superannuation scheme provided sufficient evidence to the state that the employment relationship was permanent, although it would not by itself offer an employee any protection against unemployment, or any financial support in the event of termination.

A 1940 leaflet titled 'Ministry of Labour and National Service: Unemployment Insurance Acts Insurance of Domestic Workers' clearly shows that college servants were still excluded from the unemployment insurance scheme – 'Gate porter, gyp, messenger, porter, scout' – categorized in the same way as private indoor domestic servants.[475] It appears that it was not until the 1946 National Insurance Act that all of these categorical exemptions were removed.

[474] OC TF2/B1/2, 11 March 1938.
[475] Ibid.

5. Uncertainty and Insurance

Examples of retired college servants occasionally appear in college histories and include apocryphal stories of ordinary servants who managed to accumulate sufficient wealth to enjoy an enviable standard of living at the end of their careers. These depictions further reinforce the image of colleges as generous employers and their servants as shrewd masters of the 'perquisite game', but these types of stories and their effect on colleges' attitudes about their responsibilities towards older servants deserve reexamination.[476]

J.M. Crook's history of Brasenose offers the example of David East, a scout who retired sometime in the late 1870s and was the 'owner of a large section of Longwall Street - provision for his old age - out of earnings from his trade'.[477] East lived at 7 Longwall Street from the 1840s until his death at the age of 69 in 1882. He had a large family to support, a wife and six children. Scouts appointed at Brasenose in 1865 earned approximately £35-40 annually in cash wages from the college, together with additional perquisites and gratuities.[478] East likely relied on contributions from other family members in his household, including his wife, sons and his father-in-law William Baxter, who worked as the librarian at the university's Botanic Garden. The family and a servant lived together in the six-bedroom house where East and his wife Ruth were licensed by the university to provide lodgings; they offered

[476] 'But the perquisite game was played unflinchingly and unblushingly unless the employer made a stand against it', Walter Woodgate, *Reminiscences of an old Sportsman: a gossip of memories and moods* (1909) p.116-122. Woodgate matriculated at Brasenose in 1859, although East was not his scout, they were contemporaries.
[477] J. Mordaunt Crook, *Brasenose The Biography of an Oxford College* (Oxford, 2007), p.251. [Hereafter Crook, *Brasenose*]
[478] BNC:BF/11/C1/1-2; East's wage records do not survive, this figure is from a summary of starting annual salaries from the late 1800s. No junior scout's starting salary at BNC was above £40 until the late 1890s.These records suggest that after promotion to senior scout, East likely earned about £50 annually in cash wages.

one set of rooms at least until the 1870s.[479] East did not own his home, a notice from 1878 lists the house and the three small cottages adjacent at Longwall Place for sale at auction by the executors of the estate of Mrs. Sarah Grunning; the advertisement suggested that prospective owners could expect rental income of £30 annually from the current tenant, Mr. East.[480]

When East died in 1882, his estate was valued at approximately £405, which was less than the value of the home he occupied.[481] East's rent would have consumed a sizable percentage of his annual cash wages and the expenses associated with raising a large family, along with the seasonal nature of college employment likely made it difficult to accumulate any substantial savings, particularly the surplus necessary to make an illiquid investment in real estate. None of the information available suggests East experienced the type of prosperity indicated in Crook's account or a standard of living in retirement out of the ordinary for a man of East's socioeconomic status. [482]

What standard of living could a college servant expect when their capacity for work diminished? 'College servant' encompasses a wide range of positions, from a highly compensated cook, with annual wages of at least £100 and at least half that again in perquisites, to a casual worker like a common-room boy, employed in term time only with no cash wages, working for tips and food. The types of assistance and insurance available for these servants in times of hardship reveals as much variation as their incomes would suggest. The city and the university accepted that the academic calendar meant that most college

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[479] LHD/L/2/5 Records show that East charged lodgers £1 per term for service, 6/- termly for boot cleaning and 5/6- weekly in the winter months for coal and fagots (bundled wood). These charges were typical and suggest that if the rooms were fully occupied, the family could expect to earn approximately £13-15 annually from this work.

[480] *JOJ* 6 April 1878. The house and cottages, which rented for an additional £9 annually, realized £750 at auction.

[481] *NPCE&W* 1882, p.273

[482] One of the most widely circulated rumors concerns a porter at Trinity, supposed to have left an estate valued at £15-20,000. Crook, *Brasenose*, p. 251.

servants were out of work or on a significantly reduced income for about half the year and unable to accumulate much in the way of long-term savings. Employer-directed savings schemes began at Oxford colleges in the mid-nineteenth century and were motivated equally by an interest in promoting middle-class values as well as concern to prevent poverty among elderly or infirm college servants.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the responsibility for managing the risks associated with old age was shared between the employer, the servant and the state. Poor relief and charity were unlikely sources of support for infirm or elderly college servants; particularly before colleges began paying poor rates in 1858. Rather than distribute poor law funds, guardians or organizers of other local charities likely contacted college authorities and reminded them of their obligation to former employees. The relative weight of this responsibility shifted over the century, but at least until the 1850s, colleges bore the majority of the cost of retirement for most long-serving employees. One of the chief attractions of college service was security, a 'job for life'.

It is difficult to estimate the level of need among college servants for assistance in times of financial uncertainty. Were most servants able to manage these periods of hardship on their own? It seems unlikely. In 1937, Barnett House in Oxford collected data from fourteen colleges and halls about the occupational distribution and wages of their servants as part of a larger project on social services in the city. The survey estimated that in 1937, about a third of college employees worked on the staircases, the same positions that in the nineteenth century offered relatively insecure rights to an *ex gratia* pension. The survey concluded that a working-class family of three: a husband, wife and one child, living in Oxford needed a

minimum weekly income of £3.10.0 to support their household.[483] According to the survey, 70% of servants at these fourteen colleges and halls earned wages of less than £3 weekly.[484]

It is reasonable to assume that the occupational distribution of servants in the preceding decades was broadly similar. It is also reasonable to assume that income distributions were broadly similar, and as a consequence, accumulating any meaningful amount of savings for old age must have been difficult throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for all but the most highly compensated servants. In the example above, in 1937, only 6.5% of college servants earned cash wages of more than £4 weekly. Conditions in earlier periods were even more challenging. In the mid to late-nineteenth century, much of their remuneration was in-kind and most servants found themselves underemployed, if not unemployed, outside of the academic terms. Any savings a servant managed to accumulate were typically necessary to survive periods of reduced or nonexistent household income during the long vacations. Before the widespread adoption of pension schemes and with them, the institution of compulsory retirement ages, some college servants who were able to save, may have chosen not to, in the expectation that they would have been able to work well into old age, albeit in a reduced capacity. The promise of a pension or other financial support at the end of their working life was a strong incentive for servants to accept lower wages and to stay with one employer, rather than move from college to college. Many servants, therefore, needed assistance when they were beyond the traditional working age – whether this was provided by

[483] SJC ADMIN VIII c.9, 1 October 1937, Letter from Grace Hadow, Society of Oxford Home Students to Ronald Hart-Synnot, the bursar at St. John's.
[484] Ibid., 12 October 1937, Letter from C. Bourdillon, General Secretary at Barnett House to Hart-Synnot, the bursar at St. John's. These figures for 1937 wages do not include gratuities or any in-kind remuneration. Bourdillon provided these figures in advance of their publication (in summarized form) in Barnett House Survey Committee, *A Survey of the Social Services in the Oxford District, Vols. I & II*, (Oxford, 1940). The letter does not identify the colleges, and sorts servants into four categories: bursary and other clerks; kitchen staff; staircase servants; and others.

employers, the state, or charities.

In addition to the earnings of family members and *ex gratia* pension awards, college servants could provide some income for themselves and their dependents through self-organized strategies, like the purchase of life insurance and burial insurance, and membership in mutual aid societies. Although historians have explored the history of friendly societies during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, little has been written about the relative importance of this type of insurance to household income during this period, likely due to the paucity of source material.[485] This is particularly true for older workers, for whom a weekly disability or sickness benefit from their friendly society acted as a pension. Most of the literature on the early nineteenth century focuses on the structure of these societies, the circumstances surrounding their establishment and their role as *de facto* trade unions. College servants' friendly societies share many traits with those described in the literature, however they differ in important ways. Mutual aid societies complemented, rather than replaced, the traditional system of *ex gratia* pensions awarded by colleges to retiring servants. College pensions, particularly the way they were calculated and awarded, remained relatively unchanged through the mid-nineteenth century.

By the late nineteenth century, the employment contract reflected a fundamental shift in the apportionment of responsibility for managing the financial risk associated with death, illness, and most importantly, old age. Beginning with contributory savings schemes for the purchase of life insurance in the mid-nineteenth century, colleges experimented with a variety of strategies for managing the cost of servants' retirement and by the 1920s, all colleges but

[485] One of the few quantitative examinations of the relative importance of these payments to household budgets is found in S. Horrell and D. Oxley, 'Work and prudence: Household responses to income variation in nineteenth-century Britain' *European Review of Economic History*, 4 (2000), pp.22-57, [Hereafter Horrell and Oxley]

two had contributory pension schemes. This chapter explores the history of these strategies, from both the employer and employees' perspectives.

5.1. Individual Strategies: personal savings and kinship networks

Very few sources survive to provide insight into college servants' savings patterns outside of employer-sponsored schemes during this period. Underemployment in the long vacations was endemic and it seems unlikely that most servants were able to accumulate long-term savings, rather that they concentrated their efforts on short-term savings that would smooth out earnings over the year. Those with enough income to save may have chosen to deposit some of this cash in the local savings bank. One statement survives from the Oxford Savings Bank during this period and shows that well over a thousand domestic servants, male and female, held some savings in the bank. The average funds deposited by male and female servants are roughly equivalent, about £30 per depositor.[486] Although there is insufficient evidence for any real comparison or upon which to draw any conclusions, this would seem to be a considerable sum, suggesting higher than average savings rates, consistent with a highly seasonal economy, where workers needed to accumulate enough to survive periods of under or unemployment. In 1899, nearly sixty years later, 91% of Post Office savings account holders had a balance of £4 or less.[487]

Senior servants with higher incomes and the corresponding capacity to accumulate long-term savings sometimes invested in real property or in other business ventures. William Gunstone, a scout and later the butler of the SCR at Magdalen, borrowed £700 in 1843 to

[486] BL:G.A. Oxon c.57. In 1851, there were 8,145 employed men and 4,600 employed women in the city of Oxford. Eleanor Chance et al., 'Modern Oxford', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4, the City of Oxford*, ed. Alan Crossley and C.R. Elrington (London, 1979), pp. 181-259. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol4/pp181-259 [accessed 8 May 2018], fn.301.
[487] Paul Johnson, *Saving and Spending The Working-Class Economy in Britain 1870-1939* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 100-2, [Hereafter Johnson, *Saving*].

purchase one and a half acres of land in St. Clement's near the college. This speculative investment proved disastrous for Gunstone, who had lost over £500 on this transaction at the time of his death in 1859.[488] John Dover, the porter at Oriel, similarly speculated on land in St. Clement's at about the same time. Dover approached the college for some advice, and notes from a conversation with the treasurer on 22 October 1857 provide some details of his circumstances.[489]

Unlike Gunstone, who appears to have made an unwise investment, Dover's difficulties were partly related to cash flow. Dover purchased land and built two houses on Alma Place in St. Clement's, the treasurer noted that Dover was promised funds from 'another quarter, in which he was deceived' and then borrowed £300 from the Oxford and Abingdon Building Society. He also owned the land on Speedwell Street where he built his own house, which cost £380, £150 of which he borrowed from the building society. Dover paid £7.10.0 to service the loan on his house, and also had to cover the difference between the rent collected on the Alma Place properties, £30 annually and the cost of the mortgage, £11.2.11 quarterly. Dover had owned the properties for ten years when he met with the treasurer, and it appears that the rent had stayed the same over this period. Dover thought these houses were now worth approximately £1000, but he had fallen behind on the loan payments and believed that if he could not pay off the balance of loan, which was now due, the building society would sell the houses. The treasurer observed that Dover was in a difficult position financially and 'had nothing laid by'. Dover had a large family, six daughters and three sons, six of whom still

[488] Sheppard, *Gunstones*, pp.29-32. William Gunstone (1801-1859), his father William Gunston (1776-1842) and his son, Richard 'Gunner' Gunstone (1840-1924) were also servants of the college.
[489] OC:GOV/B1/1/6; Oriel allowed some servants to have a portion of their wages withheld and the college paid interest on these funds. In the late nineteenth century, both the cook and the porter had regular deductions from their wages, these transactions are recorded in the Junior Treasurers' Accounts.

lived at home. Two daughters had moved to Birmingham to take up positions in manufacturing, each earning 10/- weekly. Of his children still at home, one daughter was able to earn 5-6/- weekly as a dressmaker, but was not always employed. One son was leaving soon to work in Africa, and the rest were still in school.

Several months later in June, Dover had still not paid the building society and the treasurer advised him to sell outright. Dover eventually did, paid the society and by his calculations lost about 8% on the transaction. Still, it was noted that during this period of hardship, Dover kept up the premiums of £3.17.1 annually on his life insurance policy of £100.

These two cases, Gunstone and Dover, show that some highly compensated servants were able to save enough to make speculative investments in real property.[490] Their activities demonstrate a level of knowledge about the local housing market and finance that is not immediately suggested by their professional experience. However, many positions in a college encouraged entrepreneurship, and servants frequently developed close relationships with local businesspeople which likely facilitated access to other opportunities. Senior servants worked in close proximity to the college bursar, who typically had relevant experience in managing investments, particularly if the bursar had responsibility for looking after the college estates. Servants frequently looked to college authorities, particularly bursars, for advice and assistance managing their personal financial matters.

Dover undoubtedly sought ways to supplement his income in order to meet the costs of supporting a large family. The demands of a porter's job would have made the passive income

[490] During the mid-nineteenth century, Oxford experienced unusual growth in speculative building. Chance, Eleanor et al., 'Modern Oxford', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4, the City of Oxford*, ed. Alan Crossley and C.R. Elrington (London, 1979), pp. 181-259. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol4/pp181-259 [accessed 8 May 2018], fn. 117-123.

from rental property particularly attractive. The tone of the treasurer's notes does not suggest that he believed Dover had invested unwisely, rather that Dover had first been deceived by another investor, and then the expenses of his household made it impossible to find the additional funds to manage his real estate venture. The treasurer's responses to Dover show clearly that the college expected Dover's family, particularly his older children, to contribute financially, especially during periods of hardship; the collection of information about a servant's household's income in this way was routine. Requests for assistance – and it is not clear whether Dover was asking for financial assistance, for advice, or both – are often accompanied by detailed notes that show colleges' enquiries concerned not only the current contributions of family members, but their earning potential, as evidenced by the treasurer's questions about the children's ages and their education.

These enquiries typically focused on members of a servant's household, but in the case of older servants, particularly widows, the college would look outside the home, to younger family members who were capable of contributing financially. In all cases, the importance of family labour networks in this labour market meant that most family members were simultaneously affected by seasonal underemployment outside the academic terms. This necessarily limited the level of assistance that kinship networks could provide.

Oxford Savings Bank 1841 Summary

No. of Depositors	*Description of Depositors*	*Total Amount belonging to each 'Class'*			*Average Amount to each Person*			
		£	s.	d.	£	s.		d.
442	Small Tradesmen and Shopkeepers	17,212	13	0	38	18		11
435	Mechanics and Journeymen	10,594	7	0	24	7		1
65	Labourers employed in Trade	1,654	19	6	25	8		11
375	Small Farmers, Husbandsmen, and Agricultural Labourers	12,339	11	0	32	18		0
571	Male Servants	17,793	10	4	31	3		2 ¾
1024	Female or Domestic Servants	30,737	17	0	30	0		1
229	Widows	11,917	9	1	52	0		0 ¾
38	Governesses and School Mistresses	911	9	4	23	19	11¾	
196	Dressmakers	4,792	14	1	24	8		9
1284	Children	17,479	10	10	13	12		3
21	Others – not particularized in the above classification	939	0	9	44	14		3 ¾
4680		**£126,373**	**1**	**11**	**£27**	**0**		**0 ¾**
56	Charitable Societies	2,804	16	10				
88	Benefit Clubs	10,194	12	6				
4824		**£139,372**	**11**	**3**				

Table 14 Oxford Savings Bank 1841 Summary, source: BL:G.A.Oxon c.57

5.2. Charity and the Poor Law

In addition to personal savings and assistance offered by kinship networks, in times of hardship servants could appeal to their parish and private charities for assistance.[491] The local 'mixed economy of welfare' in Oxford has been examined in some detail, particularly the importance of charity. Tomkins estimated that in late eighteenth-century Oxford, spending by endowed charities represented approximately one quarter of poor relief spending during the same period.[492] Dyson looked at Oxford in a slightly later period, at the decades immediately preceding the new poor law, and similarly concluded that charitable provision remained an

[491] There is one private external charity that exclusively assisted college servants' widows. In 1686, Thomas Hodgkins left £400 in his will to provide pensions for four widows of college manciples or college servants. The charity was still providing assistance to widows of college employees as late as 1961.
[492] Alannah Tomkins, *The Experience of Urban Poverty, 1723-82* (2006).

important component of this mixed economy. Dyson estimated that if spending by subscription charities that provided medical care was included in these estimates, the total spent by charities on the poor may have been up to half of poor relief expenditure.[493]

How did college servants access this type of assistance; what types of requests from servants were received, approved and denied by these charities; and how did these institutions interact with one another? Colleges did not pay poor rates until 1858, prior to that, colleges made contributions to a general fund for the city's poor. Records suggest that few college servants received poor relief; this could be an artifact of record keeping – occupational information was not recorded for all recipients of relief. Some college servants may have been recorded as domestic or general servants. It is also likely that at least until the later decades of the nineteenth century, city officials and later the poor law union, often acting in concert with the Charity Organization Society, would have referred applicants back to their former college employers. Until colleges were assessed for rates, their servants would have been dubious recipients of public funds. Servants could make a reasonable claim for assistance from their employers if a substantive employment relationship had existed and was concluded on satisfactory terms. It is unlikely that any former servant whose employment was terminated for poor performance, theft or drunkenness would have had a valid claim on a college after their employment was severed.

A list of all paupers in the city of Oxford who received relief from 1853 to 1929 includes seven college servants: Henry Byles, aged 49; John Gough, 45; Walter Green, 42; James Halsey, 46; John Reakes, 30; and James Wood, 66. All of these men, except James Halsey, received indoor relief in the workhouse, all have 'college servant' recorded as their occupation. One

[493] Richard Dyson, 'Welfare provision in Oxford during the latter stages of the Old Poor Law, 1800-1834' *The Historical Journal*, 52, 4 (2009), pp.943-962.

woman is listed, 'porteress' Mary Lewis, aged 58, she also received indoor relief.[494]

James Lingham, a former college servant at Pembroke, is one of two former college servants resident in the Oxford union workhouse in the 1881 and 1891 census returns. He appears in the poor law records mentioned above, but his occupation is recorded variously as servant or a labourer, not as a college servant. James Lingham's story is likely an unusual one for a college servant; his behavior clearly tested and ultimately broke the ties of the paternalistic employment relationship. Lingham's wife, Harriet, a laundress at Pembroke, made a complaint against James in 1867 for ill treatment and threatening her life. The 1861 census returns show the Linghams were both dependent on the college for their livelihoods, they provided lodging for members of the college in addition to working as college servants. James Lingham was no longer employed by Pembroke in 1874 when he pleaded guilty to drunkenness and annoying tradesmen in the market. Census returns show he was an inmate at the Oxford union workhouse in 1881 and 1891, having lived there since at least 1877 when he again appeared in court for drunken and violent behavior as well as the theft of a bag from a pub in St. Clement's. Mrs. Lingham remained an employee of Pembroke as a laundress and continued to provide lodging for members of the university, along with her young niece Elizabeth who worked as her servant; they supported themselves in this way until Harriet Lingham's death in 1883.[495]

From the mid-nineteenth century, the provision of private charity and the administration of the poor law in Oxford were connected by the Charity Organization Society (COS). Established in London in 1869, the COS campaigned nationally for the ideals of individualism, promoting thrift, self-help and a pioneering, influential case work approach to

[494]These records are transcribed in Howard Fuller, *Paupers of the City of Oxford, 1853-1929* (Steventon, 1998).
[495] PC PMB/B/1/4 4 March 1880, 'The Bursar was authorized to pay Mrs. Lingham, an old servant of the college, now infirm and nearly blind a pension of five shillings weekly'. An interior plan of her house on Beef Lane appears in David Sturdy, 'Houses of the Oxford Region' *Oxoniensia*, Vols. XXVI/XXVII (1962).

the distribution of charitable contributions.[496] The Oxford branch of the society had its origins in the Oxford Society for the Relief of Distressed Travelers, established in 1814 by members of New College and Oriel. In 1827 it became the Oxford Anti-Mendicity Society, and later under the direction of the bursar of Keble, Col. W.E. Sackville-West, the society expanded its purview to include the local poor. In 1875, still under the direction of Sackville-West, it merged with the COS.[497]

The influence of the COS and its leadership in Oxford was significant. Annual reports from the later decades of the nineteenth century occasionally list donors by name, college and the amount of their contribution. In 1875, for example, the report lists contributions of £170.12.9 from 422 members of the Oxford colleges – more than twice the amount contributed by city residents. Many colleges had a designated collector who received contributions from members and some colleges. At some colleges, these collections were made weekly in chapel.

The COS actively campaigned on the matter of poor relief, with the objective of eliminating outdoor poor relief entirely. These ideas were met locally with controversy and fears that eliminating outdoor relief would cause the breakup of households and the immiseration of many, particularly children and the elderly. The COS leveraged close ties to the university alongside the authority and influence of the institution locally to push these ideas further than would have been possible in other locations. When the university became rated in the nineteenth century, members of the university were appointed as poor law guardians. The university returned thirteen out of thirty-five of the union's poor law

[496] Charles Loch Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society, 1869-1913: its ideas and work* (London, 1961).
[497]Christopher Day, 'The University and the City' in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds.) in *The History of the University of Oxford Volume VI Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1*, pp.441-76.

guardians, despite having only one-quarter of the total rateable value.

Several of the university guardians, including Lancelot Phelps who served as a guardian from 1880 and became its chairman in 1912, led the efforts to abolish outdoor relief entirely. In 1887, he wrote, 'It is true that I look forward to a time when we shall be able to do without any out-relief, the evils of which I hold to be demonstrated beyond question both by history and my own experience at Oxford.'[498] Phelps was elected a fellow at Oriel in 1877 and became provost in 1914, a position he held until 1929. While a fellow at Oriel, Phelps served on the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor from 1905 to 1907. His personal opinions on poor relief during that time were well known in Oxford. In 1887, he estimated that the COS administered funds totaling over £2000 annually, alongside parochial charities which administered a similar amount. Phelps believed the chief concern of the COS was to see that these funds were used to benefit the city's poor without causing harm, specifically to avoid increasing poverty through the distribution of charitable assistance. Annual reports of the Oxford COS, founded in 1872, show the extent of support the organization enjoyed within the university community. It is not surprising therefore, that college authorities would encourage values promoted by the COS, like thrift and self-help, among their own employees.

The COS appears to have been influential earlier and longer in Oxford than elsewhere in England.[499] The strategy of investigative case work with its modern approach of data collection appealed particularly to some academics as a more rational and methodical approach to the provision of charity. The popularity of the COS came at approximately the same time that colleges were rationalizing their systems of accounting and improving methods

[498] 'Letter to the Editor of the Oxford Journal', *JOJ* 16 April 1887.
[499] Thane suggests the influence of the COS in London was short-lived, perhaps only a decade, its 'scientific' approach inadequate to the complexity of poverty. Thane, *Old Age*, ch.9.

of data collection and analysis generally. Case work required gathering information about the household, its resources and earning potential, as well as its consumption and habits. This provided ample opportunity for the inculcation of middle class values. A more efficient, coordinated approach to the distribution of charitable assistance prevented any recipient from being made better off by turning towards relief and away from work, a persistent concern of the middle class in Victorian England. The individualized approach of the COS was perfectly compatible with nineteenth-century paternalistic management practices.

Individuals and families who requested relief were closely assessed, often through home visits and personal interviews, to determine if they were deserving of assistance. By the late nineteenth century, Oxford colleges often employed this case work approach to evaluate appeals for relief from servants and their families; some colleges worked through the COS to arrange and distribute payments to servants. Minutes of the governing body at Keble in 1889 note that 'the subject of pensions was brought up by Mr. Lock and seconded by Dr. Bright, proposed that the old servant Eborn be granted £5 through the Charity Organisation Society.'[500] As the nineteenth century progressed, much of the day-to-day work of the COS was done by women. In this way, colleges could delegate some of the responsibility of investigating the personal circumstances of their employees to these women, many of whom were the wives, daughters and sisters of Oxford dons.

The influence of the COS and its ideology of extreme individualism on the management of college servants is perceptible, but often difficult to disentangle from other factors. During the late nineteenth century, the agricultural depression had a significant negative impact on

[500] KC/GOV 1/C2, 24 April 1889.

the finances of many colleges.[501] Replacing the traditional system of *ex gratia* pensions and grants to servants in sickness and disability with compulsory mutual aid schemes or contributory savings schemes was motivated by a belief in the importance of individualism, but these decisions were also considered in a period of reduced income for most colleges. The cost of labour was typically the largest internal expense for most colleges and requiring servants to either contribute towards the cost of their pension, or pay its entirety, was also part of an effort to control costs in several colleges.

Some colleges received a contribution towards these costs from individuals, in the form of a benefaction. Records from one of these, a small bequest from a fellow at Balliol in the early nineteenth century, provides some insight into the administration of an endowed charity intended for the exclusive benefit of college servants, from the perspectives of both employer and employee.

Rev. Powell's Benefaction

In 1830, the Rev. George Powell, a fellow of Balliol, bequeathed funds for a number of charitable causes in his will.[502] His instructions reveal a committed interest in encouraging thrift and industriousness among Oxford's working class generally, as well as a familiarity with the particular circumstances of Balliol servants. Although bequests from fellows to

[501] The impact of the agricultural depression in the 1880s on Oxford college finances is debated in J.P.D. Dunbabin, 'Oxford and Cambridge College Finances, 1871-1913', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Nov. 1975) pp.631-47.; J.P.D. Dunbabin, 'Oxford and Cambridge College Finances, 1871-1913, A Reply', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Aug., 1978) pp.446-9; and Arthur Engel, 'Oxford College Finances, 1871-1913 A Commentary', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Aug., 1978) pp.446-9. Dunbabin offers an optimistic interpretation while Engel argues that colleges were significantly negatively impacted by the depression. It is clear from bursars' correspondence that colleges were concerned to minimize internal expenses during this period.

[502] PROB 11: Will Registers, 1829-31, Piece 1768: Beard, Quire Numbers 151-200 (1830), accessed online at ancestry.co.uk on July 11, 2018.

college servants occur with some regularity in this and other time periods, records associated with an ongoing concern like Powell's Trust, intended for the benefit of college servants generally, rather than a specific legacy to an individual servant known to the testator, only rarely appear in Oxford college archives.

Powell's will included bequests to individual servants and the founding fund which was to be applied for the benefit of all college servants. He left £100, along with his clothing and furniture to Sarah Wild, the wife of Balliol's porter Culling-bird Wild. Powell was particular in his wish that the bequest was for Sarah alone: '…one hundred pounds together with all my furniture clothes and fuel…for the exclusive benefit and advantage of Sarah Wild the wife of Culling Wild the Porter of Balliol College independent of her present or any future husband and so that he shall not have anything to do therewith or any control over the same…'. At most Oxford colleges in the nineteenth century, including Balliol, the porter's wife lived in the lodge and was expected to work alongside her husband in college service. Sarah would have been a familiar presence in the college, however Powell's bequest indicates a particular concern for her well-being.

This bequest was modified in a codicil, just a month after the will was written. The revised bequest was to benefit both Sarah and Culling, subject to his meeting conditions of good behavior as determined by the master, Richard Jenkyns or his successor. Similarly, the codicil modified or revoked other bequests to college servants. The will provided £100 to be divided equally among 'seven of the lowest servants of Balliol College'; seventy pounds to the late college porter John Adams; and £20 to the children of the former bedmaker, Frances Simpkins. Under the terms of the codicil, Powell's bequests to individual Balliol servants were combined into a bequest of £200, comprising a fund invested in government securities or the like by the master and his successors, to benefit a college servant, male or female, who best

entitled themselves by 'continued sobriety, industry and frugality during the long Vacation'.

Powell intended his legacy to fund an annual contest that would encourage good behavior in all of the college's servants: 'it being my desire and most earnest wish to raise a continued competition between all the College Servants to entitle themselves to be elected by the master to receive my annual benefaction as a reward of their merit in all other respects'.[503] There is no evidence from the decades immediately following Powell's death to suggest how his legacies were originally interpreted.

By the 1860s, however, the income from Powell's benefaction was used as a hardship fund for servants rather than to support an annual prize. The table below lists distributions during the seven years in the nineteenth century for which accounts survive.[504]

Payments to Servants From Powell's Benefaction 1862-8

Year	*Amount*	*Description*
1862	£10.0.0	Donation to Herbert's widow
1862	£6.0.0	Crop's and Moore's funerals
1863	£5.0.0	Donation to Steff's widow
1863	£3.0.0	Donation to Steff's widow, additional
1864	£5.0.0	Mrs. Winchester's funeral
1864	£4.0.0	Douglas's funeral
1865	£1.0.0	Donation to Mrs. Herbert
1865	£2.0.0	Donation to T. Caswall
1866	£5.0.0	Fenner, doctor's bill
1866	£10.0.0	T. Caswall (sundry donation, funeral, &tc.)
1867	£6.6.0	George Dodson, illness
1867	£1.0.0	Caswell's relatives
1867	£6.0.0	George Dodson, illness
1868	£4.5.10	Kendrick's illness

Table 15 Payments to Servants from Powell's Benefaction 1862-8, Source: BC D.8.41-41a

These grants are broadly similar to those made from general college funds for the decades preceding and following Powell's death: payments to widows of servants, funeral expenses,

[503] BC D.8.41-41a.
[504] Ibid.

medical expenses and sick pay. It is not possible to determine from these accounts how the college decided to distribute the income from Powell's trust, what types of requests were received and whether any applications were denied. The annual amounts distributed from the trust in 1862-8 vary from £3 to £16, which suggests that the college was not constrained in either direction by the income of the fund, which was fairly constant. It is not clear during this period whether servants appealed for assistance or whether the college offered it when circumstances suggested that a servant was facing difficulty.

From 1852, the college required servants, but in practice only senior servants, to purchase life insurance. The recipients of Powell's fund included several widows, which suggests that despite this order, the college still provided assistance in the event of a servant's death. These payments may have also been to servants who could not afford insurance, either because their income was insufficient or they were of an age in 1852 where the cost of premiums was prohibitive. It was not just the poorest servants who benefitted from the fund, two of the payments were to George Dodson, the college butler – which suggests even the most highly compensated servants found it difficult to meet the cost of a lengthy illness. As the payments to Dodson show, recipients of Powell's fund were chosen using a broad, subjective definition of 'deserving', which changed over time and according to the interpretation of individual fellows evaluating each case.

A letter from the master Benjamin Jowett to the Universities Commission in 1874 emphasizes the paternalistic and discretionary nature of this type of charity. The letter states that the 'Powell Fund for Meritorious Servants' was the only trust in the master's name and was kept in the master's private accounts, passed along from one master to the next. Jowett went on to explain that he could not provide an accounting of the fund since its inception, but

in the ten years for which he had control of the trust, disbursements were about £60. He added that this represented 'considerably more than the income derived'.[505] No supporting documentation appears to have been provided.

It is not possible to determine from the surviving accounts how much Balliol spent annually on this type of assistance to servants, what proportion of this total expenditure Powell's Trust comprised, or whether the trust effectively increased the total amount of this type of financial support the college provided to servants, or if it merely subsidized the college's usual levels of spending on servants' welfare. It is clear that Powell's Trust was not the only source of funds used for relieving servants in times of crisis; occasional discretionary payments from the general funds of the college to servants and surviving family members were also recorded in the college minutes during this period, for example in 1860, the college gave £5 to 'Grove the son of the late cook in aid of his passage to the Cape of Good Hope'.[506]

Perhaps the only insight into the total amount of college spending on servants' welfare can be found in Balliol's response to the Royal Commission's inquires related to amounts paid for 'pensions to old servants and gratuities' during 1867-71. The college recorded £5 in 1867, no payments meeting this description from general funds in 1868 and 1869, £35 in 1870 and £60 in 1871; payments from Powell's Trust do not appear to have been included in these figures. Using the total for servants' income also reported in the responses to the Universities Commission for this period, discretionary payments to servants in illness, old age and death represented about 5% of the total cash wage bill. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was widely accepted that perquisites and gratuities comprised about a third to half of a servant's total compensation, suggesting the cost to Balliol of direct grants to sick or

[505] BC F.17.1-3, 11 May 1874.
[506] BC GOV C English Register of College Meeting Minutes, Vol.I 1794-1875, 22 March 1860.

old servants and their families was proportionally low.

In 1902, a Charity Commission order established a scheme for the administration of Powell's Trust and consequently, more documentation survives from 1902-48.[507] From this, it is possible to better understand how its funds were invested and how the income was distributed, although these records are still incomplete. Perhaps the most significant changes were administrative, there was now oversight from the Commission. Trustees were appointed, typically fellows of the college, and their approval was required for grants, however, there was still an institutional understanding that the trust was under the control of the master.

After Powell's initial bequest, further contributions to the trust were made, occasionally from members of the college and through other bequests. The funds were typically invested in consols and railway stock; a rough balance sheet from 1904 lists assets of £536 and annual income of £19.[508] This balance sheet records one grant of £5 against this income, with no further details about the recipient. From 1902-25, the college did not distribute the full annual income from the trust; in twelve years for which there is data, no funds were distributed at all. Less than £20 annually was granted from 1923-8, and then disbursements increase significantly, from £58.4.6 in 1928 and thereafter amounts averaging approximately £34 annually until 1948, when the surviving accounts cease. In addition to dividends from investments mentioned previously, from 1922, Powell's Trust received £5 annually from another college-based charity, the Hancock Memorial Fund. Accounts also show regular reinvestment of income from dividends during this period, suggesting that while the trust was not used to provide support to college servants during these years, it was still actively

[507] BC D.8.41-41a Benefactors: Powell's Trust (College Servants) and correspondence, R. Durnford, secretary of the Charity Commission to Balliol College, 30 September 1902.
[508] Ibid., Caledonian Railway 4% debenture stock, later the London Midland and Scottish Railway.

managed by college authorities. In twenty-one of the forty-six years for which there is data, the reinvestment of income exceeded grants made to servants. In 1925, the trust made one grant, a payment of £20 to Adams, a servant whose wife had recently been ill. The memo from Arthur Smith approving the grant notes that Adams incurred about £40 of expenses, and the college agreed to pay half from Powell's Trust; that same year, the college reinvested £40 of the trust's annual income in war stock. Smith's brief memo suggests that Adams did not apply for assistance directly, rather a grant was offered when the college became aware of his circumstances.

Balliol servants accessed Powell's Trust as Adams did, through a nomination from another member of the college, as well as by applications made themselves. This required institutional knowledge from experienced servants who understood the types of claims that were likely to be successful and how to bring these to the attention of the master. Servants and fellows passed this knowledge to successive generations of college employees. In years when the trust was inactive, it is likely that some of this knowledge was lost.

A few letters from servants applying to the fund for assistance survive and offer some details about the process from their perspective.[509] In October 1920, a note from the master Arthur Smith to the bursar asked for the fellows acting as trustees for the Powell Trust to approve a request for assistance to Lyne, a servant of the college. Smith offers few details of Lyne's circumstances, but was made aware of them by two fellows and Duke, another servant. They urged him to act at once, as Lyne 'was in some trouble about it'; another note attached to the letter states that Lyne had 'large family expenses, including heavy doctors' bills'. Smith asked the bursar to raise the issue at the next college meeting and allowed that if

[509] Ibid.

the application was denied, 'I become responsible because I told him that it would be all right'. Lyne's grant was approved and the bursar sent the cheque for fifteen pounds to Smith so that he could give it to Lyne personally. The bursar wrote to Smith that although he (the bursar) was unaware of the details of Lyne's case, 'the terms of the scheme are quite well known amongst the older College Servants. I discovered this when applications have been made by them for assistance under this benefaction.'[510]

In June 1923, Thomas Sawyer made a request for assistance from the trust. Sawyer's letter was addressed to the master, although he made clear that he had discussed the details of his case with another member of the college: 'I should be grateful if you could give me a small grant from the Powells Trust to help me pay the forthcoming quarters rents etc I have had a very long and expensive illness. Mr. Bailey gave me permission to refer you to him.' Sawyer did not ask for a specific amount, presumably Mr. Bailey had been made aware of the particulars and was prepared to speak with the master on Sawyer's behalf. The grant Sawyer received was clearly insufficient, and a few months later, the college arranged for him to borrow £50 against his deferred annuity.[511]

There is no discernible pattern to the proportion of the claim paid by the college, sometimes the full expense is paid, at other times a percentage is given. In 1938, E. Parnell, an almoner at the Radcliffe Infirmary, informed P.F. Lowe, an employee of Balliol, that the Oddfellows would contribute £3 of the £5.10.0 required towards the cost of a medical support device that would help him continue in work. Lowe needed to find the balance himself; his application for assistance from the Powell Trust was approved by the master, leaving the full cost of Lowe's medical bill paid.

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[510] BC D.8.41-41a.
[511] BC Miscellaneous Bursary Papers 61a Mortgages on Servants' Annuities.

In another case, correspondence exchanged between George Webber, an employee of the college, and several fellows in 1937, while he was a patient at the All Saints Convalescent Hospital in Eastbourne show that sometimes the application took a less straightforward form. Webber was unable to continue in his usual work with the college and had some work through the hospital with a basket-making society, but as he informed the college, he had not received any national health money and had been unable to earn much, 'I am losing so much being ill so long and unfortunately I am far from fit for work'. The college made a grant of £5 from the trust in response to Webber's letters, and instructed the funds to be sent to him immediately.[512]

In this case, Webber made no specific request, rather his letter described his circumstances: the duration of his illness, his efforts to provide for himself by working despite his diminished capacity, the recommendations of his doctor for continued rest, the lack of national health money and finally, his concern for his wife and her support. Webber's letters reference direct communication between college authorities and his wife, who was evidently still in Oxford. It is not clear from the correspondence how the college decided on the amount of Webber's grant; in 1937, the total amount awarded from the trust was £17.6.0, against an income of about £50.

Although the conclusions that can be drawn from a small number of examples are necessarily limited, it is clear that grants were made from the fund based on subjective criteria which is entirely consistent with a paternalistic management strategy. Servants' understanding of paternalism, particularly the importance of reciprocity, is further reflected in this correspondence, a few letters of thanks survive from servants who have received money

[512] BC D.8.41-41a.

from Powell's Trust and show a reluctance to specify an exact amount requested, an appeal to the personal generosity of the master and fellows, the extraordinary nature of the event and offer explicit evidence of self-help. Letters from Adams, Webber and Sawyer acknowledge the receipt of funds from the college and express their gratitude for the assistance, although these notes are polite and routine, they are also a reminder to consider the role of deference in this paternalistic employment relationship.

Although Powell's benefaction never resulted in the annual competition he envisioned, was his bequest an effective way to provide assistance to Balliol servants in times of hardship? A college-based endowed charity should have mediated most of the problems inherent in administering this type of assistance. The trust was for the benefit of a small group of servants who were well known to their employers; matching the charity's funds to the recipients should have been straightforward. The cost of investigating the particulars of an application was relatively low, the likelihood of servants cheating was similarly low. In theory, if it was financially stable and generated sufficient income to make regular grants, Powell's Trust should have been a successful charity.

From the outset, the trust was hampered by confusion over how best to interpret and implement the bequests. The brief window between the will and the revocation of specific bequests to individual servants in a codicil suggests that there was uncertainty, even before Powell died, about the best way to use bequests to provide assistance to servants. Bequests to individual servants with little restriction on how the money could be spent were often replaced with a different type of paternalism in the mid to late-nineteenth century: assistance dependent not only on a subjective determination of 'deserving', but a demonstration of exceptional hardship, rather than the routine hardship characteristic of working-class life.

This reflects a typical nineteenth-century anxiety about the hazards of charitable giving to

the working class and the poor. Lancelot Phelps, champion of the Oxford COS, vice-principal of St. Mary's Hall and later provost of Oriel, believed that charity could have a detrimental effect on the poor and working classes by removing their sense of responsibility and ultimately damaging their self-respect. It was the duty of trustees not just to do good, but to avoid doing precisely this sort of evil.

According to Phelps, the trustees of an endowed charity had considerable latitude in determining the best use of its resources. In 1892 Phelps wrote, 'I deny then, *in toto*, the right of any individuals to force upon posterity, beyond reasonable limits, a definite employment of property. No one can possibly foresee the needs of those that come after him with sufficient clearness to justify his being entrusted with such a power.'[513] Phelps went on to address the use of endowed charities to provide assistance in times of uncertainty and crisis, 'against the ordinary incidents, among which must be numbered the support of wife and family, old age, and sickness, it is the duty of every man to make provision, and to remove that duty is to weaken his manhood.'[514] This belief in individualism coupled with a broad interpretation of acceptable uses of charitable income meant that during this period traditional paternalistic patterns of alleviating college servants' financial hardship, particularly due to what Phelps referred to as 'ordinary incidents', were ineffectual. Although servants were expected to continue to honor their side of the paternalistic employment contract, increasingly, the ideology of individualism eroded the protections reciprocally owed to them.

Judging Balliol against the 1902 interpretation of Powell's bequest, a hardship fund for deserving servants, was the college a good steward of the trust? Evidence suggests that they

[513] L.R. Phelps, 'The Use and Abuse of Endowed Charities' *The Economic Review*, January 1892, p.89. Italics appear in the original.
[514] Ibid., p.100.

were not. In December 1948, the college applied to the Charity Commission for permission to transfer some of the stock held for the Powell Trust to a more general fund, the Balliol College Trusts' Pool. The Commission denied the request and the secretary rebuked the college for its failure to consistently apply the income of the fund for the benefit of Balliol's servants:

> 'It would appear that for nearly 80 years little, if any, use has been made of the income of the Charity for College Servants. As a result of representations made to the Commissioner that the income could not be applied in accordance with the original trusts, the Commissioners established a Scheme on the 30th September 1902 which provided for the application of the income in the making of grants to servants employed at the College in times of illness either of the servants themselves or of members of their families for whose support they are responsible. The Commissioners find difficulty in understanding how it has come about that opportunities have not been found to spend the income in accordance with the trusts and would be glad to be informed why since 1902 so large a sum of unused income has been invested as is represented by the holding (on the 30th September 1947) of £915 3.5% Conversion Stock. It is the duty of trustees of charities to spend their income in accordance with the trusts and, should that prove impossible, to take appropriate steps to obtain a variation of the trusts either by the Commissioners or by the Court.'[515]

Balliol's estates bursar Theodore Tylor replied to the Commission and, in an attempt to explain why the college had distributed only about half of the trust's income of £1638 from 1902-48, suggested the institution of a sick pay policy had obviated the need for assistance.[516] Tylor further asserted that if the Commission considered the income of Powell's original securities over the period, which he calculated to be £709, the college had actually distributed funds in excess of that income.[517] There is no evidence to suggest that at any time the college

[515] BC D.8.41-41a.
[516] Ibid., Letter from T.H. Tylor to the Charity Commission 26 August 1949.
[517] Ibid. None of these documents address the regular contributions to the Common University Fund paid out of the Powell Trust for College Servants. Regular amounts were paid annually from 1937 and have no obvious relationship to the fund's income or disbursements made during those years.

had a policy of distributing the income from just the original securities and it is difficult to imagine a convincing or even legally tenable explanation for such a policy.

Sufficient evidence does not survive to evaluate Tylor's intriguing assertion that the college's newly instituted sick pay policy was the reason for the reduction in claims on Powell's Trust or to evaluate whether this reflects a determination by the college that sick pay was more effective than charity in preventing and relieving financial hardship among college servants. It is not possible to determine the number of claims submitted by servants at any point since the trust's inception and there is no evidence that the college kept any records associated with unsuccessful claims for any period. Consequently, it is not possible to discern any trend in the number of hardship claims due to illness. Of the few surviving claims for which there is sufficient documentation, there is evidence that at least some servants' claims were only partially relieved, despite there being sufficient income to pay the full amount. If there were fewer claims made on the trust, rather than simply fewer incidences of hardship, this could also be explained by the loss of institutional knowledge among fellows and servants of the existence of the fund and of the application process. It seems unlikely that there were twelve years out of forty-five when no servants or their family members experienced hardship, especially as one of the longest stretches without any disbursement occurred during the Great War.

Although it is clear that Powell's benefaction was not an efficient or effective way to distribute assistance to college servants in times of financial hardship, it is difficult to assess more generally the impact of charitable giving on the welfare of college servants during this period.[518] The Charity Commission's correspondence strongly suggests that Balliol's

[518] Little has been written on the history of endowed charities and Oxford colleges. At Balliol, for example, Powell's Trust was one of 104 funds administered by the college in the 20th century for which similar records

management of the funds did not meet their standards, but very little evidence survives from other colleges.

Limited account records from a similar fund at Worcester show the income and distributions of the Muckleston Bequest from 1899 to 1907.[519] Rowland Muckleston, a fellow and tutor of the college and later the rector of Dinedor, left £2,000 in his will when he died in 1898 for the college to provide pensions to old servants.[520] The funds were invested in India 2½% stock and the college recorded regular quarterly dividends of £11.15.1. Payments to servants included pensions, grants for expenses associated with illness, funerals and a regular contribution to the College Servants' Benefit Society. The disbursements are listed in the table below:[521]

survive. Balliol Archive Catalogue, p.170-1. J.P.D. Dunbabin writes briefly about trusts and benefactions in J.P.D. Dunbabin, 'Finance and Property' in Brock, M.G. and Curthoys, M.C., *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. 6, the Nineteenth-Century Part 1* (Oxford, 1997), pp.416-7.

[519] WOR/BUR 1/41 Accounts of funded property, Muckleston Bequest 1898-1907.

[520] C.H. Daniel and W.R. Barker, *Worcester College* (London, 1900) p.210.

[521] WOR/BUR 1/41 Accounts of funded property, Muckleston Bequest 1898-1907; the CSBS became a branch of the Oddfellows in 1904, and accordingly the name of the society was changed.

Payments to Servants from Muckleston Bequest 1899-1907

Year	Description	Amount
1898	Porter's widow	£15.0.0
1900	East's pension	£28.15.0
1901	East's pension	£30.0.0
1902	East's pension	£30.0.0
1902	College Servants' Benefit Society	£2.2.0
1902	Collins' widow for funeral	£2.5.0
1903	East's pension	£21.19.0
1903	College Servants' Benefit Society	£2.2.0
1903	Deverell's pension	£5.0.0
1904	Deverell's pension	£5.0.0
1904	Higgs - sick grant	£15.0.0
1904	Wilkins - funeral	£0.15.0
1904	Loyal College Servants [CSBS]	£2.2.0
1904	Gibbons' pension	£2.5.0
1905	Deverell's pension	£20.0.0
1905	Loyal College Servants	£2.2.0
1906	Deverell's pension	£20.0.0
1906	Cook on retirement	£50.0.0
1906	Gibbons' pension	£2.5.0
1906	Piper sick allowance	£32.2.0
1906	Loyal College Servants	£2.2.0

Table 16 Payments to Servants from Muckleston Bequest 1899-1907, Source: WOR/BUR 1/41

F.J. Lys' memoir of his time as a fellow, bursar and provost at Worcester in the early twentieth century offers his brief observations on the administration of this fund:

> 'The small income of the Muckleston fund was to provide for retired College servants something in addition to what the College would naturally give them; but though long experience has not led me to expect much generosity or even a very scrupulous sense of duty, from corporate bodies, I think that while the Fellows were receiving so little it might well be argued that they could not afford the pensions which were actually given, and might legitimately take part of the cost from the income of this fund.'[522]

Worcester, like Balliol, experienced periods of financial hardship during this period; a section of Lys' memoir of his time at Worcester is titled 'Time of Extreme Poverty'. From

[522] Francis J. Lys, *Worcester College, 1882-1943, and some account of a stewardship* (Oxford, 1944), p.18. Lys was later vice chancellor from 1932-5.

1899 to 1906, Worcester's grants to servants from the Muckleston fund equaled or exceeded its income in only one year, 1906, when a large gratuity of £50 was paid to the retiring cook. Lys' comments offer a possible justification for using these types of charities to fulfill the college's obligation to provide for a servant's old age when the college lacked sufficient income from other sources, but not to redirect the funds to more general purposes, and suggests a more circumscribed interpretation of the role of trustees than Phelps offered. Perhaps the most significant question, whether the college was obliged to distribute the annual income of the fund in its entirety, remained unanswered throughout this period. The Charity Commission clearly held that annual income from these trusts should be distributed in full each year while some colleges did not. Lys found that traditional practices around the management of older servants were often inefficient and in referencing the 'lack of a scrupulous sense of duty' regarding the disbursement of charitable funds intended for servants' benefit, recalled the oft-repeated admonishments of his friend and colleague Pottinger to take 'caution against leaving anything to colleges'.[523]

5.3. Friendly Societies

The College Servants' Benefit Society and the College Servants' Provident Institution

College servants developed informal strategies based on mutual aid, particularly to manage periods of sickness and age-related incapacity, long before the establishment of organized, larger-scale friendly societies in the early nineteenth century. Unlike other senior servants, if a scout could not work due to injury or illness, and did not work with an assistant, the scout was obliged to hire and pay a substitute themselves. Brief periods of illness were

[523] Francis J. Lys, *Worcester College, 1882-1943, and some account of a stewardship* (Oxford, 1944), p.18. Lys is likely referring to H.A. Pottinger, a librarian at Worcester.

usually managed by redistributing the workload among fellow servants. Longer periods of absence where the increased workload became too demanding to share with co-workers, or the resulting decline in the standard of service became unacceptable to residents, required the scout to hire a substitute. Without assistance from the college, prolonged periods of illness for any servant could be financially devastating.

Before National Insurance was introduced in 1911, policies on sick pay for college servants were ambiguous; although colleges often provided some financial assistance to servants who were unable to work during a long or severe illness, these decisions were made on an individual basis and a servant could not be certain that help would always be forthcoming, or that it would be sufficient to meet the costs of hiring a substitute, doctor visits, medicines and the loss of perquisites. Like other workers during this period, servants managed this uncertainty with a combination of personal savings, membership in mutual aid societies, family and kinship networks – ultimately turning to charity, the Poor Law and the workhouse, if necessary.[524] The National Insurance scheme, which took effect in July 1912, included domestic servants, whether employed in institutions, like the colleges, or in private homes. The scheme provided insured working women with a weekly sickness benefit of 7s. 6d. for up to 26 weeks, and 5s. weekly in the event of disability causing incapacity for work. Men received a higher sickness benefit, 10s. weekly and the same disability benefit. Employee contributions were 4d. weekly for men and 3d. weekly for women, with the employer contributing 3d. weekly.[525]

Similarly, assistance was often provided to surviving family members when a servant died while in the employ of a college, but the details were decided by the college authorities after

[524] See for example, Pamela Horn *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (1995), ch. 9. Hereafter, Horn (1995).
[525] Horn (1995), pp.184-5; Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State* (London, 1996), pp. 78-9.

considering the circumstances of the servant's household and employment history. In all of these decisions, colleges considered objective as well as subjective criteria, for example, the number of dependent children along with their age and ability to work, as well as the deceased's thrift and other personal characteristics. In this paternalistic employment relationship, the college was obliged to provide help, but a servant could not be certain that in the event of their death, the college would offer adequate financial assistance to meet the family's needs, continue to employ family members if they were in college employment, or if the family lived in college housing, that their tenancy would continue. Security could only be guaranteed through self-organized strategies.

In the later decades of the nineteenth century, the influence of the self-help movement was reflected in these decisions as a servant's purchase of insurance or membership in a friendly society was held as proof that they or their families were entitled to their employer's sympathies and assistance. Obituaries and death notices printed in local newspapers during this period occasionally observed whether a deceased college servant had been a member of a friendly society. In 1848, William Grainger, a servant at Exeter, drowned in the river near Christ Church meadow. An account of the inquest into his death noted, 'The deceased has left a wife and two sons behind, but having very prudently insured his life in the College Servants' Provident Institution for 100*l*, his widow will be entitled to receive that sum, which may in some degree mitigate the sad bereavement which has just befallen her.'[526] Self-help strategies became not just complementary, but were often a prerequisite for claiming the fulfillment of paternalistic obligations.

[526] *Oxford University, City and County Herald*, Oct. 21, 1848, p.3. It is interesting that in this particular case, only the university paper mentions the insurance policy.

In 1812, the College Servants' Benefit Society (CSBS) was founded to provide insurance against sickness and disability, together with burial insurance.[527] Although very little evidence survives from earliest decades of this society, it logically follows that servants' existing networks and strategies found common purpose with the objectives of friendly societies and it made sense to spread the risk of loss of income over a larger pool of workers, rather than confined to individual colleges. The College Servants' Provident Institution (CSPI) was established several decades later in 1841 and provided a larger death benefit than the £12 paid by the CSBS, members could choose a policy that paid £50 or £100 in the event of their death. Membership in these societies was complementary and records show that many servants belonged to both.

How should these nineteenth century mutual aid societies be understood? Were they similar to other societies, both national and local? An institutional interpretation, perhaps best illustrated by Gosden's approach, considers the history of the societies themselves, with less attention paid to their membership.[528] Gosden's study examined the history of English friendly societies from 1815-75 and found that in 1815, most societies were locally organized, but by 1875, nationally affiliated orders dominated. Gosden concentrated on largest of these affiliated orders, the Oddfellows and the Foresters, and argued that over this period, the importance of local societies waned; societies organized on the basis of shared occupation, like the college servants' societies, 'had a far more transient existence.'[529]

Gosden's broad focus on the growth of friendly societies raises questions about the local

[527] The CSBS rules from 1849 give the founding date as Oct 7, 1813 and the 1880 rules give the founding date as Oct 7, 1812.
[528] P.J.H.J. Gosden *The Friendly Societies in England 1815-75* (Manchester, 1961), [Hereafter Gosden, *Friendly Societies*].
[529] Ibid., p.71.

experience of friendly societies. Morley's survey of Oxfordshire friendly societies provides compelling evidence that membership in the county was more widespread than previously assumed and that the affiliated orders were slow to develop a significant presence, with the earliest branches established in Oxfordshire in the 1830s.[530] Morley traced the establishment of the earliest friendly societies in the county to 1750, with the most significant period of sustained growth, both in the establishment of societies and levels of membership, from about 1830-99. Unlike the pattern established by Gosden for England, Morley found that in Oxfordshire, local, independent societies, like the college servants' societies, were dominant into the early twentieth century.

The question of membership, who joined and why, has been the subject of considerable debate. To date, the nature of the data that survives on friendly societies has made any large-scale quantitative study difficult, indeed none have been published, and there has been only one qualitative national survey since Gosden.[531] Membership among working-class men was common, although the lack of quantitative data makes precise statistics impossible. Membership excluded the poorest workers and has been described as 'the badge of the artisan'.[532]

Existing literature offers little insight into the role of mutual aid in the economic lives of domestic servants. The remuneration of domestic servants traditionally included some or all of their support: food, clothing and lodging, while custom dictated some provision for care in

[530] Shaun Morley, *Oxfordshire Friendly Societies 1750-1918*, Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol.68 (2011).

[531] Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750-1914* (Palgrave, 2003).
[532] Bentley Gilbert, 'The Decay of Nineteenth-Century Provident Institutions and the Coming of Old Age Pensions in Great Britain' *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 17, No.3 (1965) p.552.

times of illness.[533] Examining the participation of domestic servants in mutual aid societies provides insight into how these employment contracts functioned in practice, particularly in times of crisis, in the event of illness or disability. How far could domestic servants rely on their employers to provide these customary benefits in sickness and old age? Were servants typically able to negotiate positions where they could reduce the most physically demanding aspects of their employment as they aged? After a working life spent in domestic service, how did older servants manage the transition out of work? Friendly society membership often provided a *de facto* old age pension for many working people before the advent of a state pension; how did domestic servants incorporate mutual aid in their strategies for managing economic insecurity? Evidence of Oxford college servants' participation in a variety of mutual aid societies suggests that a reexamination of the relationship between domestic service and mutual aid is in order. College service may represent a 'best case scenario' for domestic servants in old age, and the popularity of mutual aid in this context suggests that even when a domestic servant had some confidence that they would receive assistance from their employer, they still frequently chose to insure themselves against illness and death through friendly society membership.

Compared to the rest of the country, Oxford experienced late, but significant population growth during this period, from 11,921 in 1801 to 27,843 in 1851 and then 49,285 in 1901.[534] There was no significant increase in the number of men and women employed by the colleges until the expansion of the university in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Trade

[533] The legal origins of an employer's obligation to provide support in the event of a servant's illness are discussed in Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (eds.) *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (North Carolina, 2004).

[534] Eleanor Chance et al., 'Modern Oxford', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4, the City of Oxford*, ed. Alan Crossley and C.R. Elrington (London, 1979), pp. 181-259. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol4/pp181-259 [accessed 8 May 2018]

directories show that the occupational structure was not radically changed by the population increases in the early decades. The local economy had long been closely tied to the university and in 1835, when the university lifted restrictions on trading in the city, the number of tradespeople expanded rapidly. With little evidence of significant demographic change, changes in the occupational structure or wage levels among college servants in the early decades of the nineteenth century, it is necessary to look elsewhere in the literature to explain the establishment and growth of these mutual aid societies.

The decision of whether or not to join a friendly society required a college servant to consider not only the affordability and benefits of membership, but also the likelihood of assistance from their employer. These calculations became more complicated over the nineteenth century, and the relative value of membership varied not just over the life cycle of an individual servant, but for all servants, over time, by position and by college employer. In households where family employment strategies were important, prudential insurance was more common. This appears to be particularly true when family members who were able to work were already fully employed and the household had little surplus labour available to compensate for the loss of another's income.

Evidence shows that family employment was an important and traditional feature of college service, particularly after 1868 when the licensing of university lodgings expanded home-based employment opportunities for college servants and their families. The inherent income insecurity associated with seasonal underemployment outside the academic terms meant that family labour was typically fully employed whenever possible and little surplus labour remained in reserve to manage the loss of income associated with illness, disability, and old age. This suggests that insurance would have been attractive to college servants who could

afford the cost, and indeed, insurance appears to have been a popular savings strategy for servants with discretionary income.

The affordability of friendly society membership and insurance premiums for college servants depended not only on the usual household income and expense constraints, but on the form of college servants' remuneration. Junior servants, typically those in their twenties and younger, received comparatively less of their remuneration in regular cash wages. All servants depended on termly cash gratuities, and although the customary amounts were well established, gratuities were still discretionary and income from these sources varied from term to term. Regardless of the form their wages took, insurance was likely unaffordable for the lowest paid college servants: casual labourers, those who worked exclusively for gratuities, and many female college servants who were also heads of households. Friendly societies required a demographically balanced membership to remain solvent, the form of junior servants' remuneration made it even more challenging to recruit them as members.

A small sample of working-class budgets was collected by Violet Butler in her social survey of Oxford; these provide an example of what middle class observers, including college authorities, likely believed was affordable for servants.[535] While researching and writing the survey, Butler worked closely with several organizations in Oxford, including the Cottage Improvement Society and the COS. Butler provides sample weekly budgets from eight working-class households, five of these purchased some type of insurance. Two of three households that did not purchase insurance were elderly and receiving a pension or relief, Butler implies that the third was too poor to be expected to purchase insurance, a family of

[535]Butler, *Oxford*, particularly Ch. VI 'The Cost of Living', pp.121-41. None of these budgets were from college servants' households.

two adults and three children living on 12/- weekly.[536] The five households in Butler's survey spent from 4d. to 1s. 8d. weekly on insurance with household incomes varying from 13-27/-; for comparison, the weekly cost of CSBS membership was approximately 5d. at the end of the nineteenth century.

Johnson argues that working people were concerned with balancing income and expenditure, but did so in a way that would yield other social benefits important in a society where 'position and status had constantly to be reasserted'.[537] For college servants, it was not just position and status, but the means with which it was usually acquired by servants – through evidence of good character, of the sound moral habits that friendly society membership demonstrated. Character was perhaps the most important quality in a successful college servant, and it is difficult to overstate its value in this labour market. Good character translated to more senior positions, with higher earnings and job security. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, the middle classes championed friendly societies as a way for the working class to learn and practice self-governance, thrift, and fellowship, ultimately improving their character. These activities were closely bound with the patronage of college servants' friendly societies.[538] Colleges supported friendly societies in important ways, financially through donations and subscriptions, but also by serving as patrons and trustees. Their interest in these organizations was not just as members of the wealthier middle classes, but as employers, and it is often impossible to distinguish between these two roles as a source of motivation.

The names of leading members of the university are prominently printed on CSBS and CSPI documentation. Management strategies of Oxford colleges during this period echo

[536] Butler, *Oxford*, p.133; 10-12/- was approximately the average weekly wage of a kitchen woman or cleaning woman on a college staircase at the same time.
[537] Johnson, *Saving,* p.5.
[538] On patronage, see also Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750-1914* (Hampshire, 2003).

many of these ideas, and by the late nineteenth century, it is not just employers, but servants, particularly those in senior positions, who champion friendly society membership. By the late nineteenth century, it is no longer just that membership is the hallmark of good character, but that the absence of it becomes evidence of irresponsibility. The consequence, that the paternalistic employment contract was increasingly contingent on a new set of subjective conditions, fundamentally changed the employment relationship and further delineated separations between senior servants eligible for friendly society membership, with year-round permanent employment and casual workers, who were typically employed only in the academic terms for lower than average wages. Women disproportionately worked in these casual, term-time only positions, making friendly society membership difficult to keep up.

Beyond the discussion of patronage, existing literature on friendly societies offers limited insight into the tension between self-help and paternalism. Many questions remain: what were the consequences of the growth of friendly societies for this employment relationship? Were friendly societies initially established because college employment provided inadequate protection from income insecurity? Can their continued success be similarly explained? Did shifting the provision of insurance from the colleges to a friendly society weaken the paternalistic authority of colleges? It seems plausible that the establishment of friendly societies made it easier for servants, particularly earlier in their careers, to move from college to college. How did employers respond? Perhaps most importantly, does this period represent a fundamental change in the understanding of how life-cycle risk was to be shared between employer and employee?

Any detailed consideration of these two societies is limited by the availability of documentary evidence; insufficient data survives to enable any substantial quantitative analysis. Local newspapers provide the best source of historical information, but these are

limited as well. There is no evidence of the earliest decades of the CSBS; newspapers began coverage of annual feast days in 1842, about thirty years after it was founded. Slightly better source material survives for the CSPI, including more complete coverage of the founding of the society and an incomplete membership ledger; copies of the rules for both societies survive.

CSBS and CSPI: Membership terms and cost

Although there were other friendly societies in Oxford that offered similar benefits, college servants' societies had a crucial advantage in attracting members – fees were paid quarterly rather than weekly, and both societies actively solicited contributions from colleges and fellows, which effectively subsidized the cost of membership. Surviving wage records show that in the early to mid-nineteenth century, servants' cash wages were typically paid quarterly. Similarly, quarterly payments were due at CSBS meetings held in January, April, July and October, which corresponded with the conclusion of the academic terms. Scheduling meetings at the conclusion of terms when workloads were lighter also afforded more servants the opportunity to attend.

Membership in both societies was limited to men currently employed as college servants, although members could continue to belong to the CSPI if their employment as a college servant was terminated.[539] Both of these mutual aid societies competed with other popular friendly societies for members, including the Oddfellows and Hearts of Oak. Although it is impossible to estimate the percentage of college servants insured by other societies, limited membership statistics for the CSPI survive. In the year it was founded, the CSPI had eighty-

[539] BL:G.A. Oxon 8A 124 (1) Articles of the College Servants' Benefit Society 1849; G.A. Oxon c.57 The College Servants' Provident Institution 1841

three members, the same in 1842.[540] In 1874, measured by the value of its cash assets, the CSPI was among the largest friendly societies in Oxfordshire; ten years later in 1884, the society counted 162 servants among its members. The CSPI enjoyed moderate but steady success and was acquired by Legal and General, with all of its assets transferred in 1889.[541]

In deciding whether to join a friendly society, servants had to weigh the likelihood of assistance from their employer, a pension or accommodation in employment, or financial support in the event of hardship against the immediate cost of friendly society membership. The founding of the CSPI was motivated in part to provide insurance against the loss of income faced by widows and children who had survived the death of a primary wage earner; but it would have been unusual for a college to refuse assistance to surviving family members who experienced hardship resulting from this type of loss. The CSPI was also intended to instruct college servants in the values of self-help and thrift.

From the first announcement of the CSPI in the Oxford papers, there were questions about the financial viability of the organization. Questions about the stability and long-term prospects of friendly societies during this period were common, actuarial science was still in its infancy and the insolvency of friendly societies was a national concern. Letters to the editor of the *Oxford Chronicle* praised the benefits of friendly society membership for working-class people generally and remarked that membership gave

> '…a tone of manly independence to the character - a man feels that his own exertions have placed him above the reach of poverty; and that while he has laboured during the period of health for the advantage of society, he is not a burden on it when old age and infirmities disable him. Frugality and providence cannot fail to produce habits of temperance, thoughtfulness, and steady conduct; and such habits use make a man a better servant, a better husband

[540] BL:G.A. Oxon c.14 Oxford College Servants' Provident Institution 1841-6; 1883-7
[541] Ibid.

and a better father.'[542]

Another letter appeared in March from the same author and warned that the subscription fees for ordinary members were too low and that if the CSPI did not consult an actuary or make the necessary adjustments, it was doomed to fail. Using three actuarial tables, the letter offered calculations for premiums and all were above the £1.5.0 charged annually by the CSPI. The letter provided quotes from three insurance offices ranging from the Crown at £2.10.5 to the Amicable at £2.11.1 and compared them to the calculations from the actuarial tables. The CSPI subscription currently quoted was deficient by at least 17/2- annually per member. The letter continued its attack with a pointed observation that the CSPI could not hope to be independent with such a deficiency and alluded to the possibility that perhaps independence was not its chief objective, in light of the reliance of the society on ladies and gentlemen who subscribed to honorary membership.[543]

In response to these public criticisms, the CSPI raised the cost of an annual subscription. The society continued to court honorary members and at its second anniversary in 1843, counted eighteen at £1 each annually. The annual reports from these years illustrate the importance of these members, the vice chancellor of the university is prominently listed at the top of each report along with his substantial annual contribution of £5. Other honorary members are listed below, along with itemized contributions and regular members appear in the final third of the report. Honorary membership was explicitly called out as a way for members of the university to subsidize the cost of life insurance for college servants, 'The scale of payments [is] low, in aid of which assistance was looked for from the Members of the University, and in this they have not been disappointed.'[544]

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[542] *OC,* 13 February 1841.
[543] *OC,* 13 March 1841.
[544] *OC, 4* March 1843.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence that the CSPI was not intended to be an independent mutual aid society is the maximum age of membership, 55. The ages of eighty-one founding members are summarized below and it is obvious that a typical maximum age of 35 would have denied membership to two-thirds of these men. [545] Rules from 1880 show that the maximum age was still 55. Although the development of actuarial science had not advanced sufficiently to make reasonably accurate mortality tables widely available by 1841, it is implausible that this might still explain the high maximum age of entry in 1880.

Age Cohort of CSPI Members

	In 1841		In 1875	
<20	0	0	5	2.5%
20-24	2	2.5%	21	10.7%
25-29	8	9.9%	24	12.2%
30-34	16	19.8%	24	12.2%
35-39	17	21.0%	31	15.7%
40-44	21	26.0%	15	7.6%
45-49	8	9.9%	18	9.1%
50-54	8	9.9%	13	6.6%
55-59	0	0	15	7.6%
60<	1	1.2%	31	15.7%
Total	81		197	

Table 17 Age Cohort of CSPI Members 1841, 1875, Source: BL G.A. Oxon c.14 and OC TF 1 G5/1 1841-1859

There is a consensus in the literature that for most of the nineteenth century, friendly societies functioned as *de facto* trade unions. The CSBS and CSPI served several of the functions of a trade union, perhaps most importantly establishing a forum for exchanging information about working conditions and pay. With its membership defined by occupation, these societies likely also encouraged solidarity among college servants; well-publicized and attended events like the annual club day raised the profile of college servants in the local

[545] BL G.A. Oxon c.14; OC TF 1 G5/1 1841-1859 Accounts of the Servants' Provident Institution.

community. The similarity to trade unions ends with any suggestion that these societies were an effective way for servants to collectively bargain with employers to improve working conditions or remuneration. The societies were headed by senior servants, whose publicly expressed views aligned closely with their employers. In some instances, the friendly societies were explicitly used to influence the behavior of servants and advance the interests of their employers.

From their foundation, these societies actively solicited and depended on patronage, first from colleges and individual fellows, then later from local businesses and tradespeople. Patronage offered not only financial support in the form of honorary memberships and donations, but also practical advice on managing the organizations and investing funds. Patronage took both active and passive forms, patrons served in leadership and advisory roles; honorary members and donors offered financial support.

Comparing the list of honorary members attending the CSBS annual club day in 1869 with the Kelly's *Post Office Directory* from the same year illustrates the importance of tradespeople to the society in the later decades of the nineteenth century. An alphabetical list of honorary members in attendance follows, with their trade in parentheses where it could be determined: C. Baker (beer retailer), J. Baker, H. Eldridge Bates, W. Brunner (solicitor, 34 Pembroke St., St. Aldates), J.B. Brown (ironmonger), J. Dewe, H. Eyles (Manager, Oxford Furnishing Company), G. Drinkwater (wine and spirit merchant), G.T.C. Foster (tailors and robe makers), J Gillbrey, A.R.H. Hill, T. Lovesey (publican of The Ship on Ship Street), C. Park (wine and spirit merchant), H. Piper (beer retailer), J. Simms (shoemaker), G. Smith (beer retailer and ginger beer manufacturer), R.F. Spiers, S. Spiers, H. Stanley, J.R. Stroud (cab proprietor), H. Taylor (livery stables), R. Thomas (painters and plumbers), T. Thorpe,

G. Tollit, J. Wakefield, J. Waldie, H. Ward, R. Wheeler (tailor), G. Whetton (grocer), F. Williams, B. Wollams, and G. Wyatt (ironmonger).[546]

Friendly societies and old age

The CSBS offered support to older members in two ways: a no-claims bonus and a *de facto* old age pension. After twenty-five years without having claimed any benefits, members were entitled to collect a no-claims bonus of 5/- weekly for one year. The amount of this benefit was unchanged from 1849 to 1880. If a servant had collected some benefit from the society at any time in the twenty-five years of membership, he was entitled to a smaller weekly payment of 3/- for a year. Presumably, significant numbers of servants were able to reach this threshold and by 1880 the criteria were restricted. In 1849, a servant was entitled to this payment if he had collected less than £15 over twenty-five years of membership; in 1880, this threshold was reduced to less than three pounds. If a servant had received between £3-10 over twenty-five years of membership, he was only entitled to 2/- weekly for one year.[547] In 1892, the society's secretary Mr. Brooks calculated that over fifty years, the society had paid a total of £1400 in these bonuses.

The society also provided pensions to members who were unable to work due to disability or old age. At the 75th annual dinner, the club's secretary James Symonds gave the annual financial summary and remarked that the club's funds were in such good condition, they were able to pay 7/- a week each to their 'old worn out members'.[548] This phrase connoted the deserving nature of these servants, having spent a lifetime toiling in the service of the colleges

[546] *JOJ*, 17 July 1869.
[547] BL:G.A. Oxon 8Â 124 Articles of the College Servants' Benefit Society 1849; WCL: XXI.4.12(11) Rules of the College Servants' Benefit Society 1880.
[548] *JOJ*, 6 August 1887.

and their members. In several of these annual speeches, Symonds made a direct connection between pensions and the contributions of honorary members. In 1889, Symonds warned 'were it not for their honorary members, they would have to reduce their old and worn out members' pay from 7s to 5s per week, and he therefore sincerely hoped they would endeavor to keep the honorary members' list as full as it was at present. If that was done, they could keep up their present payment as long as they liked without getting into a state of bankruptcy and that showed the great advantage of the honorary members' subscriptions.'[549] By the late nineteenth century, the cost of providing old age pensions exceeded payments of ordinary sickness benefits. In 1892, Brooks reported that in that year, the society had paid out £328, £200 of this was 'nominally or literally for old age pensions, that is, for members on the sick list who had come down to reduced pay and were likely to be so for the remainder of their lives.'[550] Although it is not possible to tell how many servants received this payment, £200 represents a weekly pension of 7/- paid to ten servants each for a year.

Brooks noted that in 1892, as in previous years, the society's regular expenditures exceeded its income from membership fees. For the preceding five years, the average shortfall was approximately £85 and Brooks concluded that it was only possible to pay these pensions with the contributions of honorary members and the interest earned from investments.[551] Brooks and Symonds must have known that these speeches were quoted at length in the local newspapers and continually made explicit the connection between the payment of pensions to deserving workers and the contributions of honorary members in a very public way. Speeches given by honorary members at these same celebrations often call out the morally improving

[549] Ibid., 3 August 1889.
[550] Ibid, 16 July 1892.
[551] Ibid.

nature of friendly society membership and in it, the fulfillment of the responsibility of servants, to themselves, their families and their community.

The compilation of annual reports and the dissemination of these statistics offered some estimates of mortality and morbidity for servants and enabled a rough comparison with the rates of other workers. In 1892 at the annual CSBS dinner, Rev. C. Fletcher, the rector of Carfax, observed that the annual rate of mortality for Oxford college servants was approximately two and a half per hundred, while the comparable rate for the city was sixteen per thousand and 'although members were a selected class he had no doubt they were dying at a greater rate than the citizens generally'. He calculated that during the year one-fifth of the membership had been sick, and although he did not have comparable statistics for the city, he felt that this seemed a high rate.[552]

In 1893, Langford Price, a longtime honorary member of the CSBS and the treasurer at Oriel, recounted how he had been made aware of the society while an undergraduate at Trinity and had long since supported its aims of mutual aid and fellowship.[553] His work as treasurer at Oriel brought him in 'close and constant relations with the servants of the college' and that 'by not associating themselves with such institutions as theirs men not infrequently became a burden to their friends and relations'.[554] The speeches of Brooks, Symonds and other members, both honorary and ordinary, balanced the conversation by reminding those in attendance and those reading the local newspapers that the paternalistic employment

[552] Ibid.
[553] The position of treasurer at Oriel was similar to the position of bursar at other colleges. Price was a political economist and a student of Alfred Marshall's while at Oxford; Marshall wrote the forward for Price's *Industrial Peace* in 1887.
[554] *JOJ*, 29 July 1893; OC GOV 4 A4 College minutes from 13 February 1890 note that a circular received by the college from the CSPI was discussed and it was agreed that 'it might be brought to the knowledge of the servants but without pressing them to join.'

relationship was reciprocal. By contributing to the CSBS through donations or honorary membership, members of colleges could, and indeed should, subsidize the cost of old age pensions for deserving servants who, through friendly society membership, had demonstrated their efforts to provide for themselves in old age, disability and illness.

Rev. William Duggan, an honorary member and regular attendee of the annual dinners, spoke after Price and advised servants to 'make a personal application to the fleeting body of the teaching staff at the University' and the 'list of honorary members might satisfactorily be increased'.[555] As a former undergraduate and now clergyman of Oxford, Duggan was well-acquainted with the customs of colleges and their servants. Fellows like Price might be encouraged to support the individualistic ideology that compelled servants to provide for themselves in times of uncertainty, but they were even more likely to respond to a personal appeal for a contribution. It seems that both servants' friendly societies followed Duggan's advice. In July 1890, Symonds wrote to the principal and fellows at Brasenose and asked that they become honorary members of the CSBS. His letter noted that a copy of the society's rules and an annual financial statement were enclosed.[556] Symonds mentioned only one benefit of membership specifically, the allowance to old and infirm servants: '…through the Medium of Honorary Subscribers [the society] has been enabled to give a larger weekly allowance to aged and infirm members than it could have otherwise done.'[557]

By the late nineteenth century, it is clear that membership in a friendly society was

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[555] *JOJ*, 29 July 1893, Duggan received his BA at Lincoln College, Oxford and was the vicar at St. Paul's in Jericho, Oxford for 33 years. He was well known for his sympathy with the friendly society movement and the Christian Social Union.

[556] It appears that the CSBS routinely sent letters to college authorities soliciting contributions. Minutes at Trinity note the receipt of one of these letters and that concerns were expressed about the solvency of the society. TC Coll. Govt. III/c/1-2, 12 May 1897.

[557] Letter from James Symonds to BNC, 5 July 1890. BNC Bursars' Correspondence and insurance

recognized as a means of demonstrating good character and sensible personal habits to college employers. In 1871, Trinity accepted forty-five applications for the butler's position. Of these, twenty-five appear to have been selected for interview or at least for further consideration. College authorities created a chart of the men interviewed which shows the criteria used for evaluating each of the candidates. The college considered their work experience and testimonials, as well as their age, marital status, father's occupation, whether they had a life insurance policy or were a member of a friendly society, and their habits and sobriety.[558] Only one of the men was a member of a benefit club, one mentioned a lapsed policy and the rest offered no evidence of either insurance or membership in a friendly society. The chart noted the number of dependents for each candidate, ranging from single men with no dependents to married men with seven children. It is clear that this information was considered alongside the provision candidates had made for themselves and their families in the event of illness or death. Not only was the insurance a sign of respectability and thrift, but also served as an indication of the potential liability the college might face for surviving family members, should a servant die or become incapacitated while in their employ.

'The Absconding Cook'[559]

On April 9, 1870, William Thurland, the manciple and cook at New College, was elected president of the Oxford Amateur Rose Society. Thurland often appeared in the newspapers with his prize-winning roses and kept a large garden on nearby Ship Street. One month later, Thurland again appeared in the papers, this time, under very different circumstances. On May 14, 'Our Local Notebook', a regular column in the *Oxford Times* breathlessly reported,

[558] TC Old Bursary – Drawer 26 Servants 1831-1876.
[559] 'The Absconding Cook' *JOJ*, 21 May 1870.

'On dit that a town councillor, who is manciple and cook at a certain well-known college, who is well-known and much esteemed by the habitués of a famous hostelry in the Turl, who has taken a conspicuous part in connexion with college benefit societies, and who is a devoted admirer also of the queen of flowers, has disappeared, leaving, however, behind him certain disagreeable mementos in the shape of undischarged liabilities.'[560] Thurland, a well-respected senior servant and prominent member of the local community, had absconded with over £1100 belonging to the two servants' friendly societies. The gradual unfolding of his story in the local papers detailed Thurland's financial and social ties to the community, inseparable from his role as a trusted college servant.[561]

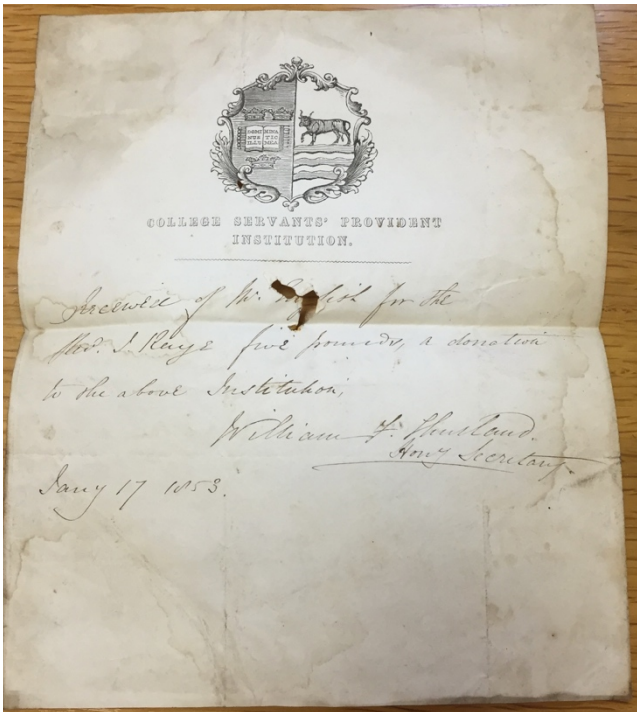

COLLEGE SERVANTS' PROVIDENT INSTITUTION.

Figure 18 1853 Receipt signed by William Thurland for £5 donation to the CSPI from Lincoln College (LC/B/C/4)

[560] "Our Local Notebook' *OT*, 14 May 1870.
[561] See Appendix, image 17 for a receipt signed by Thurland.

Thurland's rise exemplified the embodiment of middle-class ideals of thrift and mutual aid as a route to respectability for the working class. Until May 1870, to any observer, Thurland was a hard-working, respected man who supported his fellow college servants through his commitment to the ideals of self-help and his work in both college servants' friendly societies. The May 14th article, which hints at a fondness for drinking and stokes fears of sizeable unpaid debts, offers a sharp contrast to previous reports of Thurland's conduct. In May 1862, members of the CSPI had taken up a collection to purchase a piece of plate which they awarded Thurland at their annual dinner. 'On the pinnacle of fame in our society stands our excellent secretary, Mr Thurland…many of you know that our secretary's father held a similar office in the Benefit Club and was presented with two massive silver tankards for his valuable services. I would say of that venerable gentleman, happy father of such a son and looking to my right, happy son of such a sire (cheers) - I hope the sight of this gift may stimulate his children and his children's children to walk the path so honorably marked out for them.'[562]

Quotes from Thurland's speeches at the annual society dinners often appeared in the local newspapers. He drew attention to the income insecurity that characterized college employment, 'In the position they held as college servants, they were hardly able to avoid the accumulation of debts, especially in long illness, so that it was impossible for many of them, particularly the younger ones, to save anything against the dire misfortune which might happen to their families by their death at any moment.'[563] Thurland warned against the poverty that would likely befall a family that unexpectedly lost their breadwinner, but worse

[562] *OC*, 3 May 1862.
[563] *JOJ,* 11 January 1868.

than that, the breakup of families that he observed had often followed these tragedies.[564] As well as providing some financial security for dependents, according to Thurland, friendly societies also taught members 'the cardinal virtue of self-reliance in Christian charity'.[565] Thurland's speeches comport with his role as a senior servant, his views expressed in these speeches reflect ideals of individualism espoused by college authorities at that time. Several of these reports highlight the importance of older servants in senior positions modelling responsible behavior for their younger colleagues.

In July 1866, 220 members of the CSBS and their guests attended the society's annual dinner, held in Worcester Meadow. 'The bill of fare comprised ten dishes of salmon, four dishes of roast beef, two haunches of mutton, two fore-quarters of lamb, two legs of lamb, one boiled leg of mutton, three couples of boiled fowls, two couples of roast fowls, four couples of ducks, two geese, ten meat pies, salad, cheese, &etc.' as well as drinks: wine spirits and beer supplied by Mrs. Vize of the Druid's Head in George Street. Attendees danced to Mr. Matthews' Quadrille Band and played Aunt Sally and 'kiss in the ring'. Newspaper accounts estimated that over the course of the day, one thousand people attended, the entrance guarded by the city police.

Thurland presided over this dinner, and after the mayor had finished his speech, Thurland spoke, '…I hope I may be possessed of half the virtues our kind friend, the Mayor, has enumerated. Whatever talents I may be endowed with, I believe ought to be exercised in ameliorating the distress and suffering incident to my fellow men, and in attempting to induce others to follow my example, and to keep the wheels of time so nicely oiled as to make it glide smoothly on. …We know sickness will make sure and fearful incursions, and reduce the once

[564] *OC,* 11 January 1868.
[565] *JOJ,* 11 January 1868.

manly voice to the childish treble, then this valuable society comes to the members' aid. I hope no action of my life will forfeit the good opinion you entertain of me.' In other speeches that evening, honorary members spoke of the status conferred by ordinary membership in the society, 'during the last twenty years the College Servants have visibly raised their social status, and the seniors and more influential, in becoming adherents of this society set a good and praiseworthy example to the junior members'.[566]

Middle-class observers held that friendly societies offered working-class members an opportunity to learn self-governance, important in an age when suffrage was extended to more men. In 1867, the year following this dinner, Thurland was elected councilor to the East Ward of the city, in addition to his offices as the treasurer of both college servants' friendly societies, reports commented, 'Mr. Thurland is a good Conservative, is highly respected by persons of all shades of political thinking'.[567] Thurland appeared a sterling example of middle-class ideals, making his act of betrayal, effectively stealing money from his fellow servants, their widows and children, even more shocking.

Thurland's position as manciple and cook allowed him to accumulate sizable debts with local tradespeople, the prospect of his default fueled a local panic.[568] It was reported, 'Most of the tradesmen in the market, however, proclaim themselves sufferers, and many in the town are said to be badly victimized. A poor milkman, for instance, let in for £9 and another for £20.'[569] The patronage of local tradespeople was integral to the success of both friendly societies and Thurland had longstanding ties to local businesses through his college

[566] *OT*, 21 July 1866.
[567] *OT*, 19 October 1867.
[568] Under certain arrangements, senior college servants purchased items using credit, which were then sold on to residents of the college, with the servant receiving payment. Although these debts were incurred as part of Thurland's position in the college, he would have been personally liable to repay them.
[569] "Our Local Notebook' *OT*, 14 May 1870.

employment. A meeting of his creditors was held two weeks after he disappeared and it was reported that he owed them £1800, in addition to the funds embezzled from the friendly societies.[570] Thurland's story unfolded in the local newspapers for several months until he was declared bankrupt, his assets sold and his debts settled in November 1870. His assets included leasehold property consisting of two large houses in the city centre, one of which he ran as licensed university lodgings, as well as his shares in the Oxford Building and Investment Company, where he was a company director.[571] Surviving records are incomplete, but newspaper accounts suggest that the societies recovered most of the stolen funds. Whether his other debts were repaid is less clear.[572] Thurland fled to the United States where he died in 1877, aged 61.[573] His family appears to have stayed in Oxford. Thurland's son, also named William, worked at the Bodleian Libraries where he started as an assistant in 1868 and continued for forty years as the senior assistant in charge of the topographical department. He was remembered at the Bodleian as a 'hardworking, loyal and faithful servant of the library'.[574]

Thurland's theft was likely the largest suffered by a friendly society in Oxfordshire and received considerable attention in the local press.[575] Fantastic rumors about Thurland and the amount of money that had disappeared, circulated quickly and both friendly societies were anxious to quell the panic and provide members, both honorary and ordinary, more accurate information and assurances that the societies would survive the scandal. James Symonds, the

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[570] *JOJ*, 21 May 1870.
[571] 'Application in Bankruptcy' *Oxford Times*, 17 September 1870.
[572] Thurland was adjudicated bankrupt in the Oxford County Court on June 8, 1870. George Dewe, an Oxford grocer, was appointed trustee of Thurland's property. *JOJ*, 11 June 1870; *OT*, 17 September 1870, 19 October 1870 and 10 December 1870.
[573] *JOJ,* 20 October 1877
[574] *Bodleian Quarterly Record*, Vol 1 (1917), p.301.
[575] The next largest reported theft was approximately £500 from a Thame chapter of the AOF in 1879. S. Morley, *Oxfordshire Friendly Societies 1750-1918* (2011) p. 383

CSBS secretary, wrote a letter to the *Oxford Gazette* assuring readers that the losses suffered by the CSBS were much less than originally reported, only about £100. Symonds could make no similar comment about the CSPI, as those losses were significant.[576]

Although records for the years of Thurland's embezzlement do not survive, in previous years, trustees of the society included prominent members of the university. A few of the annual reports from both societies survive and show, for example, that in 1847, the trustees of the CSPI included: the vice chancellor; the lord bishop of Chichester; and the Reverend David Williams, who was the warden of New College and Thurland's employer. Trustees listed on the next surviving annual report from the CSPI in 1883 are less distinguished: Rev. H. Boyd, the principal of Hertford College; William Perkins, Esq. of Holywell Street and Alderman T. Randall, of Grandpont.[577] Thurland's case was a stark reminder of the financial responsibility of the societies' trustees, whereas before 1870, the role likely seemed much less risky.

From its inception, the CSPI deposited its funds in the Oxford Savings Bank. From 1841-7, annual reports show a steady accumulation of funds with a balance in cash deposits of £1304. In 1862, at the annual general meeting it was announced that the city's waterworks committee had accepted the offer of a loan of £2000 at 4% interest from the society.[578] At the annual meeting in 1869, the secretary, Mr. T. Carter gave a brief account of the CSPI's finances. He stated, somewhat ambiguously, that the society's income 'would about meet' its expenditure and assured those present that the society was solvent, 'Their society now numbered 149 members, with a capital of something like £4000. At a time whether there were

[576] *OC*, 21 May 1870.
[577] BL G.A. Oxon c.14.
[578] *JOJ*, 4 January 1862.

so many failures among Insurance Societies, it was satisfactory to know that the Oxford College Servants' Provident Society was in such a sound condition that if they were called upon that very day to discharge their obligations, it had the means of doing so by the surrender of all its policies'.[579]Reports of annual meetings of the CSBS from approximately the same time suggest that this society had significantly fewer assets, about £1000 in 1867, which offers some explanation why Thurland took so much from the CSPI and very little from the CSBS.[580]

Thurland's theft was chiefly a failure of oversight. Annual reports were produced and signed by the society's officers, but they signed their approval of the reports without having examined any evidence, such as receipts from bank deposits. Records from the savings bank would have shown that the funds had never been deposited.[581] An early report from the week following Thurland's disappearance suggested that he had made a series of loans to friends which precipitated his financial troubles, but the newspaper accounts offer little insight into Thurland's behavior.[582] In a court case in November 1870, Mr. Mallam, who was representing the CSPI in its efforts to recover funds from Thurland's estate, told the court that he believed Thurland's defalcations had started in 1867 or 1868.[583] No evidence survives of any response to the scandal by colleges or individual fellows, although undoubtedly it was the topic of considerable discussion.

Both societies recovered financially from the theft, but the damage to the societies' reputations took longer to mend. James Symonds took over from Thurland as secretary of the

[579] *Oxford University and City Herald*, 15 January 1870; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 15 January 1870.
[580] *OT*, 20 July 1867.
[581] *JOJ,* 12 November 1870.
[582] "Our Local Notebook', *OT*, 14 May 1870.
[583] *JOJ,* 12 November 1870.

CSBS in 1870 and in the months following Thurland's disappearance, the CSBS held its traditional annual dinner, although much smaller than in years past, with only about one hundred attending. By 1878, about 600 members and guests attended. In the years that followed, the precision with which Symonds detailed the society's finances at the annual meeting is particularly striking. Newspaper accounts after 1870 list the income, disbursements and assets of the society to the penny.

5.4. Other Mutual Aid Societies

College-Based Clubs

In addition to the two registered friendly societies, several unregistered benefit societies for college servants were established during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These took a variety of forms, from a large, independent slate, or dividing, club to small, accumulating, college-based societies, resembling shop clubs.[584] Although it is likely that servants formed slate clubs earlier, documentary evidence survives only from the early twentieth century, perhaps not surprising given the nature of these clubs. The first evidence of an accumulating, college-based, mutual aid society is found at Queen's in 1860, and other colleges formed these clubs into the early twentieth century. An announcement in the *Oxford Chronicle* stated that Mr. Owen, the college butler at Queen's, founded the society which was to be funded by subscriptions and donations and would pay for substitutes when servants were unable to work because of sickness or infirmity.[585]

By the late nineteenth century, these small, college-based societies coexisted alongside larger registered societies. The CSBS rules from 1849 and 1880 both prohibit members from belonging to any other benefit society, however by the 1900s there is evidence that suggests some servants were members of the CSBS and the CSS slate club, as well as at least one of the college-based clubs, Worcester. It is not clear if the rules were changed after 1880, or the prohibition on membership in multiple societies was not strictly enforced in the case of unregistered societies.

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[584] Report to Parliament on Shop Clubs 1899 'The Committee understand the expression "Shop Clubs" in the reference to include every club and society for providing benefits to workmen in connection with a workshop, factory, or other commercial undertaking…'
[585] *OC*, *7* January 1860.

These college-based clubs were a way for paternalistic employers to directly influence the financial habits of servants, encouraging, and often compelling servants to save for the cost of illness through regular membership contributions. Sometimes these clubs functioned in conjunction with a sick pay policy, but in some cases were established instead of guaranteed sick pay, and entitlement to any payment for work missed due to illness was contingent on membership in the college-based club. Later, when colleges began to establish defined sick pay policies, these societies continued, and were believed by employers to be an effective management tool for preventing malingering. Shop clubs generally allowed benefits on the first day of absence from work and employers believed that workers were likely to take less time away from work if they could access these benefits on a short term, rather than on a weekly basis, as was common in most friendly societies.

Employers insisted that the requirement to resign other society memberships was necessary to prevent a circumstance where a worker could collect sick benefits in excess of regular wages, thus multiple memberships could also encourage malingering. Creating a mutual aid society within a college set up an effective check against fraudulent claims of illness, by shifting the burden of surveilling servants' behavior from college authorities onto the workers themselves. College-based clubs that did not offer a significant contribution from the college increased the value of the incentive to monitor coworkers by making the loss associated with a fraudulent claim the exclusive burden of the other club members: it would be their contributions collected by a malingerer. Membership in these clubs varied from completely independent to effectively compulsory; similarly, some were financially independent and some were dependent to some extent, whether through donations or the implicit promise of financial backing by the college, should the fund be unable to meet its liabilities.

The College Servants' Society Slate Club (CSSSC), formed in 1914, was completely independent, neither soliciting nor receiving any donations or honorary memberships. A slate club, or dividing society, collected regular dues from members but did not accumulate funds, instead at the end of the year the remaining balance was divided among its membership. Evidence from three college shop clubs and one slate club survives, and shows that colleges and servants experimented with a variety of schemes, some compulsory, some voluntary, with varying degrees of financial independence.

Slate clubs and shop clubs are described as both as an inferior substitute for and a complement to friendly society membership, much of this discussion focuses not on the institutions themselves, but rather on the political activities of the large affiliated orders to limit the competitive threat, particularly that posed by compulsory shop clubs in the late nineteenth century.[586] Slate clubs were perceived as less of a threat to friendly societies and have hitherto received little attention. Both of these types of mutual aid societies are cast as an inferior form of friendly society membership, especially compared to the larger affiliated orders. Slate club subscriptions were typically less expensive compared to accumulating friendly societies, but offered correspondingly limited benefits, and usually did not provide defined prospective benefits, like burial insurance. Where slate clubs provided death benefits, it was often through a collection, in which case the benefit would necessarily vary in amount. Lacking any significant financial reserve, slate clubs were also perceived as vulnerable to widespread epidemics of sickness.

Slate clubs could avoid one of the problems that plagued friendly societies: an aging membership. Older members, or members who had a year that burdened the club with a

[586] Gosden argues for the importance of geography, finding that in rural areas, these clubs were an inferior substitute, however in industrial areas, they were complementary. Gosden, *Friendly Societies*, pp.57-8.

lengthy illness, could be prohibited from rejoining the following year. After 1875, slate clubs were eligible for registration, like accumulating societies, and while some chose to register, they were typically less likely to do so. There was a popular perception that as a consequence, they were more risky than other types of benefit societies. To qualify for registration, a society had to be voluntary, managed by a committee of its members and could not invest its funds with a private individual. Benefits from registration derived from the recognition of the society as a corporate entity. These benefits included exemption from some duties and the right to use the courts to recover debts, embezzled or misappropriated funds.[587] The administrative burden associated with registration likely discouraged slate clubs, and the ability to recover misappropriated funds through the courts afforded by registration would have been less important to societies that did not accumulate funds beyond a year. Shop clubs were ineligible for registration if membership was compulsory, if the society's funds were invested in the company or if the society was governed by the employer, rather than its members – all conditions that occurred with some regularity.

Secondary literature provides little insight into the workers' perspective, and leaves important questions unanswered: how did workers incorporate membership in these institutions into their strategies for managing income insecurity? How did these types of societies differentiate themselves to appeal to workers in a competitive marketplace, alongside larger, registered friendly societies and industrial assurance companies? In order to develop a better understanding of working-class strategies for managing economic uncertainty, it is important to understand how these societies functioned, their role in household economies, and their impact on the employment contract.

[587] Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750-1914* (Hampshire, 2003), p.46.

Existing literature suggests that slate clubs were attractive for those who could not afford friendly society dues or lacked the regular income to commit to an accumulating society or the purchase of an insurance policy.[588] This is true – but is also an oversimplification. As with life insurance, working people often reinsured themselves and purchased multiple policies or memberships.[589] Slate clubs also offered an alternative for those who 'could not afford long term risk'.[590] Rather than merely an inferior substitute, membership in slate clubs and shop clubs could be complementary and comprise part of a household's strategy to manage uncertainty.

There has been little progress in the secondary literature in understanding how these types of institutions influenced and were influenced by management policies regarding workers' disability and sickness benefits in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Edith Deverell, a late-nineteenth century historian, published articles on both shop benefit clubs and slate clubs in *The Economic Journal*.[591] Her work on these benefit societies has been strangely overlooked, but offers valuable insight into these organizations. Her research was a response to the well-publicized concerns of friendly societies and their objections to the growing practice of compulsory shop clubs that required employees to resign any other benefit society memberships, but her work also looked at these societies from a broader perspective to highlight several key questions that had previously been ignored: were members 'getting an adequate return for sums contributed', were management costs reasonable, what was the relationship between wages, membership costs, and benefits, and finally, was there truth to

[588] Ibid., p.77.
[589] Horrell and Oxley found two-thirds of the households in their sample reinsured, with insurance against sickness and death most commonly held. Horrell and Oxley, p.45.
[590] Pat Thane, *Old Age in English History* (Oxford, 2000), p.195.
[591] Edith Deverell Marvin (1872-1958) studied at Somerville College, Oxford and Trinity College, Dublin. She held several research studentships, including at LSE, where she worked as an unpaid research assistant on Bowley's study of wages, *DNB* https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/48586, accessed online 21 June 2017.

the fear that these clubs 'were sucking the life-blood of the great Friendly Societies'?[592]

Deverell surveyed a number of shop clubs and slate clubs, along with trade unions that represented the relevant industries. Her work made important connections between shop benefit clubs, managerial strategies and employment law, and how these impacted workers' disability and sickness benefits.[593] Deverell argued that the 1880 Employers' Liability Act and subsequent modifications in the late nineteenth century had been created with the express goal of preserving the shop benefit club. She found that shop clubs 'had assumed serious proportions', although she believed that the well-publicized case of the London and India Docks' Shop Club was likely not representative and that relatively few employers required their employees to also resign any other friendly society memberships. Deverell compared rules from shop clubs representing a variety of occupations, including: compositors, tramway workers, colliers, gas workers, woolen manufacturers and railway workers.

Deverell found that slate clubs appealed to workers for a variety of reasons, not just the affordability of membership. Very few friendly societies offered sickness benefits that covered the full expense associated with illness, and workers often used slate clubs to supplement friendly society benefits. Deverell cites the example of compositors, who typically belonged to three or more mutual aid societies, the total benefits from these memberships still did not completely replace missed wages.[594] The question of whether or not these clubs were compulsory is not always straightforward, Deverell argues that is it not always possible to discern from a club's rules whether or not membership was compulsory and she describes a

[592] Edith Deverell, 'Slate Clubs' *The Economic Journal*,Vol.9, No.34 (June 1899), p.266.
[593] Edith Deverell, 'Shop Benefit Clubs' *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 30 (June 1898) pp.243-254, [Hereafter Deverell, 'Shop Clubs'].
[594] Deverell, 'Shop Clubs' p.248

'nameless influence of the employer' which exerted pressure on workers to join.[595]

Evidence from several colleges during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggests that negotiating the uncertainty and hardship around the cost of illness was problematic for all servants, but especially difficult for scouts. At Christ Church, a college-based sick club for scouts was proposed in 1895. The scouts' committee, a group comprised of all the senior college scouts - who numbered about twenty in 1895 and had no entitlement to sick pay, resolved to look into the possibility of arranging such a club. Minutes from February 1896 note that rules had been agreed, although no details were given. The scouts expected financial support for the club from the college, as the steward's diary noted that all requests from subscriptions to the scouts' 'newly arranged Sick Fund must go in the usual way through the Estates Committee'.[596]

These societies illustrate the tensions inherent between paternalism and the ideology of the self-help movement. Scouts at Christ Church believed that they would have more success in receiving a guarantee of sick pay if it came through a donation from the college via a mutual aid society rather than a defined sick pay policy where benefits were paid directly to the servant. Actuarial science was well-developed enough by the 1890s for colleges to understand that these small clubs were inherently precarious: the risk pool was small and homogeneous; and long illnesses were not uncommon. In some cases, such as Christ Church, these mutual aid societies acted as an intermediate step between the early nineteenth-century assumption that the scout was wholly responsible for the cost of his illness and the mid-twentieth century idea that risk should be shared between the state, the employer and the employee.

Over this period, colleges and servants negotiated and renegotiated the employment

[595] Ibid., p.247
[596] CCA S.xxxi.a.3, 30 April 1896.

contract with regard to illness. Servants, particularly scouts, continued to push for explicit recognition of the responsibility of their employers to share the cost of illness and disability; in these exchanges, the preferences of servants for standardized policies guaranteeing the terms of benefits was repeatedly revealed. At the same time, colleges preferred an approach where authority for these decisions rested not in rules or policies, but with individuals. The scouts' sick fund at Christ Church proved to be only a temporary solution, with the subject of sick pay and the pay of scouts' substitutes raised again with the steward in early 1906. At a meeting with the dean and censors, the steward, Arthur Slessor, brought up the request of scouts to receive equivalent treatment to the other servants in the college, the recognition of their entitlement to sick pay, and their substitutes to be paid by the college. The college authorities refused to grant this request, instead preferring to continue the traditional paternalistic strategy of deciding each case on its perceived merits.[597] In March 1906, the minutes reported that the steward had agreed to pay substitutes £1 per week when a scout was unable to work due to illness but that scouts 'would have to settle up with the steward at the end of term.'[598] This was also an unsatisfactory solution. The steward's offer amounted to recognition that scouts could not reasonably be expected to have enough savings to cover the expense of anything more than a brief period of illness and had the advantage of at least standardizing the rate paid to a substitute – but was in fact just a short-term loan against termly gratuities. Eventually in 1907, an agreement was reached that the college would pay half the cost of a substitute, doctors' fees and chemists' fees.[599]

[597] '…Steward authorized to use his discretion about giving assistance in such cases', CCA:S.xxxiii.a.1, 28 February 1906.
[598] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1, 21 March 1906.
[599] CCA:S.xxxi.a.3, 20 December 1907.

In 1885, Exeter established a college-based mutual aid society.[600] The society was intended to organize and pay substitutes for college servants who were absent from work due to illness. Officers of the club included positions held by college servants: a treasurer, secretary and collector; the president was to be the rector or a fellow of the college. The entrance fee was 10/-, annual membership dues were 2/-, paid in each of the three academic terms, for a total of 6/- annually.[601] There is no mention of any contribution from the college, presumably this would have been in the form of discretionary donations from the college and individual fellows. This also required college servants to solicit contributions from fellows in order to help fund their sick pay. This came at a time when Exeter, like most colleges, was making such requests, which had always been considered vaguely distasteful, a punishable offence. Donations or subscriptions to servants' clubs were perceived as another type of gratuity. A copy of the rules for college servants from 1896 stated 'The servants are strictly forbidden to apply to undergraduate members of the College for subscriptions to their clubs or to ask members of the College for any gratuity. Those who are reported to have broken this rule will lose their situations.'[602]

The rules of the Exeter mutual aid society are very similar to the typical rules of mutual aid societies in this period and do not specifically state that membership was compulsory, however it is likely that a servant, particularly scouts, who did not join would not be entitled to sick pay and would also be viewed unfavorably by their college employers. Under the rules of the society, the collector was required to visit the house of any servant who was unable to work due to illness each week. This effectively required servants to surveil one another and

[600] EC:L.II.*4*.
[601] EC:L.II.*4* Miscellaneous 19th century papers 'Rules of the Exeter College Servants' Benevolent Society'
[602] Ibid., 'Instructions for the college servants' 1896.

created an obligation to report malingering to the president of the society, who was the rector or a fellow of the college. The clear implication is that malingering would likely jeopardize a servant's continued employment. Out of its funds, the club paid the benefit to the college, who then paid the servant their regular wages. One surviving summary from 1937 shows that the subscriptions were deducted directly from servants' wages and the rate of sick benefit was 15/- weekly. If a servant left the employ of the college, he was entitled to all monies paid, less sick pay received. It is not possible to tell from the surviving records whether the college effectively subsidized the club or to what extent.

The society survived into the late 1940s, but not in the same form. In 1935, the society considered purchasing disability and sickness insurance to provide the same benefits. The society contacted an insurance broker recommended by one of the college fellows and received a quote from the Railway Passenger Assurance Company. The club suggested that they could pay a premium of 8/- per servant per annum, with 5/- paid by the servant and three by the college. For this, they could purchase a policy that would pay 6/- per week in the event of incapacity through illness or disability for a maximum of fifty-two weeks. This was far short of the 15/- weekly that the club had hoped to receive and there is no evidence that any insurance was purchased.

Starting in 1937, the benefit club was run in conjunction with the recreation club and one surviving balance sheet shows that thirty men paid the annual subscription to both clubs. The club appears to have continued until 1938, when the benevolent club was wound up and reformed as a slate club. The new club had no entrance fee and while all servants were eligible to join, the rules stated that 'membership shall be entirely voluntary'.[603] Officers were elected

[603] Ibid.

as before, but there is no mention of any college fellows serving in any capacity. The rules also indicate that employees of the college were, in some cases, entitled to sick pay as members could not claim any benefit if they were drawing full wages from the college. Despite this, the existence of the sick club suggests that there remained a need for some insurance against the cost of illness during this period. Club subscriptions were 6d., paid weekly; sick pay was 10/- for the first five weeks of illness and then 5/- per week for five weeks. No member was entitled to receive more than £3.15.0 in any twelve-month period. The annual share-out was held on the third Thursday of December, with the funds paid to all members on the following Monday, offering a way to save during the year for Christmas. One balance sheet from 1938 survives, and shows that the club received one donation from a fellow, five pounds from Mr. Luttrell. The club spent the funds as follows: £1.12.0 'beer to drink Mr. Luttrell's health, two shillings each to the four college servants who were not members of the club, and the remaining three pounds to be divided among the thirty members of the club. The club appears to have carried on in this way until December 1948, when a vote was taken to wind up the club and the remaining funds were divided among the members. The recreation club carried on, however.

In October 1908, on behalf of the college bedmakers, William Drake, a senior servant at Worcester, agreed the terms of a similar mutual aid scheme with the bursar, F.J. Lys.[604] The scheme was only for bedmakers, evidence that the traditional employment contract between colleges and bedmakers, where bedmakers were not fully considered direct employees of the college, was still influential at Worcester as late as the twentieth century. In the archived bursary file containing a copy of the society's rules, there is also an undated list of bedmakers

[604] William Drake was later promoted to butler. Francis Lys, later the provost of Worcester (1919-46) and vice-chancellor of the university (1932-5).

and their friendly society affiliations.[605] Nearly all were members of a society. Of the twenty bedmakers on this list, seven belonged to the CSBS, including Drake. Nine belonged to an affiliated order: five to the Foresters, two to the Hearts of Oak and two to the Odd Fellows. One bedmaker was a member of an unnamed slate club, and the remaining three reported that they did not belong to any society. The college and these bedmakers were clearly in agreement that their existing sickness insurance arrangements made through these friendly societies provided inadequate coverage, but the relative distribution of responsibility for managing the cost of sickness between the employer and employee was very much an unanswered question. It is not clear from the surviving evidence how the college and the bedmakers arrived at the creation of a subsidized mutual aid society as the solution to the high cost of illness, or indeed if there was any negotiation. The letter from Lys to Drake only reports the decision: the college insisted that any guarantee of sick pay was contingent on the institution of a college shop club.[606]

The rules of the scheme, called the 'Bedmakers' Mutual Aid Society', stipulate that in the event of a bedmaker's absence from work due to illness, the college agreed to contribute 5/- for five weeks and 2/6- a week for the remaining three weeks of term towards the remuneration of a substitute, half of the weekly benefit, but only if the servant was a member of the college-based mutual aid society, effectively making membership compulsory. The rules do not prohibit the payment of benefits for short illnesses, but in the event of feigned illness or defrauding the society through any misconduct, the servant would be excluded from the society and all monies paid would be forfeited.[607] It seems evident that defrauding the society

[605] WOR/BUR/8/18/58.
[606] WOR/BUR/8/18/58, 22 October 1908.
[607] Ibid.

by malingering would also seriously threaten a servant's continued employment, although the rules make no explicit reference to termination. If a servant left the college or died, he or his representatives were entitled to two-thirds of the contributions paid, less any amounts received for sick pay.

Although the club was headed by servants, the society was not strictly self-governing. Lys added that the rules of the society would have to be approved by the college and any changes to the rules must be agreed with the bursar, conditions which were stated in a letter to Drake but do not appear in the archived copy of the society's rules.[608] Each bedmaker paid an entrance fee of 10/-, five up front and five within three months of joining, along with a termly subscription of 2/6; all of the society's funds were to be invested in the Post Office Savings Bank. Two terms' fees must have been paid to be eligible to claim the benefit of 10/- a week for the first five weeks and 5/- a week for the remaining three weeks of term in the event of illness.[609] It is likely that the college collected information about servants' other friendly society memberships at least in part to determine whether the total amount of benefits collected from all sources would exceed a scout's wages.

The entrance fee was approximately half of the CSBS fee and the termly dues were about one-third the cost of CSBS membership. For this, a Worcester bedmaker would receive about two-thirds of the CSBS weekly benefit, an attractive proposition for the servants. The society was obviously at serious risk of insolvency without the college's subsidy and under this arrangement, there is an implicit promise by the college to meet the obligations of the society if its liabilities exceeded its assets. It is not clear from the surviving evidence whether these servants were able to afford the cost of their existing friendly society membership along with

[608] Ibid.
[609] Ibid.

the college shop club dues. The sum of these benefits, 15/- from the CSBS and 10/- from the college shop club, was likely sufficient to cover the cost of a substitute, which was approximately £1 weekly. A servant would have been significantly worse off if they could not afford to maintain both memberships, as they would have lost not only the sick pay but also the benefit of medical attendance, which was included with CSBS and other larger affiliated orders, but not provided under the college club. College clubs did not offer any benefits out of term.

Lys's letter strongly suggests that the college still believed that the responsibility of managing the work and payment arrangements in the event of a scout's illness rested primarily with the servants themselves and that the college would not be drawn into a negotiation about either the reapportioning of this responsibility between employer and employee or whether the scout was in fact still left to bear a significant portion of the financial risk of illness themselves. The rules of the club implicitly acknowledge the likelihood of financial insecurity and imply that payment of the entrance fee of 10/- up front was beyond the comfortable reach of most servants by allowing them to defer payment of the balance until the end of term, when they would receive termly cash gratuities. This is further supported by the final paragraph of the letter; Lys concludes by stating that, 'I do not think at present that there can be a fixed rule as to whether the remuneration of the substitute is to be fixed by the Bursar (i.e. the amount of it) or the bedmaker concerned to arrange; but that is a less important matter under the new conditions.'[610] The remuneration of a bedmaker, particularly the entitlement to gratuities in the event of a long illness, could be a complicated and contentious matter and it is difficult to see how the terms of the mutual aid society obviated

[610] Ibid.

the need to make explicit the payment arrangements for substitutes. Lys's letter leaves open the likelihood that the college would continue in a traditionally paternalistic fashion, to offer additional assistance based on a subjective assessment of each case individually.

College Servants' Slate Club

The College Servants' Slate Club (CSSC) was founded in January, 1914 by members of the College Servants' Society (CSS). In 1914, the CSS, founded in 1872 as a working men's club, was in a precarious financial position and it is clear from the minutes of that year's annual meeting that members did not expect it to survive the war years. The men who decided to start the slate club were likely motivated by both a desire to maintain the fellowship they had enjoyed as members of the CSS, as well as an interest in providing sick benefits and a limited, short term savings scheme. Minutes from the first meeting on January 14th note that the club had 63 members, which suggests that most of the remaining members of the CSS had joined.[611] The slate club's entrance fee was 1/-, members had to pay 2d. for a card, which recorded the payment of their subscriptions. The club rented a room in a pub for their fortnightly meetings, which were held after work, from 7:30-8:30, an hour and venue that suggests the meetings were an occasion for socializing, and not just to discuss club business. Several of the club's officers were men who had also been prominent and active members of the CSS, including Edward Dix, who worked at University and William Soundy, a servant at Harris Manchester. The club was run in an organized, democratic fashion. The membership elected a president, chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer annually, as well as two appointed trustees and a membership committee of eight men. At the annual general meeting, officers

[611] It is likely that the club had 70-80 members in 1914. Neither the committee minutes nor the society's annual reports for 1912-4 provide membership figures.

were elected, and often re-elected; a statement of accounts was produced and handed around for any members present to inspect, minutes suggest that the club's officers encouraged the membership to ask questions about the club's income and expenses. In 1930, minutes state that 'the balance sheet was passed round to the members for any questions which might arise for them. [612] In 1937, the rules were changed so that a quarterly balance sheet was prepared and made available for members, in addition to the annual balance sheet.[613] At every annual general meeting, the membership took a vote by a show of hands on whether or not to continue the club for the following year. At the same meeting, the annual share out, or each member's share of the club's funds, was announced and usually paid about a week later. It is not clear when the society dissolved, the minute book concludes in 1958, with a vote to continue the club for another year, at least forty-four years of operation.[614]

In the early years of the club, membership was limited to current and prospective members of the CSS, but later was opened to any college servant in good health under the age of 55. In 1932, the age limit for new members was reduced to 50, but in 1945 a new rule was adopted that allowed existing members to rejoin annually until age 55. Surviving records do not indicate either the amount of an individual's membership fees or the sick benefits, but do note that in 1920 that the club would pay a death benefit funded by a levy on members of 1/- for a fellow member, or sixpence for his wife.[615] Members could not collect any benefits in the first two months of the year, to allow the fund to build up a reserve. By 1922, it was evident that this did not provide a large enough reserve, and the club decided to adopt a rule that new

[612] NC/NCSC D1, 15 December 1930.
[613] Ibid., 1 December 1937.
[614] Ibid.
[615] Ibid., In most years, the minute book records only the annual vote to continue the society and the election of the club's officers.

members were required to wait until April 1st before submitting a claim. Renewing members could claim on March 1st. Although the records are patchy, minutes suggest that membership peaked in the 1920s, 197 members are recorded in 1922 and 214 members in 1923. In 1930, 43 new members joined, in 1931, 23 men joined, and in 1932, 31 new members' names were read aloud at the annual meeting.[616]

The club's membership profile, voluntary membership limited to a shared occupation with similar employers, and the annual renewal of membership, suggests there would be little likelihood of moral hazard, and indeed, records show only one possible case significant enough to draw attention. In December 1939, at the annual general meeting when the balance sheet was passed around, it was remarked that in most years, one member seemed to collect sick benefits in excess of his membership contributions. The chairman asked for a proposition and it was decided that this member would not be allowed to rejoin in the coming year.

From the club's inception, funds were kept in a box, minutes note that in 1915, David Talboys had kindly presented the club with a box for this purpose.[617] By the 1920s, the club's funds were deposited in a savings account with the London & Westminster Bank. In January 1930, perhaps in a response to the Great Depression, the club decided to withdraw its funds from the bank and invest them with Allsopp's Brewery instead.[618] By the late 1940s, the club's funds were again deposited in a bank, earning about £1 annually in interest. Six years of balance sheets survive, 1947-51 and 1954, these appear to be six of the original sheets that were handed around for inspection at the annual general meetings. The sheets are handwritten, in contrast to the CSS, which produced professionally printed annual balance

[616] Ibid.
[617] Ibid., 15 March 1915.
[618] Ibid., 3 January 1930.

sheets, summaries of accounts, and membership lists, suggesting the slate club adopted a less formal style and anticipated less oversight by college authorities, who would have expected printed documentation. The sheets are signed by the chairman, D. Talboys and the secretary B. Simmonds, as well as the two auditors, A.H. Barnes and A.H. Horne.

Management expenses were low. Ordinary expenses included the printing of cards and the rent of a room. The club also paid a small salary to the secretary and steward, minutes from 1925 mention that the club decided to hire an assistant secretary to help with record keeping, to be paid by a one penny levy on each member, it is likely that the secretary and steward were similarly compensated based on the number of members. Balance sheets from the late 1940s show that the club paid two auditors 5/- annually. It is difficult to find appropriate figures for comparison, but the longevity of the club suggests members were satisfied with the proportion of expenses paid. Like most slate clubs, the annual share-out was paid just before Christmas, providing servants with a convenient way to provide some insurance against illness and at the same time, set aside some money for the holiday. Minutes from 1919 record that the club ran a goose and turkey club in addition to its regular scheme.[619] At the end of the first year, the annual share-out or division of the balance of the club's funds, was £1.3.4 per member. Share-out figures for the years where balance sheets are available are shown in the table below. For these years, servants could expect from 59-74% of their contributions to be returned in the annual share-out.[620]

Although financial support from colleges, whether from individual fellows or from the institution generally, was vitally important to other college servants' friendly societies, there is

[619] Ibid., 6 December 1919.
[620] For comparison, Butler's notes for *Social Conditions* show figures for two Oxford slate clubs from 1909-10, on subscriptions of 3-6d. weekly, the Royal Oak club paid out £1.4.3 and the Jericho club, £1.4.0. Butler concluded there were 'a large number' of these clubs in Oxford. BL: C.V. Butler Papers/Box 13.

no evidence to suggest that this slate club sought or received any support from the wider university community. With no surviving membership lists, it is only possible to draw the most general conclusions about its appeal to college servants. For some, membership was complementary to other mutual aid society memberships. William Drake, a scout and later the butler at Worcester, was a member of this slate club, his college's compulsory mutual aid society and the CSBS.

College Servants' Slate Club Annual Accounts Summary 1947-54

Year	Members	Income	Sick Pay		Death Levies		Expenses	Annual Share Out
1947	94	£148.17.9	No. of individuals	5	No. of individuals	3	£15.7.6	£1.3.4
			Total	£10.0.0	Total	£13.13.0		
1948	102	£154.14.11	No. of individuals	11	No. of individuals	2	£15.7.0	£1.10.0
			Total	£17.13.4	Total	£10.0.0		
1949	95	£153.13.4	No. of individuals	17	No. of individuals	3	£14.10.6	£0.19.0
			Total	£34.16.2	Total	£14.7.0		
1950	87	£135.2.2	No. of individuals	9	No. of individuals	2	£12.13.11	£1.3.2
			Total	£12.13.4	Total	£8.14.0		
1951	82	£133.8.3	No. of individuals	13	No. of individuals	3	£12.11.6	£1.1.3
			Total	£21.3.4	Total	£12.10.0		
1954	65	£101.14.0	No. of individuals	6	No. of individuals	2	£10.15.6	£1.1.8
			Total	£13.5.0	Total	£6.11.0		

Table 19 College Servants' Slate Club Accounts Summary 1947-54, Source: NC/NCSC D1

6. Retirement Savings Schemes

6.1. Life Insurance and Early Contributory Savings Schemes

In the 1850s when compulsory life insurance schemes for servants at two colleges were first proposed, it was uncommon for working-class people to purchase life insurance.[621] Life insurance was not marketed to working-class consumers until the growth of the industrial insurance industry in the late nineteenth century. Marketing to the middle-class consumer started a few decades earlier. The *Oxford University Calendar*, the annual publication listing important dates in the academic year and the names of all members of colleges, first included advertisements in 1860. Advertisers appear to be a carefully selected group: mostly book sellers and periodicals, but after these, life insurance companies purchased more pages of advertising in the *Calendar* than any other type of business.[622]

When they could afford to, members of the working class frequently purchased multiple types of insurance. For the working classes, friendly society membership and/or the purchase of burial insurance were the most common strategies for proactively managing the uncertainty associated with the death of a wage-earner.[623] In the mid-nineteenth century, friendly societies could legally offer life insurance benefits of up to £100 and an annuity of up to £30, which met the needs of most members.

In the mid-to late nineteenth century, before the advent of the professional college bursar,

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[621] 'British life insurance remained at mid-century largely a middle - and upper class affair. In a sample of a hundred life insurance offices active between 1850 and 1870, fully 95% of those established before 1840 insured on average at least £400 per policy, which would have been beyond the reach of nearly all working-class customers.' T. Alborn, *Regulated Lives: life insurance and British society, 1800-1914* (Toronto, 2009), p.38, [Hereafter Alborn, *Lives*]

[622] *Oxford University Calendar*, 1810-87 electronic resource accessed via solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk 15 March 2018.

[623] By the late nineteenth century, most working-class people purchased some form of burial insurance, but these policies had high management expenses and frequently lapsed. Johnson, *Saving*, pp.11-47.

it is clear that familiarity with insurance, both the industry and its services, varied considerably among college authorities. In these sources, terms associated with insurance are often used interchangeably and without precision until the early twentieth century. Some explanation of how these terms will be used in this discussion is therefore useful. As they were in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'insurance' and 'assurance' are used here interchangeably. Life insurance (or assurance) is understood to be a policy that matures on the death of the insured. Endowment policies matured after a defined number of years and paid a lump sum. Endowment assurance was the same, except the policy also paid out in the event of the death of the insured. A deferred annuity was a policy that paid a defined annual income at a predetermined date of maturity until the death of the insured.

Employer-subsidized life insurance policies were unusual in the mid-nineteenth century. The Excise Office, in 1844, was likely the first employer to offer subsidized life insurance to employees.[624] I have found no other examples of similar initiatives for working-class people during this period, although paternalistic employers frequently supported other types of savings schemes for employees. These schemes frequently evolved into formal pension schemes, however not typically before the early twentieth century.[625]

Servants who could not afford the cost of friendly society membership may have purchased insurance against burial expenses, however it could have been a struggle for families to consistently afford the weekly cash premiums when their cash wages were paid quarterly. College servants, particularly those who earned low wages, also weighed the likelihood of some assistance from their employer in the event of a crisis against a stretched

[624] Alborn, *Lives,* p.42.
[625] Leslie Hannah, *Inventing Retirement The development of occupational pensions in Britain* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 15-30, [Hereafter, Hannah, *Retirement*].

budget and other more immediate concerns. In many instances, it undoubtedly made sense for a servant to forgo burial insurance in order to provide for more immediate needs, or if any surplus income was available for savings, it is more likely that they would have prioritized saving for illness or to manage seasonal fluctuations in income.

Pension schemes were also unusual in the mid-nineteenth century.[626] By 1900, only about 5% of all workers in England would have been eligible to join a formal pension scheme.[627] Early adopters of pensions schemes in this period were typically large, bureaucratic employers. Railways offered pension savings schemes from the mid-nineteenth century, but early schemes usually excluded manual workers or 'servants'. These schemes were typically contributory, with the employee paying something like 2.5% of his salary and the employer matching the same contribution. [628] In 1859, the civil service pension scheme was rationalized to create one of the largest and best-known examples of the period: a non-contributory scheme whereby civil servants were entitled to one-sixtieth of their final salary for each year of service. Most employers could not afford to extend benefits at this level, however. In the late nineteenth century, the university proposed for its servants a pension scheme modeled after the civil service, but because of the cost, it was quickly abandoned in favor of a scheme much like those already established at the colleges.[629]

The creation of contributory savings schemes at Oxford colleges from the mid-nineteenth century is remarkable for several reasons: these schemes were early; they were established for the benefit of domestic servants rather than more highly compensated employees; and the

[626] On the origins of occupational pensions, see also Pat Thane, *Old Age in English History* (Oxford, 2000), ch. 12.
[627] Hannah estimates that this 5% was approximately equally divided between blue and white collar workers. Hannah, *Retirement*, p.13.
[628] Ibid., pp.9-13.
[629] UOC 12/9/1.

colleges were relatively small employers, unlike the large, bureaucratic employers typically associated with the early adoption of these types of savings schemes. Early pension schemes were more closely associated with paternalistic employers, in this the colleges are fairly typical, but the reasons for establishing these schemes varied by college.[630]

Balliol and Magdalen introduced compulsory savings schemes in June 1852 and April 1853 respectively – but with very different motives – managing the liability associated with supporting workers in times of hardship and inculcating the values of self-help. The premise of the Balliol proposal was that servants lacked the disposable income to save, the Magdalen proposal held that its servants lacked the necessary discipline.

At Balliol, the retirement savings scheme initially began ten years earlier as an internal transfer of funds to create a balance sheet reserve that would be used to support older servants. At a college meeting in 1842, the emoluments of the butler's place were reorganized in order to pay the underbutler a quarterly salary of £10. As part of this reorganization, the college resolved to use the previous statutory, quarterly payment from the butler to the under butler of £2.10.0 to establish a fund invested in the Oxford Savings Bank for the relief of 'aged and invalid Servants belonging to the College'.[631] This seems designed to supplement the existing tradition of paying *ex gratia* pensions to servants out of the regular income of the college with servants' own income, formally establishing the principle that the financial risks of old age, disability and death were to be shared between employer and employee.

The creation of the fund on that particular date was sparked by two complementary

[630] Thane argues that these schemes were introduced into paternalistic firms for 'reasons of humanity and/or because they judged this the best technique for holding a loyal, hard-working labour force'. This is certainly true for colleges, but additionally colleges prioritized inculcating values of thrift and self-help. Thane, *Old Age*, pp.246-7.

[631] BC English Register 1794-1875, 19 March 1842. Attendees included Jenkyns, Tait, Ward, Woollcombe, Lake and Wall. Only summary accounts survive from this period and there is no further mention of the fund in college minutes.

motives: the memory of a beloved servant who had worked to advance the cause of mutual aid among his fellow servants, and concern about the liability faced by the college in the event of a servant's death. On the same day that the college authorities met and decided to start a fund for their servants, an obituary notice appeared in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* that read, 'The members of the College Servants' Benefit Society determined to pay their late father, Mr. Richard Young, former servant at Balliol College, a tribute of respect, met on Sunday se'nnight, to the number of 80, and followed his remains to the church of St Peter-le-Bailey, where the funeral service was most impressively read by the Rev AC Tait, Tutor and Bursar of Balliol College. Mr. Young had for many years been father of the Society and was one of its original founders.'[632] The college minutes of March 19th do not mention Mr. Young by name, however Reverend Tait, an honorary member of the College Servants' Provident Institution, was at both the funeral and the meeting and it is likely that other members of Balliol attended as well.

There is little further mention of funding servants' retirement until June 1852, when Benjamin Jowett proposed a plan for insuring Balliol's servants. His plan suggested that the college pay one-half of the premiums and any fees associated with a life insurance policy for each servant. The scheme was intended to make life insurance more affordable for servants, except the cook and butler 'whose higher emoluments need no such aid'.[633] Jowett's proposal was accepted by the college and he was tasked with writing an information sheet for distribution to the college servants. Beyond the exclusion of the more highly compensated cook and butler, there is no mention of other qualifications: seniority, occupation, or gender.[634]

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[632] *JOJ,* 19 March 1842, parish records from St. Peter-le-Bailey show that Young was buried on 6 March 1842 and confirm that Tait performed the service.
[633] BC English Register 1794-1875, 26 June 1852.
[634] Ibid., 2 June 1840.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Balliol was one of the poorest colleges and the liability associated with providing for the dependent family members of a deceased servant would have been a real concern.

On 21 April 1853, the governing body of Magdalen resolved that all senior servants were required to insure their lives for the value of three times their annual salary and to provide proof of insurance to the college. Magdalen was one of the richest colleges, and if required, could have met the costs of supporting servants' surviving family members. This order suggests the college intended to establish that the responsibility to provide for surviving family members in the event of a servant's death belonged primarily to the servants themselves. Three times the value of the annual stipend would have been about £120, if only the annual cash wages of a senior bedmaker were considered, or several hundred pounds in the case of more highly compensated servants, as in the cook or manciple's place – more coverage than could be obtained through friendly society membership. The order makes no mention of a contribution from the college and implies that the college believed that its servants could afford insurance premiums at existing levels of remuneration, but lacked the initiative or discipline to save.

There is no evidence to suggest that the order was carried out until several years later, however, and it is likely that it was met with resistance from the college servants, the most obvious source of complaint being the affordability of the insurance. Servants may have also reasonably objected to having to contribute part or all of the cost of support that they felt was already due them as part of their employment contract. Two years later, in 1855, the college conducted a review of the bedmakers' compensation and increased the annual stipends of senior bedmakers to £70 and began to pay assistants directly. All other sources of payment, gratuities and perquisites were abolished, suggesting that cash wages were approximately half

of the total remuneration. A superannuation fund for servants was established in the same meeting and senior servants were required to contribute £5 annually, which represented about 7% of their annual cash wages.[635]

The pattern of requiring servants to contribute to a savings scheme and then raising their wages to accommodate the deduction appears to have been relatively common among colleges with similar schemes in later decades. In some cases, like Magdalen, the wage increase appears to be in response to servants' demands. In other cases, there is an anticipatory increase, suggesting that the colleges were keen to enforce the principle of self-help by compelling servants to save.

These schemes likely targeted bedmakers because of their unusual status in the college; until the late nineteenth century, they were considered to be employed by their individual 'masters' rather than directly employed by the college. Although colleges frequently provided some assistance to bedmakers and their families in times of crisis, colleges held that bedmakers should be responsible for providing for themselves in old age and for their families in the event of their death. Bedmakers' entitlement to this assistance was less secure than that of other college servants and these schemes may have been attractive to these workers as they provided a guarantee of benefits. An 1865 order at Balliol stated that a contributory insurance scheme was 'the best mode of helping them [bedmakers] to provide for themselves in old age, [the College] can hold out to them no hope of future assistance in any other way'.[636]

Decisions about pension awards and gratuities to families of servants who have died following the creation of a superannuation fund at Magdalen appear to be made in exactly the same fashion as in the preceding years. Awards were related to length of service, as they had

[635] MC CP1/12, 15 March 1855.
[636] BC GOV C English Register 1794-1875.

always been, but the calculation was based on subjective criteria, rather than a scale that explicitly stated the relationship between tenure and award, or related the award to contributions. During these years, the servants' superannuation fund continued to grow and the balance was recorded in the bedmakers' wages book, however no pension awards were made from this fund until 1860 when Dawson, a bedmaker, retired. He drew an annual pension of £25, less than half of the pension awarded to Stevens, the last bedmaker to be retired. Stevens, who had served as bedmaker for 56 years, retired on a pension of £50 in 1855, no explanation is provided in either case for the amount of the award.[637] At Magdalen, the decision to create a superannuation fund appears not to have been motivated by any desire to formalize the college's policies on pension awards, but to establish the principle that servants were expected to save for their old age through regular contributions from their wages.

There is little in these sources to offer any insight into servants' perspectives of these early schemes. At Balliol, the benefits and costs were clear: servants could purchase life insurance with half the cost subsidized by the college. Most servants insured for £100, but in some cases, the college allowed a larger policy of £200. During the mid-nineteenth century, other colleges contributed towards the premiums of servants' life insurance, but it appears to have been offered to servants on a case-by-case basis rather than through a defined scheme. At Magdalen, it is less clear what the annual deduction of £5 provided. The servants' contribution seems to have been determined arbitrarily, no evidence survives that suggests discussions to establish the criteria for receiving a pension, the level of pension awards, or any estimation of the costs of these pensions compared to the projected value of the

[637] MC CP/2/48.

superannuation fund.

Similarly, there is no mention of the purchase of life insurance policies, suggesting that at least in the early years of the scheme, Magdalen decided to self-insure. For comparison, in 1841, the CSPI offered a thirty-five year-old man a £100 life insurance policy for £2.5.0 annually.[638] What did servants at Magdalen receive for their contributions, which were more than double the cost of friendly society membership? Was the difference put towards a deferred annuity or some other type of savings? It is not clear from the surviving records whether this was the case, or indeed if the college discussed creating management policies around these issues.

In most cases, life insurance benefits alone would not have compensated a family for the loss of a male servant's income. For college servants, the relationship between life insurance and the male breadwinner ideology is intriguing. Insurance and other formal self-help strategies, whether directed by individuals or by employers, were complementary to family employment.[639] Colleges traditionally relied on family labour networks and until the mid-nineteenth century, it was relatively common for widows and children, who were of sufficient age and ability, to continue in the deceased servant's place, although not in the most senior positions.[640] Was the insistence of colleges on the compulsory purchase of life insurance an acknowledgement that these practices had changed, that widows' rights in these positions were less secure than in the past? Or did these schemes effectively erode widows' access to this employment? These questions are complicated by the introduction of the university

[638] BL:G.A. Oxon c.57.
[639] This is consistent with conclusions from other research, for example late nineteenth-century industrial workers in Horrell and Oxley, pp.27-57.
[640] On this practice, see for example Olwen Hufton, 'Women Without Men: Widows and spinsters in Britain and France in the eighteenth century' *Journal of Family History*, Winter 1984, pp.355-76.

lodging house licensing scheme in 1868, coincident with the push for insuring servants' lives. From then on, colleges expressed a strong preference for most widows, married women, and the wives of college servants to work as lodging-house keepers in their homes, and employment opportunities for women inside the colleges were further limited. Life insurance benefits would have provided sufficient funds to manage the immediate loss of income and the capital necessary to start a lodging house.

6.2. Endowment policies

Preferences quickly shifted from schemes that only offered life insurance to schemes that provided both life insurance and deferred annuities, typically through endowment policies. At the same time, the focus on reforming internal management practices at Oxford colleges, especially scrutiny over labour costs, intensified over the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly through the efforts of the royal commissions, and colleges began to phase in mandatory retirement age requirements for many workers. With these, colleges faced the liability of providing pensions for more servants over longer periods of compulsory unemployment or underemployment in their later years. Deferred annuities and endowment policies were also popular with servants, unlike life insurance, they could look forward to directly enjoying the benefits of their savings.

The popularity of insurance and the creation of policies around mandatory retirement ages were intertwined, each impacting the other, rather than causation occurring primarily in one direction or another. Providing for the expense of older servants and their dependent family members through the purchase of insurance, rather than paying benefits out of current income or self-insuring, as was the traditional practice, became increasingly popular over the later decades of the nineteenth century. Improvements in actuarial science meant that by the

late nineteenth century, insurance was seen as a modern and scientific way of forecasting the financial liability associated with aging workers. College authorities, particularly bursars, were attracted to these novel products and insurance companies were eager to do business with these prestigious institutions. In the early incarnations of these schemes, even colleges like Magdalen, that could have afforded to self-insure, elected to purchase policies for their workers.

In 1865, Balliol modified the terms of their retirement savings scheme and in addition to life insurance, required all bedmakers to purchase a deferred annuity of not less than £30, the college to pay half. The college order from October 1865 implies the establishment of a retirement age and states that in most cases, 'bedmakers become incapacitated from doing their work satisfactorily after the age of sixty'. The order further states that servants are not entitled to retain their places after the annuity becomes payable.[641]

By the 1870s, other colleges begin to establish contributory retirement savings schemes, all of these included the purchase of deferred annuities or endowment policies. Some, like Balliol, specify the amount of the annuity, which was typically the same for all servants, while others calculated the annuity based on the servant's salary. In 1873, Queen's adopted a contributory scheme that required the purchase of annuities payable at age 60 for half the servant's salary, with the college and the servant paying equal shares.[642]

These schemes were subject to revision and refinement over the later decades of the nineteenth century as both colleges and servants became more knowledgeable and experienced. In 1888, the scheme at Magdalen was reorganized. The new scheme added several features that would be common to most colleges by the end of the nineteenth century:

[641] BC GOV C, 12,13 October 1865.
[642] QC Minute Book 1860-1883, 28 February 1873.

a maximum age at entry, for Magdalen this was 35; some definition of compulsoriness; payment terms if a servant continued to work past the stated retirement age; and clarification of repayment terms in the event a servant left the employ of the college or died.[643]

According to the evidence available, no college servants' retirement savings scheme allowed servants to continue working and collect their full pension in addition to their wages. Magdalen was typical in stating that after a servant reached pensionable age, they could only continue in work with the permission of the college. Here, servants were permitted to collect half of their pension and the other half would be used to pay their wages, wholly or in part. In practice, it is more difficult to determine how these new policies affected servants' income once their pension became payable. Although most colleges had adopted these relatively standardized retirement policies, all colleges still employed traditional paternalistic management strategies. Decisions about staying in work and remuneration were made on a case-by-case basis well into the twentieth century.

Similarly, the nature of the paternalistic employment relationship meant that 'compulsory' could have no strict interpretation when it came to retirement savings schemes. At Magdalen, new employees were informed that if they met the age requirement for joining, but declined to participate, they would have 'no claim upon the College for a pension'.[644] In reality, colleges understood that if a servant refused to join, the college still had some liability for their support in the event of a crisis, or simply when they became too old to continue in work. Servants also understood that if they declined to participate for reasons that were not acceptable to the college, they would suffer the consequences. The proposed regulations for a pension scheme at Jesus in 1927 stated that all existing servants would be invited to join and suggested that

[643] MC CP/9/24/i-ii, 29 September 1888 revised scheme pasted in front cover of volume.
[644] Ibid.; in 1888 the starting salary for a bedmaker was £45 with an extra payment of £5 for waiting in hall.

three points 'might be urged to them' to encourage their participation. These included the offer of a higher pension award if the servants joined the scheme; as well as the threat of no pension if he did not. The proposed scheme also stated 'No promotions will be made of any present servant who refuses to enter the scheme'. The college may have perceived that they could not order a servant to give up part of their wages, essentially to submit to a tax, 'The College cannot pledge itself to do anything at all in the way of pensions for any member who refuses to enter the scheme. If it did grant such a servant a pension, it would certainly be very much less than that servant would get if he entered the scheme (e.g. Quelch might get £52 per annum in place of a guaranteed £78 p.a.).'[645]

In practice, very few servants who were compelled to join opted out of these schemes. The bursar at Balliol noted that from 1865 to 1904, only one bedmaker had been allowed to opt out. J. Dalgleish 'had joined our service unusually old, had no children and had provided well for his wife and himself; he was made to put in a declaration by himself and his wife that they would neither of them make any claim in respect of assistance…'.[646]

Policies regarding repayment of contributions varied by college, but the example of Magdalen was fairly representative. Magdalen's 1888 scheme provided for the return of both the servant's and the college's contribution only if the servant retired from Magdalen or died in service. If a servant left the college for any reason besides dismissal for misconduct, he was entitled to his contributions plus four percent simple interest. If a servant was dismissed for misconduct, he was only entitled to his contributions.[647] In this way, although the pension scheme was originally devised as a way to instill habits of thrift, by 1888 it was explicitly used

[645] JC Box 65 Uncatalogued items relating to pensions.
[646] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Books 1900-1910.
[647] MC CP/9/24/i.

by this college as a management tool. By the twentieth century, a typical provision entitled the servant to a percentage of the college contributions

Queen's pension scheme in 1927 provides a representative example of these policies:

> 'After reaching the age of 40 and having served the College for ten years a member shall until pensionable age, unless he is discharged for fraud or dishonesty or for misconduct, be entitled to a percentage of the accumulated contributions made towards his or her pension by the College in accordance with Scale A and the College may if they think fit give him or her a larger proportion. The College shall have power to determine whether a member has or has not been discharged for fraud or dishonesty or misconduct and whether he has resigned to escape dismissal for same, and their decision shall be final.'[648]

In 1932, L. Kimber was fired for 'unpunctuality', the college decided to pay him both his and the college contributions, which totaled £13.7.2. Although it is not explicitly stated, this payment could be seen as a sort of severance.[649]

These policies were clearly designed to further several objectives. Colleges wanted to keep successful senior servants from leaving for better remunerated positions, a problem particularly for poorer colleges who were vulnerable to poaching by their wealthier counterparts. Colleges were also keen to recruit and retain younger workers. By the late 1920s, the local labor market offered more opportunities for young men, including manufacturing jobs at Cowley. Policies like these explicitly demonstrated the accumulated rewards of paternalism and the long-term cost of changing jobs.

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[648] JC Box 65 Uncatalogued items relating to pensions, At age 40 with 10 years of service, Scale A returned 10% of the college contributions, the maximum percentage returned was 90% for a servant aged 55 with 35 years of service.
[649] CCC B/4/7/1B, 19 May 1932.

These policies were also designed to discourage and punish misbehavior. Decisions on what constituted fraud, dishonesty and misconduct could be highly subjective and these policies vested all authority in the college. Servants had no right of appeal. As servants aged, presumably if they remained in a college's employ, they gained seniority and with it, additional responsibility. This often meant increased access to the college finances, whether through the payment of subordinates or procurement of goods and other services on behalf of the college. Servants also had control of and responsibility for the valuables of the college and of its members, including cash, plate, works of art, and personal effects, like watches. The cost of supervising servants was high, and these policies effectively prescribed severe sanctions for servants who transgressed. The loss of the college contributions for a senior servant could represent a sizeable sum, not to mention the loss of potential additional discretionary awards like college housing, medical care and jobs for family members.

Women were not included in these schemes until the twentieth century, and even then, their participation was limited.[650] Many women were in low-wage employment and did not earn enough to contribute. Colleges typically hired middle-aged women, widows or married, and insurance premiums for older workers were considerably more expensive than for younger workers, which likely also discouraged participation. This meant that women were still dependent on the traditional system of *ex gratia* pensions long after contributory savings schemes were common. These pensions were still typically viewed as the fulfillment of a college's paternalistic responsibility rather than deferred compensation, and could be awarded conditionally. In 1898, a pension of 7/- weekly was awarded to the kitchen woman, Mrs.

[650] In one of the earliest examples, women were admitted into the pension scheme at Oriel in 1901. OC GOV 4 A4, 27 November 1901.

Haddocks, 'so long as she should remain unmarried'.[651] Although women typically received very small pensions from colleges, they had a greater life expectancy. Occasionally, the cost to a college could be considerable.

George Phillips was a servant at Brasenose for approximately twenty years, from the 1860s to 1883. He and his wife Sophia also ran a university lodging house on Museum Road.[652] In 1890, Sophia was widowed and granted a college pension of £20 annually; she gave up the lodging house and moved to a smaller home that she shared with another widow. Through all of these changes, the college maintained contact with her through the payment of her pension. In 1910, she became infirm and unable to live on her own, and her family moved her to the Headington Union Infirmary as a paying patient. The bursar, Dr. A.J. Butler was in contact with Mrs. Phillips' grandson Frank, who had advised the Union that his grandmother was in receipt of a college pension. On 7 December 1910, the Headington Union relieving officer, C.F.W. Talbot wrote to the bursar advising the college that Mrs. Phillips had been moved to the infirmary on the advice of her doctor and asked that her pension be paid to the union to defray the cost of her support. Mrs. Phillips died a year later in the infirmary, aged 98, and her grandson wrote to the bursar with the news. The bursar replied, offering to pay for her funeral costs, £7.9.6.[653] Her pension and funeral represented a cost to the college of approximately £408.

[651] OC GOV 4 A4, 26 January 1898.
[652] BNC BF C2/2, George Phillips' salary was about £105 in 1883, it is not clear if Sophia Phillips was receiving a pension as his widow or for her own work, as she is not listed in college wage records. There are other examples of Brasenose extending a fraction of a servant's pension to his widow.
[653] BNC B0482, letter from Frank Tims (her grandson) to the Bursar 9 December 1911, letter from F. Tims to the bursar 21 November 1911 thanking him for the college's offer to pay Mrs. Phillips' funeral expenses, letter from Tims to bursar notifying the college of Sophia Phillips' death. She worked as a straw bonnet maker before becoming a college servant.

6.3. The example of Hertford College

During his tenure as bursar in the late nineteenth century, Clement Jackson led efforts to insure Hertford against theft, fire, worker's compensation claims and in perhaps his most ambitious project, insurance to provide for college servants in old age and for their dependents in the event of a servant's death. The survival of records associated with Jackson's efforts is particularly good, and offers a detailed look at the subject of college servants' pensions in this period.

Hertford was poorer than most colleges, but the issues they faced in designing a retirement savings scheme were common to most of their peers. The scheme was probably first raised by Jackson in 1892, and terms of the scheme were not finalized until 20 October 1899. Over the years, correspondence exchanged by Jackson with insurance companies, college fellows, and several servants provides considerable insight into the process of designing and implementing a pension scheme. Before pursuing the scheme internally, Jackson surveyed other Oxford colleges to compare existing provisions for servants' insurance. The result of these inquiries offers a snapshot of servants' retirement schemes in the 1890s, after most colleges had gained some experience with annuities and insurance. Pension records at Hertford continue through the 1940s and show how the scheme changed over the decades, particularly in response to changes in legislation, including the advent of the state pension and national insurance. Glimpses of the servants' perspectives are revealed through the bursars' correspondence and memos, suggesting that the college sought input from servants as well as fellows regarding the design and management of the scheme.

Hertford, like all other colleges, awarded *ex gratia* pensions until the adoption of a defined pension scheme. Hertford was small, poorer than most colleges, and the purchase of insurance

was necessary to meet the obligations of the college towards its older workers. Following the example of other colleges, in 1893 Jackson initially proposed a scheme for bedmakers and a few senior servants, numbering about twelve in total. He wanted all servants to be treated equally, to pay the same premiums and receive the same benefits, regardless of their age. Jackson believed that the college could use the proceeds from endowment policies to achieve three objectives: to provide current servants with an income in retirement, comparable to other college schemes; to recoup the college's contributions; and use any remaining balance to start a fund that would eventually yield sufficient income to provide for future servants' retirement, eventually obviating the need to purchase insurance. Jackson started from these objectives, rather than from any idea of either a defined benefit or defined contribution. Jackson began the process with a limited understanding of insurance, but a willingness to innovate, and over the years he gained a familiarity with the industry and the various products available.

The college was receptive to Jackson's proposal. There are few records of pension awards around the time the scheme was instituted, however the limited information available suggests that the college could not always afford to pay adequate pensions for servants and relied on charitable contributions to supplement ex gratia awards to an extent that other colleges did not.

In June 1899, John Gardner, a servant of the college was given a pension of 6/- weekly. Gardner was in his early fifties and it seems likely he was leaving work because of his health.[654] In calculating his pension award, the college requested from him a statement of his

[654] HC 4/3/1a, 10 June 1899. Census records from 1901 show retired college servant John Gardner, a widower aged 54, living on Pembroke Street in Cowley with one son Gilbert aged 20, who was working as an architect's assistant. In 1891, he was living with four sons, two were still in school, one was working as bookseller's assistant and one as a printer's assistant. The college may have believed Gardner's older sons could make some

income from all sources. In addition to his college pension, he received 4/- weekly from the Hearts of Oak Benefit Society. Gardner had two sons living at home, one gave him a shilling weekly and the other 'does not earn enough to keep himself'. Gardner's circumstances were discussed in a meeting of the finance committee and the bursar 'expressed the hope that this weekly sum might be supplemented by some charitable donations', no increase to his weekly pension is noted.

In December 1899, Moore, the college boot-cleaner of seventeen and a half years retired, also due to ill-health, the college gave him an allowance of 2/6- a week, noting that he was in receipt of £10 annually from the James Charity of St. Clement's Parish. In October 1901, Mrs. Beale, a longtime college bedmaker retired and was granted a pension of 5/- weekly, and it was suggested that 'this weekly allowance might be augmented by subscriptions to be promised by members of the governing body'.[655] It does not appear that the college had any policies mandating retirement ages, nor does the evidence suggest they could afford to implement such policies without purchasing insurance.

Jackson first wrote to other college bursars to ask about their provisions for servants' retirement. The most common arrangement at other colleges in the early 1890s was a contributory scheme that provided both life insurance, usually a policy of £100, along with an annuity that paid about £30 annually from age sixty. Some colleges self-insured, but most purchased insurance. After receiving replies from several colleges, Jackson outlined five options for Hertford's scheme, which he called A, B, Ci, Cii, and D. 'A' was a life insurance policy for £100; 'B' was a deferred annuity that paid thirty pounds annually at age sixty; 'Ci'

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contribution to his maintenance, even though they were not living at home. Gilbert Gardner later became a well-known Oxford architect and designed many buildings in the city, including the Morris Garage in Longwall Street.

[655] HC 4/3/1a.

was a scheme that included both 'A' and 'B'; 'Cii' included 'B' and a life insurance policy that paid £250; and 'D' was an endowment scheme that paid £500 at age sixty or death, equally divided between the college and the servant.[656] In all cases, the college and the servants would contribute equally to the cost of the premiums.

Early in the process, however, the college focused on the level of contribution. Before any of the options had been fully researched, opinions within the college seem to have settled on the college paying £5 per servant annually as a maximum. Similarly, the consensus was that Jackson's proposed insurance benefits were too high. These conclusions do not appear to have been based on any quantitative information, but remained an important anchor in the discussions that followed. Correspondence with another fellow at the college, Charles Haselfoot, illustrates this point. In January 1893, Haselfoot wrote to Jackson,' It seems to me that £250 is too much for the servant to receive and that £7.2.6 for each servant per annum is more than the college should be asked to pay. Perhaps a smaller sum would work better.' A month later, Haselfoot again wrote, 'The essential point is what is the college to pay per year? I thought we agreed on the whole that we could not contribute more than £5 per annum, per servant.'[657] Haselfoot argued that because the college's 'affairs are in a bad state', the cost of the scheme could be managed by effectively shifting the whole burden onto the servants - for new hires, the college could simply reduce the wages offered by £5 annually, thus the college would only need to make contributions for its existing servants, and even this could gradually be shifted back onto the servants. He was not concerned that this reduction would make recruitment of new servants difficult and argued that as the deduction from their wages was ultimately for their benefit, servants would not object. Haselfoot wrote to Jackson, 'I cannot

[656] HC 33/1/2.
[657] Ibid.

think it would be difficult to carry it into effect, considering the fact that the places of College servants are eagerly sought after. The wages would practically remain the same but a portion would be saved for the servant. I think too that some servants are already too well paid that the college is not called on to do anything for them and that the salaries attached to their places should be considered as they fall vacant.'[658]

Haselfoot offered his opinions in advance of a committee meeting where the issue of servants' pensions was to be discussed. In the same fashion, William Inge, a tutor at Hertford wrote to Jackson. He agreed that the best scheme would include both life insurance and an annuity, assuming servants were married, and wrote 'An endowment insurance is liable to the objection that a man might squander his capital and leave his widow unprovided for'.[659] Inge implies that the college would still be liable to assist the servant's dependent family members, regardless of the contributions the college had made to the insurance premiums. Inge's letter did not consider that the college could address these concerns by maintaining control of the policy and its proceeds, which was a common approach among colleges and would eventually be adopted at Hertford as well.

In evaluating these options, Jackson raised several questions. In order to weigh the benefits and costs of each, he needed to understand mortality and life expectancy. If the college wanted to manage its own pension fund, how large should it be? Options 'A' and 'B' were quickly eliminated. The college was initially leaning towards option 'D', and wanted the proceeds of the endowment policies to cover paying the servants half - £250, and with the remaining £250 put towards recouping the college's contribution towards the premiums and paying servants' pensions at an estimated thirty pounds each annually. Crucially, if the

[658] Ibid.
[659] Ibid.

college chose option 'D' - the endowment plan, would the payment of pensions to servants when they reached sixty years of age exhaust the fund?

Jackson expected that actuarial science could provide the answers to these questions, and he wrote to six insurance companies asking for advice: Prudential, University Life, Sun Life, The Union Life, Edinburgh Life, and The Royal. Prudential, Edinburgh and Union all recommended an endowment scheme, with some minor variations. University and Sun declined to make any recommendation without receiving a consulting fee.[660] University Life also observed that Jackson 'did not appear to have a very clear conception of the professional position of an actuary.' Jackson was particularly indignant at University Life's response, which also suggested that 'college servants were hardly their class of clients and that therefore for an expert opinion they ought to have a fee but as a favour to me wd forego it. I declined to press them for an opinion'. Edinburgh Life explained that it was impossible to calculate the information Jackson wanted for such a small group of people and accordingly, the college could not design a pension scheme on the basis of that information. Sun Life also replied that they could only provide the information Jackson requested for a fee of £5.5.0.[661] Prudential did not provide any quantitative analysis, but suggested Jackson's objectives were reasonable as college servants were not 'the best lives' and the life expectancy indicated by the standard tables was 'too high for this class of life'.[662]

The deliberations moved very slowly, but Jackson pressed forward, and eventually in 1899, the terms of the scheme were finalized and most closely approximated 'Ci' in Jackson's

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[660] Jackson's notes suggest that he was not aware that charging consulting fees for actuarial advice was a common practice. Some actuaries earned more from these fees than from their salaried positions. On this, see Timothy Alborn, *Regulated Lives: life insurance and British society, 1800-1914* (Toronto, 2009), p.87. In one of these letters, Jackson makes it clear that the scheme will only include male servants. HC 33/1/2 Letter from C.N. Jackson to F. Griffith, Edinburgh Life, 20 March 1893.
[661] HC 33/1/2 Letter from H. Saunders to C.N. Jackson 15 March 1893.
[662] Ibid., Letter from F.H. Perris to C.N. Jackson 18 March 1893.

original proposal.[663] The scheme was to include all scouts and some other servants, at the discretion of the college, and provided an annuity of thirty pounds, payable at age sixty, and life insurance of one hundred pounds. Hertford opted to purchase insurance through the Norwich Union, and initially the scheme included nine servants. The cost of premiums was shared equally between the servant and the college, and in 1899, each paid £4.3.9 annually. Provisions for the return of contributions were fairly standard compared to other college schemes: if a servant left the employ of the college voluntarily or died, he (or his beneficiaries) received his contributions and 4% simple interest; if a servant was dismissed for misconduct, he was entitled only to the return of his contributions but without any interest; and if a servant was unable to work because of illness or disability, he received both his contributions and the college contributions, but without interest. After reaching age sixty, a servant could continue to work at the discretion of the college, receiving half of his pension payments while the other half comprised part of his wages.

From the outset, Jackson knew that a compulsory deduction from wages would be unpopular with servants. He decided that he would not discuss any of the options with them until the whole scheme had been finalized by both the insurance company and the governing body. 'If the servants were to be told now that the scheme meant a compulsory payment or saving of 5/- per week by them, they would see only disadvantage in the scheme. Let them rather have the whole thing before them at once, at the right opportunity and then let them weigh its advantage against its disadvantage in their eyes.'[664] Jackson believed that servants would accept any 'distinctly advantageous scheme which is intended for their benefit – even

[663] Ibid., Jackson found the indecision and delays frustrating, and in June 1898 threatened to have nothing more to do with the scheme.
[664] Ibid., Letter from C.N. Jackson to Thomas Leveritt, Norwich Union Life Insurance Society, 21 December 1895.

tho' at some sacrifice to themselves'.[665] His notes suggest that he interpreted servants' preferences to include the provision of guaranteed income in retirement, even if this came at some immediate cost. The effective communication of these costs and benefits to servants was a priority for Jackson, who included servants in the process of evaluating schemes, clearly with the objective of building consensus, to an extent that was unusual for college authorities during this period.

In the summer of 1898, Jackson wrote to all of the servants who were eligible to join the scheme. His letters do not survive; however, the replies provide insight into the servants' concerns, chief among them, the cost. Servants' contributions exceeded £5 annually in several cases and the college had agreed to provide an additional grant of 30/- annually to some servants. Ernest Herbert wrote from Bridlington Quay, where he had secured vacation employment, that he believed he was entitled to the additional allowance.[666] For both the annuity and life insurance, the cost to Herbert was £5.13.7, which he felt was 'rather a large item'. Herbert also appealed to Jackson's sense of fair play. Herbert conceded that older servants had to pay a larger premium, but he was obliged to contribute over a longer period. He also pointed out that seniority should be considered, he was thirty-three but had worked for the college for twenty-one years.

A. Martin was also working away from Oxford during the vacation at a hotel in Derbyshire and replied to Jackson that he had studied the figures and concluded 'it will be greatly to my advantage to join'.[667] Three servants had already purchased life insurance. Frederick Skerry had a £30 policy with the Prudential, he paid his premiums weekly and told

[665] Ibid.
[666] Ibid., Letters from E.D. Herbert to C.N. Jackson, 9 August 1898 and 8 November 1899.
[667] HC 33/1/2 Letter from A. Martin to C.N. Jackson undated.

Jackson that he could only afford the pension contribution, not the additional life insurance. Walter Smuin and Thomas Byles had life insurance with the Norwich Union and Legal and General, respectively. Byles was interested in the additional life insurance, Smuin was not.[668] By the end of October 1899, the servants had held a meeting to discuss the scheme and informed Jackson that they approved of the terms.

6.4. Post Office Annuities

Jackson's efforts were informed by the details of schemes from several other colleges. Balliol's scheme had changed little since 1865: the college required bedmakers to insure their lives for at least £100 and to purchase a deferred annuity of £30 annually, payable at age 60. The college contributed half of the premiums for each. With the permission of the college, other servants could opt into the scheme and several chose to do so.[669] Oriel also had a contributory scheme, and insured the lives of the cook, porter and scouts for £100, 'which comes to this college, and which they, if thought fit' is used to help surviving family members.[670] Oriel purchased annuities of £20 from the Post Office for scouts, who were compelled to retire aged sixty. There was no provision for women who worked at Oriel, which primarily included kitchen women and women on the staircases, but in some cases, the college gave women pensions of 6-8/- weekly.[671]

Michael Sadler responded on behalf of Christ Church, where scouts were required to

[668] Ibid., Letters from T. Byles to C.N. Jackson 23 October 1899; W. Smuin to C.N. Jackson 23 October 1899; Letter from F. Skerry to C.N. Jackson undated.
[669] Ibid., Letter from W. Markby to C.N. Jackson, 6 December 1892.
[670] Ibid. Letter from Hall to C.N. Jackson, 29 November, no year given but likely 1893. Underlining appears in the original.
[671] Ibid. Letter from F. Hale to C.N. Jackson, underlining appears in the original, 29 November 1892. Unusually for this period, Oriel employed women as bedmakers, so the omission of these workers from a retirement savings scheme was significant.

purchase life insurance of at least £100 on their appointment to the college. The college contributed ten percent of the premiums, but only if the policies were purchased through the Post Office. Christ Church maintained a traditional scheme of *ex gratia* pensions for scouts, awarding them £30 annually on retirement. Sadler explained that the college had, for about five years, set aside for newly appointed scouts the same amount that was required to purchase an annuity of £30 from the Post Office at age 65.[672] In this case, the college still self-insured but used actuarial data from the Post Office scheme to estimate the liability associated with pension awards.

St. John's also continued to grant pensions in a traditional paternalistic manner. The two most recently superannuated staff, one an assistant in the buttery, received £40 annually, and the other, a bursary clerk was given £80 for two years, which would then be reduced to £60 annually for life. The bursar explained to Jackson that the college was considering a scheme that would purchase a £40-50 annuity for each servant in the name of the college, who would give it to any servant who left the college 'provided his character was good'. At St. John's, 'the ultimate "pension" to the man really depended on his good character whilst a servant of the College'.[673]

Queen's required all newly appointed scouts to purchase annuities of £30 from the Post Office, with the college paying half the premiums and the remaining half deducted from the servants' wages. This replaced the previous system that awarded *ex gratia* pensions of £24-30 annually to scouts. Queen's also required its servants to join a friendly society, insuring themselves against illness and death, for which the college does not appear to have made any contribution. The college did not specify any preference for which friendly society a servant

[672] Ibid. Letter from M.E. Sadler to C.N. Jackson, 1 December, 1892.
[673] Ibid. Jackson's notes from a conversation with Bidder, 20 December 1897.

should join.[674] Merton contributed half the premium for a £30 annuity payable at age sixty from the Post Office, but its scheme does not appear to have made any contribution towards servants' life insurance premiums.[675]

Why were Post Office annuities so popular among colleges during this period? Perhaps in part because of professional and personal relationships: the Post Office savings bank and insurance policies were intended to encourage working-class thrift and were championed by William Gladstone while he served as chancellor of the exchequer. Gladstone matriculated at Christ Church in 1828 and maintained close ties with Oxford. The premiums charged by the Post Office for these policies were competitive, and at a time when insurance companies were under fire for excessive management fees, the fact that the Post Office did not administer the scheme to make a profit would have been attractive to colleges.

It was commonly understood among college bursars that the Post Office would guarantee the return of premiums – the entire sum of contributions paid – as long as the policy had not reached maturity. This was an important feature of these policies: colleges encouraged (or compelled) younger servants to join retirement savings schemes, however these junior workers were also more likely to leave the college's employment than senior employees. Turnover caused an administrative burden, and could also be quite expensive for colleges if they could not recoup these contributions. It was not until June 1898 that Jackson sought assurances from Norwich Union regarding the return of contributions: the company agreed that they would return all premiums paid less commissions, but that it was 'a most unusual concession'.[676] The Post Office actively solicited the business of Oxford colleges and in a letter

[674] HC 33/1/2 Letter from C. Grant to C.N. Jackson, 2 December 1892.
[675] Ibid., Letter from T. Bowman to C.N. Jackson, 10 December 1892.
[676] HC 33/1/2 Letter from J.W. Duchar to C.N. Jackson 25 June 1898.

sent to colleges in January 1890, the controller explained how the Post Office had modified the terms of annuities to accommodate one of the colleges' other chief concerns – the designation of beneficiaries.

Colleges insisted on control over servants' insurance policies purchased through college retirement savings schemes. This meant control not only of the physical policies, but of the sums received when the policies matured. This was in part to prevent servants from borrowing against the policies, leaving the college with the liability of supporting dependent family members, but also because until the twentieth century, there was some uncertainty as to whether policies represented deferred compensation. Colleges typically viewed their contribution as assisting servants in purchasing insurance and they expected to recover part or all of their contributions when the policies matured. In some cases, as Jackson proposed, colleges designed schemes that used the proceeds of life insurance policies to seed a pension fund.

The original terms of the Post Office annuity scheme did not allow colleges to name themselves as beneficiaries, rendering Post Office annuities less attractive. The Post Office suggested that some Oxford colleges had asked for modifications to these terms, but until 1890, these requests had been refused. Eager to win the business of the colleges, the Post Office was now prepared to modify the terms of their annuities:

> 'A Deferred Annuity on the life of any College servant can now be granted through this Department to the Head of the College, or to the Bursar, or to any other Officer of the College, for the time being, and in the event of the death of the servant before the Annuity commenced, or of the Authorities not wishing to complete the purchase of the Annuity, the whole of the purchase money paid would be returned to the Authorities, who in fact, under the terms of the

Contract, would be the legal proprietors of the Annuity.'[677]

The letter goes on to detail how the Post Office Savings Bank would be prepared to also offer some flexibility on the payment of premiums, which were otherwise payable annually in advance. If, after the annuity became payable, the college wished to transfer the annuity to the servant, or have the payments be made directly to the servant rather than going through the college, the Post Office was prepared to execute a power of attorney to effect those modifications, free of charge.[678] It is not clear from the letter whether or not the Post Office was aware that these schemes were usually contributory and that under these terms, the 'whole of the purchase money paid' would necessarily include employee contributions. Why was the Post Office now prepared to recognize a college's insurable interest in its employees? The letter makes no reference to the reasoning behind this reversal, but it seems likely that during this period, the understanding of what constituted insurable interest was constantly evolving.

6.5. Insurable interest and the designation of beneficiaries

The issue of insurable interest in these circumstances, whether a college could demonstrate a financial stake in a domestic servant, and therefore be named as the beneficiary on an employee's life insurance policy, met with various opinions during this period.[679] Was it legal? If it was legal, was it morally acceptable? What conditions should be placed on the use of the proceeds?

One of the first set of regulations on the use of the proceeds from servants' life insurance

[677] JC SV Correspondence 1880-90, Letter from Mr. Compton, controller of the Post Office Savings Bank to the principal of Jesus College, 21 January 1890. These letters were mailed to other colleges, a copy survives in the archives at Brasenose, BNC B0482.
[678] Ibid.
[679] The *OED* dates the use of the term 'insurable' from 1814, 'insurable interest' from 1848.

policies where the college was named as the beneficiary is found at Oriel in 1872. These state:

> 'When any Policy shall have become a claim, the money received shall be liable (1) to repay to the College the Premiums which it has paid; then, (if any surplus remain) it shall be applied to repay to the Representatives of the deceased servant to an amount not exceeding one half of such surplus, such sums as he shall have paid for a Deferred Annuity, in case of his not having received such annuity at all, or not for more than five years. The surplus (if any) shall be at the disposal of the College, either for the assistance of the widow and children, if any, or to go to a general fund for kindred purposes: but in no case to be applied <u>to the general purposes</u> of the College.'[680]

These regulations clearly demonstrate that the college did not consider contributions towards servants' insurance to be part of a servant's remuneration. Rather college contributions were monies advanced with the expectation of repayment, which was prioritized above other applications of the funds. In the late nineteenth century at Oriel, the proceeds from servants' insurance policies seeded a fund, essentially a balance sheet reserve, designated for servants' pensions. The college received the proceeds from servants' insurance policies and decided how to distribute the funds for each case individually. In some cases, the servant or his heirs received the full or partial proceeds of the policy; in other cases, a servant received nothing. Whether the college awarded a servant a portion of the proceeds, or made no award, the balance was applied to the servants' pension fund. It is not possible to determine from the surviving evidence if the servants who received nothing had, as the regulations suggest, no claim to the proceeds because they had not paid contributions. Neither is it possible to determine the extent to which the purchase of insurance improved the provisions for servants in retirement and for their dependents in old age relative to the previous system of *ex gratia* pensions and grants paid from the college's general funds.

[680] OC GOV 4 A4, October 1872. Premiums for servants' life insurance policies appear to have been paid by the college from 1869. Underlining appears in the original.

Occasionally college minutes note that a particular sum would be credited to a specific purpose, using the insurance proceeds from one servant to benefit another. On 28 November 1906, the college awarded an *ex gratia* pension to Mrs. Cooper, the plate washer, and noted that the payments would be 'charged against the Servants' Life Assurance Fund against the monies received for the surrender of a policy held on account of William A. Kimber, who was to retire from college service later that year'.[681] Again in 1910, the college allocated the proceeds of George Wernham's life insurance to the continued payment of Mrs. Cooper's pension.[682] In 1907, the college received the proceeds of Moses Jackman's life insurance in the amount of £100. The college gave his representatives £10 to pay his funeral expenses and then set aside the remaining funds 'as a provision for eventualities which might arise in the case of the death of O.G. Starbud, bedmaker' who did not meet the requirements of the insurer's medical examination. Jackman was a widower, his wife Eliza died in 1903, and he does not appear to have had any other dependents. However, even when a servant arguably did have surviving dependents, any support awarded was still at the discretion of the college. Charlotte Drury, a bedmaker at Oriel, died one month after her annuity matured. She lived with her daughter, Edith, who was twenty-two and single, working as a laundress. The college applied the full proceeds of Mrs. Drury's policy, £68.14.0, to the servants' pension fund.[683]

Other colleges similarly named themselves as beneficiaries, but there is insufficient

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[681] OC GOV 4 A4 28 November 1906. The college minutes alternately refer to a pension or assurance fund, but in practice they appear to be the same. Kimber lived in Gloucester when he died in 1911, his estate was valued at £2313. *NPCE&W*, 1911, p.315. OC TF1 G7/1 Similarly in 1909, when John Steele, the college porter died, the entire proceeds of his insurance, £143 were credited to the servants' pension fund. At the time of his death, Steele had kept £600 of his earnings with the college, which was paid to his widow Elizabeth, his estate was valued at £2096, presumably a satisfactory sum to provide for her support. *National Probate Calendar, England and Wales*, 1909, p.262.

[682] Ibid., Easter meeting 1910. It appears as though neither Kimber nor Wernham received a pension from the college.

[683] OC GOV 4 A4 Minutes of the Governing Body, Easter meeting 1914. The minutes make no mention of any payment made to Edith Drury for her mother's funeral.

evidence to trace the funds once they were received in order to understand how they were applied. Records at Hertford show that the concept was problematic: fellows, servants and insurance companies held various opinions on the matter.

Some college fellows found these arrangements disquieting. Commenting on the idea that the college could use the proceeds resulting from the early death of some servants to fund the pension scheme, Haselfoot wrote 'I think the principle of a scheme by which the college would take the position of an Insurance Society undesirable and might cause dissatisfaction among the servants.'[684]

The question of insurable interest was raised almost immediately by Edinburgh Life in 1893. In their response to Jackson's original request for information, they expressed reservations about the proposal, 'It appears to be assumed that the College, paying half the contributions, could secure for itself half the sum payable in the event of death, or at least could secure repayment of its contributions out of the insurance money. But would not this be, in the one case insuring without an insurable interest (which the law forbids), and in the other case, taking back with one hand what had been given with the other?'[685]

Union Assurance Society (UAS) proposed that the college purchase two endowment assurance policies for each servant: one designating the servant as beneficiary and the other the college. UAS advised the college to 'admit at the outset "insurable interest" and to avoid all question hereafter also that there would be a memorandum upon each such policy of that admission'. Jackson was not convinced and asked for further information. H.W. Page Phillips replied, '…(Y)ou do not seem to accept the fact that if the Society binds itself down at the

[684] HC 33/1/2 Letter from Haselfoot to Jackson, 26 February 1893.
[685] Ibid., This is an internal communication to F. Griffith at Edinburgh Life from another employee tasked with responding to Jackson's queries. The letter was forwarded to the college from F. Griffith around 18 March 1893.

outset as accepting the insurable interest no question could exist as to insurable interest'. He offered another, more complicated alternative: the college could purchase one policy, designate the servant as beneficiary and then have the servant assign some percentage of his interest in the policy to the college. Of course this would create a difficult situation, should a servant leave the college and the two parties did not agree on how to manage the surrender value. The arrangement involving two policies was straightforward in that case: the UAS advised that if a servant left for any reason, the college could either take the surrender value for the policy taken out in its benefit, or they could continue to pay the premiums for former employees, in their own interest – 'e.g. a servant leaving might have become a bad life and his retirement and subsequent early death be the means of a substantial increase to the Pension Fund'.[686]

Other insurance companies did not go into such detail, but clearly assumed the premise of the college's insurable interest was sound. After meeting with Jackson in March 1896, Thomas Leveritt, the manager of the south eastern branch of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society, wrote to him with further information. Outlining the advantages of a scheme that provided the college with a lump sum at the maturity of servants' policies, naming the college as beneficiary and leaving the decision up to the college - whether to purchase an annuity with the proceeds or make other arrangements - Leveritt made explicit the calculations a college could face at the maturity of an endowment policy, 'It also gives you full control over the cash at the end of the period, that is on each servant attaining the age of 60 & this is a great advantage because it may so happen that the particular Servant may be in very

[686] HC 33/1/2 Letter from H.W.P. Phillips at UAS to C.N. Jackson 14 April 1893, from Phillips' letter it appears he was a former undergraduate at Hertford and knew Jackson socially, which may have allowed him to speak more frankly. Underlining appears in the original.

bad health. Under such circumstances it would probably pay the College better to take the responsibility of the Annuity upon its own shoulders & take the cash.'[687]

It appears Hertford decided to purchase one policy for each servant. However, it is not clear how they intended to manage the distribution of funds when policies matured and by 1905, the original arrangements had already proven unsatisfactory. Jackson's notes read, 'The College, in consideration of contributing 50% of the premiums, require to have as Grantees or Trustees on behalf of their Servants the full control of the premiums returnable in the event of the decease of the sum assured in the event of survivance of any of their servants.' Jackson believed that this change merely formalized the original understanding of the college's authority.

In July 1905, W.B. Paterson, an actuary at Norwich Union Life Insurance Society where the policies were purchased, replied, suggesting that this could best be accomplished by rewriting all of the policies in the name of the college. This required the approval of the servants participating in the scheme. Servants met to consider the proposed changes, and Frederick Alder wrote to C.N. Jackson, informing him that the servants had voted unanimously to reject the proposed changes and preferred to continue with the original scheme.[688] The servants eventually agreed, although it is not clear from the surviving evidence why or if concessions were required to reach an agreement, and the changes were made.[689]

While colleges insisted on always keeping charge of annuities and endowments, life insurance policies were treated slightly differently at some colleges. Hertford did not maintain control once the servant retired: 'Servants of Hertford College may at their own option take

[687] HC 33/1/2 Letter from Thomas Leveritt to C.N. Jackson, 9 March 1896.
[688] HC 33/1/3 Letter from F. Alder to C.N. Jackson, Jan. 17, 1905; , it is not clear from Jackson's notes if these included anything beyond the changes in beneficiary.
[689] Ibid.

out life insurance policies. These are taken out in the name of the bursar of the college to prevent the servants charging or disposing of them while in the service of the college. The premiums are paid by the college and recovered by reduction from salaries. On leaving the service of the college the servants have the policies transferred to them.'[690]

Of course, this was only the case if the college was not named as a beneficiary, which was a practice that continued well into the twentieth century. Sidney Smith, the butler at Oriel, was killed in France during the Great War in February 1917. He left an estate valued at approximately £1250 to his wife, Edith. In June, Langford Price wrote to Mrs. Smith to discuss the distribution of the proceeds of her husband's life insurance policy:

> 'Your husband's life was insured by the College with a view to his receiving a pension when he should eventually leave its service, and one half of the annual premiums were paid by your husband. The College undertook at the time the Policy was taken out that if he left its service before the Policy reached full maturity it would repay to him the contributions which he had made towards the premiums, and the total amount of such contributions was about £71.5.0.
>
> The total sum received by the College on his death for this (and another independent) policy on his life amounted to £305.6.1 and the College proposes, in view of the circumstances to apply the whole of that sum for your benefit.
>
> I understand that your Husband had borrowed £160 from his Sister in New York, and that in addition to this at the time of his death a sum of £45.1.5 was owing by him to her for interest on the loan and in respect of rents of a house or houses belonging to her which he had received.
>
> It is proposed to pay Miss Smith these two sums of £160 and £45.1.5 thus clearing off the loan from her and the interest thereon, and the College proposes to invest the balance of the policy money which will then remain in its

[690] HC 16/4/4.

hands, namely £100.4.8 for the benefit of yourself and your children, paying the income (about £5 a year) to you for the present.

May I ask you to kindly let me hear from you in acknowledgement of this letter?

I am yours faithfully,

L.L. Price Treasurer'[691]

Price's reference to 'another independent policy' sounds very similar to the strategy explained to Jackson by UAS and employed by other colleges of purchasing two policies to comply with the contemporary interpretation of insurable interest. His letter implies that the proceeds of both policies were awarded to Smith's widow because of the tragic circumstances. Although the pension schemes at Oriel and other colleges in the early twentieth century had many modern features, the persistence of traditional paternalism was unmistakable. Edith Smith agreed to an arrangement where Price invested the balance of the proceeds of the policies in 5% War Stock and paid her quarterly instalments of £1.6.5 for approximately thirty years. Yet, confusion remained about the rights to the capital.

In 1947, after Edith Smith died, her daughter Phyllis wrote to the college, 'I understand there is a sum of just over £100 belonging to Mother which you invested and the interest from which has been paid quarterly.' Smith asked for details of the arrangement so that she could inform her solicitors. The treasurer wrote back and included a copy of the letter transcribed above, explaining:

> 'The sum in question, £100.4.8, as you will see is the balance remaining, after debts had been paid, of the money provided by an insurance policy taken out by the college to provide a pension. Your mother has had the income from

[691] OC STA 2 B/1 Papers relating to the late Sidney Charles Smith, College Butler; Minutes from a meeting of the governing body in June 1917 note that the capital was to be retained as provision for his children in the future. Another loose note in the pages adjacent to this minute dated 10 December 1937 states 'There appears to be no reason why Mrs. Smith's representatives should have the capital after her death. The children have long since married and settled down.' This suggests that the distribution of the capital was discussed internally ten years before Edith Smith's death, OC GOV 4 A4.

this for thirty years, and although the market rate of interest has fallen, the college has continued to pay this at a rate of 5%.

The capital sum, however, is the property of the college, and as you and your sister are now adult, it is clear that the obligation of the college has been discharged and that these payments now cease. Had your father remained in service till the usual retiring age, the capital provided by the college would not have been his, but would have been used by the college to provide him with a pension.'[692]

The clear implication is that Edith Smith had the better part of the bargain. Phyllis Smith replied that she was aware the interest continued to be paid at the original rate and added an appropriately deferential, 'I know my mother was grateful'.

Colleges maintained that retaining control of the capital sum and holding the policies was to prevent servants from borrowing against the policies during their lifetime as well as preventing beneficiaries from squandering the proceeds when a servant died. In both cases, colleges would have been obliged to assume some liability for the financial support of surviving dependent family members, thus paying twice. The bursar at Balliol wrote in 1904, 'The College insists upon holding the policies as a condition of paying the half premiums. This rule came into force when it was found that a certain bedmaker had borrowed money on his policy and on his death shortly after leaving our service left his wife penniless.'[693]

Although it cannot be the case in question, in 1912 scouts at Christ Church became aware of a fellow servant's widow, Mrs. Woodford, 'who was in very hard water' after the death of her husband. He had borrowed about sixty pounds against his policy, and she had 'no prospects for the future, no cash in the bank and was almost pennyless [sic]'. The committee immediately brought the matter to the steward, who seemed shocked and said that he did not

[692] OC STA 2 B/1.
[693] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Books 1900-1910.

suppose there was another case like it in the college. He thanked the committee for bring the matter to him and promised to see the dean. The college decided to give Mrs. Woodford £60, payable over three years at £5 quarterly.[694] Stretching the payments out in this way allowed the college to monitor her welfare as well as her spending.

With the permission of the college, servants at Balliol were allowed to borrow against the cash value of their deferred annuities, which had a much larger value than life insurance policies; in the early twentieth century, a typical deferred annuity of thirty pounds was worth at least £250. Records survive for two instances, both in the 1920s. Thomas Sawyer borrowed fifty pounds from the college against the value of his policy, which was repaid from a lump sum he received when the policy matured. Under similar terms, Frederick Whitman borrowed twenty-five pounds in 1928, which was repaid on his death from the proceeds of the policy. In both cases, the college had their solicitors draw up a mortgage, copies of which were also sent to the insurance company.[695] Oriel allowed some servants to borrow against the funds held for them by the college for their retirement; in 1907 the college advanced £16.15.0 to C.W. Taphouse, to be repaid at the rate of £4 annually.[696]

Throughout the period, colleges held that their contribution to the premiums entitled them to certain rights: to designate the beneficiary, usually the bursar or the head of house and fellows of the college; to maintain physical custody of the policies; and to decide whether at the policy's maturity, a servant should have a lump sum or regular payments. At various times, servants disagreed with all three of these.

When endowment policies matured, there was the question of whether to take the lump

[694] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1, 7 June 1912.
[695] BC Miscellaneous Bursary Papers 61a Mortgages on Servants' Annuities.
[696] OC GOV 4 A4, 30 January 1907.

sum or the annuity. In many circumstances, the college chose for the servant, sometimes against their wishes. In 1908, R.H. Bryan retired as college porter at Hertford and preferred to have the lump sum. The college refused and Bryan responded by asking for a larger pension. Bryan was later awarded an additional £7 annually, retiring on a pension of £47.[697]

Once the policy matured, or a servant left the service of the college, the right to maintain physical custody of the documents was less clear. By the early twentieth century, the understanding among colleges seemed to be that if they were no longer paying premiums, they were not entitled to control the policies. Some colleges offered superannuated servants advice on their personal finances, with the caveat that the policies remain with the college bursar. In 1904, the bursar at Balliol proposed a resolution that the college would continue to hold servants' insurance policies until their death, but would also allow servants to redeem life insurance policies after age 60 if the 'surrender value [is] invested in investments approved by the College and subject to a trust in favor of the wife and children'. The resolution passed but upon the advice of another fellow, Sir William Markby, the college determined that they could not refuse to give servants their policies once the college was no longer paying all or part of the premiums.[698]

6.6. Pension schemes in the early 20th century

The institution of the state pension in 1908 had little effect on existing college schemes. Nearly all men in receipt of a college pension received an award over the means-tested threshold of £21-31.10.0. Women typically still received small *ex gratia* pensions; records show that after 1908, colleges took the state pension into account when determining these awards. Although only a few examples of the calculations survive, they indicate that the advent of the

[697] HC 33/1/3, Letter from R.H. Bryan to C.N. Jackson.
[698] BC Junior Bursar's Memoranda Book, May 1904.

state pension likely crowded out college expenditure. In 1913, Mrs. Brightwell, a kitchen woman at Oriel, was granted a pension of 5/- weekly 'until such times as she should become qualified for an Old Age Pension from the State by attaining the age of seventy years.'[699] In 1917, Benjamin William's pension was increased from 7/6- to 8/- 'as any higher would involve a prorated reduction of his Old Age Pension'.[700]

Several colleges modified their existing pension schemes in response to the 1925 Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act. Brasenose provides a good illustration. In December 1925, the bursar wrote to the secretary of the Ministry of Health to ask three questions: whether college employees were exempt from the Act; what were the contributions payable by the college and its employees; and what benefits would servants receive?[701] In his reply, A.W. Neville informed the college that it was not exempt and enclosed a copy of the Act, with information about contributions and benefits. Neville explained that the college could reduce the value of pension benefits accordingly:

> 'I have, however, to point out that where an employing body have their own pensions scheme, section 27 of the Pensions Act enables them to modify such scheme by reducing the contributions and benefits of employees who may be entitled to corresponding benefit under the Act.'[702]

In 1928, when contributions for servants became payable under the 1925 Act, Brasenose reduced pension awards by the amount of the state pension. The scheme, which had been revised in 1925, provided a final salary pension on a scale ranging from £40 for 25-9 years of service to 50% for 40 years or more. The minimum annual pension awarded under this scheme was £60, with a maximum of £100. The £60 was effected by the purchase of two policies: one in the name of the college, one in the name of the servant. Any award in excess of

[699] OC GOV 4 A4, 15 January 1913.
[700] Ibid., 5 January 1917.
[701] BNC B0498, 12 December 1925.
[702] Ibid., 15 December 1925.

£60 was paid from college funds. Under the amended scheme in 1928, the minimum was reduced from £60 to £40, with the addition of the state pension providing an annual income of £66. The college pledged that 'in no case shall any modification reduce the total of the pension receivable by the servant'.[703]

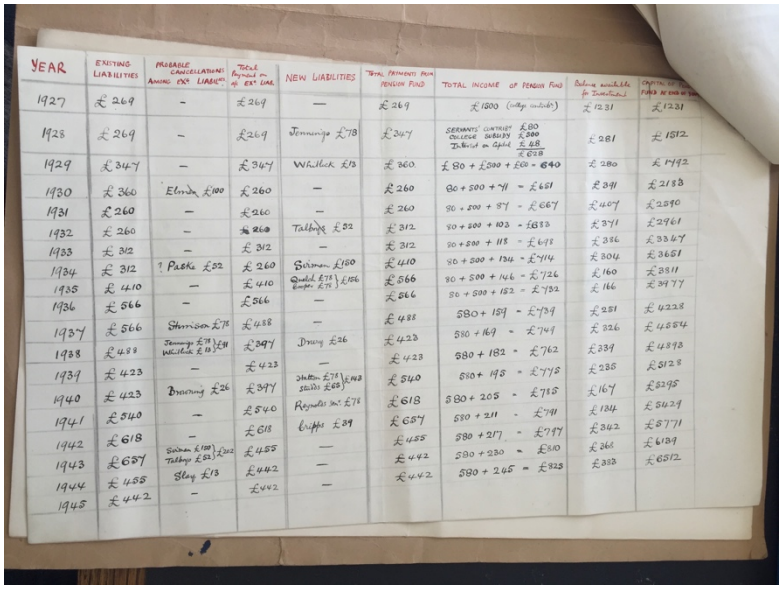
It is very difficult to recover the servants' perspective of this crowding out. Would servants have preferred to continue paying contributions and receive a larger pension? There is very little evidence from college sources, however a memorandum about servants' participation in the university pension scheme offers some insight. In 1943, H. Lodge, the clerk of accounts for the University Chest gave a talk explaining the university pension scheme to a group of employees. He wrote a memo afterwards, summarizing the discussion that followed his talk:

> 'It was easy to discover that the deduction of the Old Age Pension from the University's pension, even after allowing for the deduction of the stamp money from the contributions was very unpopular. The majority feeling seemed to be that the employees would prefer to pay the whole of the two-and-a-half percent contribution into the fund and to receive the full pension from the University. It was stated that the pensions are none too big especially in the case of an employee joining the Scheme in middle age, and that the State Pensions ought to be kept entirely separate from the University Pensions.'[704]

By the early 1920s all colleges but three, St. John's, Jesus and Christ Church, had some form of organized pension scheme. While most early schemes targeted scouts, by the early twentieth century, schemes had expanded membership and typically included most permanent servants of a college. When a scheme came into force, colleges usually expected younger servants to join while giving older servants a choice. Once the concept of a formal scheme was well-established, colleges compelled servants to join and made any pension award contingent

[703] BNC B0498. The university's scheme similarly reduced contributions and benefits in 1928, see UOC 12/9/1.
[704] UOC 12/9/3, 24 September 1943. These employees were classified as servants, it appears most were assistants in scientific laboratories or mechanics.

on their participation. This gradual phasing-in of membership was necessary as a contributory scheme effectively obliged servants to pay for a benefit that had previously been understood to be included in their remuneration. Membership criteria was variously based on age and salary. In 1927, Jesus College proposed a scheme that would include all servants over 21 with an annual income over £100. Some servants who were never expected to reach this income threshold would retain their entitlement to an *ex gratia* pension. Other colleges offered lower-waged employees a larger contribution towards their premiums, for example in 1901, Oriel paid three-quarters, rather than the usual half, of the premiums for a deferred annuity of £25 for the shoeblack, George Ladson.[705]



YEAR	EXISTING LIABILITIES	PAYABLE CANCELLATIONS AMONG EX^T LIABILITIES	TOTAL Payable on EX^T LIAB.	NEW LIABILITIES	TOTAL PAYMENTS FROM PENSION FUND	TOTAL INCOME OF PENSION FUND	Balance available for Investment	CAPITAL OF FUND AT END OF YEAR
1927	£ 269	–	£ 269	—	£ 269	£ 1800 (college excluded)	£ 1231	£ 1231
1928	£ 269	–	£ 269	Jennings £78	£ 347	SERVANTS' CONTRIBS £80 COLLEGE SUBSIDY £200 Interest on Capital £68 £ 628	£ 281	£ 1512
1929	£ 347	–	£ 347	Whitlock £13	£ 360	£ 80 + £200 + £60 = 640	£ 280	£ 1792
1930	£ 360	Elvin £100	£ 260	—	£ 260	80 + 200 + 71 = £ 651	£ 391	£ 2183
1931	£ 260	–	£ 260	—	£ 260	80 + 200 + 87 = £ 667	£ 407	£ 2590
1932	£ 260	–	£ 260	Talbot £52	£ 312	80 + 200 + 103 = £ 683	£ 371	£ 2961
1933	£ 312	–	£ 312	—	£ 312	80 + 200 + 118 = £ 698	£ 386	£ 3347
1934	£ 312	? Parke £52	£ 260	Berman £180	£ 410	80 + 200 + 134 = £ 714	£ 304	£ 3651
1935	£ 410	–	£ 410	Quibell £78 \ Kemp £78 / £156	£ 566	80 + 200 + 146 = £ 726	£ 160	£ 3811
1936	£ 566	–	£ 566	—	£ 566	80 + 200 + 152 = £ 732	£ 166	£ 3977
1937	£ 566	Stevenson £78	£ 488	—	£ 488	580 + 151 = £ 731	£ 251	£ 4228
1938	£ 488	Jennings £78 \ Whitlock £13 / £91	£ 397	Drury £26	£ 423	580 + 169 = £ 749	£ 326	£ 4554
1939	£ 423	–	£ 423	—	£ 423	580 + 182 = £ 762	£ 339	£ 4893
1940	£ 423	Drury £26	£ 397	Shelton £78 \ Stubbs £68 / £146	£ 540	580 + 195 = £ 775	£ 235	£ 5128
1941	£ 540	–	£ 540	Reynolds Jun^r £78	£ 618	580 + 205 = £ 785	£ 167	£ 5295
1942	£ 618	–	£ 618	Cripps £69	£ 687	580 + 211 = £ 791	£ 134	£ 5429
1943	£ 687	Stevenson £100 \ Talbot £52 / £152	£ 455	—	£ 455	580 + 217 = £ 797	£ 342	£ 5771
1944	£ 455	Sloy £13	£ 442	—	£ 442	580 + 230 = £ 810	£ 361	£ 6131
1945	£ 442	–	£ 442	—	£ 442	580 + 245 = £ 825	£ 383	£ 6512

Figure 20 c.1927 Jesus College: Spreadsheet estimating liabilities and income for servants' pension fund (JC Box 65 Uncatalogued items relating to pensions)

Jesus was one of the last colleges to institute a formal pension scheme. In the late 1920s, the principal, Alfred Hazel wrote to other colleges asking about the details of their schemes.[706]

[705] OC GOV 4 A4 Minutes of the Governing Body, 27 November 1901. His pension was increased as his wife, Mary, also a retired college servant, had been removed to the workhouse infirmary and the college accordingly discontinued her pension of 6/- weekly.
[706] JC SV Correspondence 1880-90, in February 1931, the college still had not settled on the terms of a scheme.

These replies, as well as a survey of domestic bursars from around the same period offer a snapshot of pension schemes after several decades had elapsed, after colleges and servants had become more informed about insurance policies and after the institution of the state old age pension scheme. Compared to pension awards of the late nineteenth century, newer iterations of these schemes increasingly featured defined benefits and defined contributions. Pension awards had always been made based on length of service, but now this was made explicit and uniform, through the use of scales. In 1927, servants at Queen's, aged 20 or older, paid 5% of their ordinary salary or weekly wage towards the purchase of a deferred annuity. The college purchased a second deferred annuity that, when combined with the servant's policy, guaranteed an annual income of 1/60 of the servant's final salary at pensionable age for each year of continuous service.[707]

Some colleges modified traditional schemes based on *ex gratia* pensions. In 1920, Exeter still awarded *ex gratia* pensions and that year, had seven servants receiving payments under this scheme, these ranged from £10 to £100 annually. After 1905, the college began to fund these awards through the purchase of endowment assurance policies, approximately £500 per servant.[708] The college paid the full premium and from the servants' perspective, it would have seemed that little appeared to have changed from the mid-nineteenth century.

A proposed scheme at Jesus in 1927 included provision for the college's self-insurance. A fund was seeded with £1500, which would be then be increased by the contributions of servants and a payment of £500 annually from the college until 1960, when the college calculated the fund would become self-sustaining.

[707] JC Box 65 Uncatalogued items relating to pensions; special arrangements were made for servants who joined after age forty and there is no mention of how the college handled interruptions of service due to war.
[708] Ibid.

Some colleges continued to provide a defined benefit scheme. In the late 1920s, University purchased two policies for each servant, these provided a pension of £65 annually or the cash equivalent when a servant reached age 60. Unusually, the college paid 5/8 of the premium, while the servant contributed 3/8.[709] Other colleges moved to schemes based on defined contributions. By 1927, Hertford had a defined contribution scheme with both the college and the servant contributing 5% of the servant's annual cash wages. Using these funds, the college prioritized life insurance, purchasing a policy for £100 for each participating servant and then putting the remainder towards retirements savings. Upon reaching the age of 60, a servant was entitled to a pension or the cash equivalent.[710]

Defined contribution schemes could be more complicated to administer and required a corresponding adjustment for any increase in salary. In 1926, Pembroke offered a scheme similar to Hertford's: a minimum age of 19, maturing at age 65, and a defined contribution of 10%, with half paid by the college and half by the employee. Pembroke's scheme specified how increases in salary would be managed: 10% of any increase in annual salary will be used to purchase supplementary endowment assurance, provided that the sum assured exceeded £25.[711] St. John's experimented with another approach to reduce the administrative costs of higher turnover among younger workers. The college temporarily held the pension contributions (1/3- weekly) of all new servants for at least a year, until the college was satisfied that the servant was likely to continue in employment. If a servant left before completing a year's service, they were entitled to a refund of these contributions, if a servant

[709] Ibid.
[710] Ibid., Letter from C.H. Haselfoot to Rev. Dr. Butler, 25 March 1927.
[711] Ibid.

left after completing at least one year's service, the college returned the contributions plus 2.5% interest.[712]

College schemes never converged on a uniform retirement age, some schemes specified 60, some 65. Most servants continued to work in some capacity after their pensions became payable, and lower ages of retirement offered some flexibility for a servant to reduce working hours or move to a less demanding role. This allowed colleges to use some portion of the annuity income to subsidize the servants' remuneration and allowed servants to stay in work, which offered the possibility of higher earnings than a pension typically provided. These arrangements also preserved access to perquisites and gratuities, and gave servants who preferred work or partial retirement over full-time retirement more control over managing their gradual exit from full-time employment.

Several pension schemes were again modified in the late 1930s, in response to the expectation that college servants would soon be included in the national unemployment insurance scheme. The ministry of labour granted exceptions to employees participating in an approved pension scheme, as evidence of the permanence of their unemployment. The assumption followed that permanent employees had little need for unemployment insurance and the deductions from their wages were an unnecessary burden on these workers and their employers.

College schemes based on self-insurance, or those operating largely on traditional paternalistic discretion, whether or not the awards were funded through the purchase of insurance policies, were not eligible for these exemptions. H. Percival, the steward at Christ Church, wrote to A. McWatters, the secretary of the University Chest, requesting that the

[712] SJC ADMIN VIII C9, Memorandum written by the bursar, R. Hart-Synnot, 15 April 1929.

university scheme admit Christ Church servants, in order for the college to qualify for the exemption. McWatters replied a week later:

> 'Mr. Lodge was at the Ministry of Labour yesterday on other matters and took the opportunity of interviewing one pf the principals respecting the points raised in your letter of the 9th March. He was informed that provided a College adopted a similar scheme to the University Scheme no objection would be made by the Ministry of Labour to granting a Certificate of Exemption from Unemployment Insurance for persons in the Pension Scheme. Mr. Lodge understood that some Colleges have already adopted such Schemes and have been granted Exception. This being so I take it that your difficulties disappear, and that you will be able to go ahead and make a Scheme for the employees of the House.'[713]

[713] OC TF 2 B1/2, 18 March 1938. Lodge was the accountant for the chest. A copy of the letter survives in the archives at Oriel because C. Emden, the treasurer was interested in understanding the relationship between pension schemes and unemployment insurance exemptions for their servants.

7. Sociability and Leisure

College histories describe this work as highly sought after and college servants as a local labour aristocracy. Yet during this period, attitudes about class and masculinity were changing. In Oxford, domestic service lost prestige, particularly for men. Jobs in the Cowley Motorworks were better paid and the work was seen as modern. It was well known that these factories would not hire workers over the age of forty, and college service became the refuge of older workers, which further degraded popular estimation of this employment. In 1912, Violet Butler described college servants as existing 'in a caste by themselves', with 'great competition' for these jobs.[714] Harrison argues this was still the case after the Great War – servants comprised 'a sort of elite among Oxford's inter-war working people'.[715] 'Before the rise of the motor industry there was an acceptance of a traditional job hierarchy…if a man had a job in the gasworks, the printing press, or on the railways, he stayed there… Of course there was the college servants, but they wouldn't look at the likes of us.'[716] When asked how people viewed college servants decades later, Alec Lyne replied, 'I think to a certain extent they look down on it. It's never been what you would call a good job.' His wife added, 'I've heard people say, "Ooo, he's only a college servant."' Alec Lyne countered, 'You see, it's very wrong, because it's as good as any other job. … If you're doing your job, it's a highly skilled job.'[717]

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[714] Butler, *Social Conditions*, p.45.
[715] Brian H. Harrison, 'College Servants in Corpus Forty Years Ago' *The Pelican Record,* Vol. XLV (2010), p.11.
[716] Citing J.M. Mogey, *Family and Neighbourhood: Two Studies in Oxford* (London, 1956) in Eleanor Chance, Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, C J Day, T G Hassall, Mary Jessup and Nesta Selwyn, 'Modern Oxford', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4, the City of Oxford*, ed. Alan Crossley and C.R. Elrington (London, 1979), pp. 181-259. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol4/pp181-259 [accessed 8 May 2018].
[717] Brian Harrison 'Interview with Alec Lyne' 8 May 1969 in Harrison 'Transcripts',p.5515.

The preceding chapters have attempted to recover the history of college servants, but it is impossible to ignore that frequently these sources are created by or for their employers. It is in servants' sports clubs, societies and leisure that we begin to glimpse how servants may have seen themselves. These activities were pursued with co-workers, but often outside working hours and away from the college. This chapter provides a brief overview of servants' sports and leisure, making use of images and contemporary accounts of these activities.

Unlike traditional paternalistic employers, college servants sports were not organized and promoted by employers as part of a paternalistic management strategy. This is largely a consequence of timing and the academic calendar. Long working days did not permit servants to participate in organized sports during the academic terms, however the reduced vacation schedule afforded more time for recreation. The short vacation for the month of April, along with the long vacation from July to September coincided with some of the best weather during the calendar year. Servants were able to capitalize on these conditions, enjoying the use of college playing fields, boats, college barges and the river when most undergraduates and fellows had left the city. This helps to explain why, in this traditional paternalistic employment relationship, servants' sports were largely self-organized, although financial and in-kind contributions were regularly solicited from members of colleges. In this chapter, these clubs are contrasted with several traditional expressions of paternalistic management, including the College Servants' Society, an organization that was modelled on Victorian working men's social clubs, but was never wholly independent from its university patrons.[718] Other leisure activities, parties and excursions, were provided by employers in a traditional

[718] On these working men's clubs, see for example, Richard Price, 'The Working Men's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform Ideology', *Victorian Studies*, Vol.1, No.2 (December, 1971), pp.117-47

paternalistic fashion. They were given as a reward for good behavior, and occasionally taken away as punishment.

7.1. College Servants' Sports: A Very Masculine Recreation'

From at the early nineteenth century, college servants participated in a wide variety of organized sports, including athletics, bowls, cricket, football, rowing and tennis. By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, these competitions were very popular in the local community; annual events, like the Easter regatta and the college servants' Oxford Cambridge boat race, drew thousands of spectators. Accounts of these matches appeared regularly in the local papers and further afield in the national sporting press, raising the profile of college servants and lending the job a certain prestige.



Figure 21 Oriel College Servants' Cricket Club 1913 (OC STA 5 A1)

The history of cricket in the Victorian era is comparatively rich, particularly the history of local and community clubs.[719] However, this does not extend to college servants' cricket, which, again, receives limited mention in college histories. College servants' cricket likely dates from the early decades of the nineteenth century; cricket score books survive in college archives from the mid-nineteenth century. As with rowing, servants funded these activities through membership fees or subscriptions and donations from undergraduates and fellows.[720] Compared to rowing, cricket attracted more participants and was easier to organize.[721] Mr. Veary remarked, 'I used to reckon it a bad summer if I didn't have two days' cricket in a week.'[722] Matches were arranged between colleges, as well as within colleges, with friendly matches between employees, fellows and undergraduates that continue today.



Figure 22 Oriel College Servants' Cricket Club 1921 (OC STA 5 A2-3)

[719] A good overview of the historiography is found in Peter Davies and Robert Light *Cricket and Community in England: 1800 to the Present Day* (Manchester, 2012).
[720] See Appendix, image 32.
[721] See Appendix, images 19-20.
[722] David Lay and Brian Harrison 'Interview with Mr. Veary' 27 May 1969 in Harrison, 'Transcripts',p.5596.

Organized sports linked undergraduates and college servants to one another, and then to the wider local community. The Cricket Scheme for Oxford Elementary Schools, launched in 1921, paired boys from nineteen city schools with coaches, many from the university cricket club and the college servants' club. Practices and matches were all held on the college cricket grounds, the first annual report estimated that over a thousand boys participated in the scheme, and over 430 practices and matches were held in the colleges during the first year. Annual reports praised the joint efforts of undergraduates and college servants, especially the groundsmen, and their dedication and commitment to the boys. The program received national and international attention, and ran for well over a decade.[723]

The start of college servants' rowing is often dated to 1850 with the foundation of the College Servants Rowing Club (CSRC).[724] In fact, servants were rowing together at least a decade earlier. In 1838, 'a large body of college servants, who, with permission, went down in the splendid racing boats of the various colleges' to Nuneham Park.[725] In 1850, servants at Oxford and Cambridge organized cricket matches and a boat race. Events were held in both cities, as well as a dinner, eventually extending into a weekend of sport, social activities and camaraderie.[726] Once established, the tradition continued for a century, aside from interruptions due to war. In all, there were forty-one races, with Oxford winning twenty-four and Cambridge seventeen.[727]

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[723] BL:G.A. Oxon 8° 1009.
[724] Mark Blandford-Baker, *Upon the Elysian Stream: 150 years of Magdalen College Boat Club, Oxford* (Oxford, 2008).
[725] *Oxford Chronicle* 21 July 1838. The origins of college rowing at Oxford are similarly described as evolving from these pleasure trips.
[726] See Appendix, images 21-31 for a selection of images of college servants' rowing. Many of these are from the collection at the Museum of River and Rowing in Henley, the national museum of the sport.
[727] BL:38442 d.27, Oxford University and College Servants Rowing Club Centenary 1850-1950.

In 1950, on the occasion of the club's centenary, R.W. Lee, president of the CSRC, recalled, 'My first trip to Cambridge was in 1912 – a great year for me. I remember the excitement when we were sitting in the Eight waiting for Tommy Robins to finish with the cricket match. At last he arrived and literally jumped into his place, and straight away put his foot through the bottom. I have made several visits to Cambridge since, for one, two, of three days and nights, but never can I remember actually sleeping there…'. He recalled, 'Our secretary of that time – William Drew – has remarked that he had never enjoyed a visit anywhere as much as he did that trip to Cambridge.'[728]

The annual Easter regatta began in 1873 and expanded into a weekend of competition and festivities, becoming one of the largest public spectator events in Oxford for several decades. A report from 1885 lists the activities organized for the weekend, including athletics at the university's Iffley Road track which drew competitors from the city and further afield, including Reading, Newbury and Maidenhead.[729]

Prizegiving for events was held in the town hall, and servants invited the Liberal candidate for parliament, Mr. C.A. Fyffe to speak:

> '…(he) thought a Society like the College Servants Athletic Club was likely to give a man independence of character. When a man competed in athletic sports he learnt to hold his own against other people – he learnt to treat himself with self-respect and to require other people to treat him with respect…
> (N)othing was more calculated to give man a sense of manhood than habitual exercise in athletic sports; and when a man had won prizes, as so many had that evening, he thought he went away with a sense that he was not to be dictated to by any one and that he could hold his own against other men.'[730]

[728] Ibid., Lee was a servant at Christ Church.
[729] *JOJ* 11 April 1885.
[730] Ibid.

The relationship between masculinity, class and sports is made explicit in Fyffe's speech. His words reflect the contemporary belief that physical activity was morally improving, not least because it kept working-class men from drinking. Fyffe continued, '…it was a good thing for a young fellow to lead a healthy, wholesome life and not waste his time in public-houses or in indulging in drink'.[731] Although these are similar sentiments to those expressed by the colleges and fellows in the management of servants, there is no indication that college authorities directed or organized these activities.

In 1850, on the occasion of the inaugural college servants' boat race, William Bacon, a servant at Brasenose gave one of the speeches at the celebratory dinner,

> 'Although it might be said that they were aping their superiors, he conceived that while the latter were competing for laurels in literature and art, those in a humbler sphere might without assumption contend for pre-eminence in manly and national pastimes.'[732]

Here Bacon conceded that members of the working class, like himself, were not permitted to compete with their 'superiors' in some spheres, however, he argued that sports belonged to all classes. 'Aping their superiors' is a clear reference to the annual undergraduate Oxford Cambridge boat race and Bacon's concern that the achievements of servants were dismissed as a poor imitation. Middle and upper class athletes were keen to keep working-class rowers from competing against them, believing that these workers had an unfair advantage. 'Any one engaged in menial duty' was banned from competing in rowing from 1885.[733] It is not clear from documentary sources, how college servants reacted to the debate about amateur sports

[731] Ibid.
[732] Bacon was the coxswain of the winning college servants eight. *JOJ* 3 August 1850.
[733] Martin Crotty, 'Separate and distinct? The Manual Labour Question in Nineteenth-century Victorian Rowing' *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 15:2, 1998, p.153.

during the Victorian era or if the impact of these regulations was felt among the local working-class rowing community.



Figure 23 Norman Dix, University College staff, accomplished rower and boatman, undated (UC:P315/4/P1/12)

Within the university community, sports, particularly cricket and rowing, provided an important outlet for the expression of masculinity. At Oxford and Cambridge, athletes who competed against Cambridge were eligible for a blue, worn on club blazers and caps. At some point, servants began awarding their own blues and observed the same strict rules regarding their use. Norman Dix, seen in the photograph above, a servant at University who also worked as the college boatman recalled the tradition and his own rowing career in an interview:

'When in '33 I got into a junior eight, we lost in the finals during August Bank holiday. In '34 I was put in a senior boat with four people from the junior eight, you see. We were coached by the waterman from Lincoln, a man called Tricky Bossum…but that was the best eight I've ever been in. No, I got in this senior eight and I rowed against Cambridge so I got my College Servants' Rowing Blue in 1934 as my father had done in '23.'[734]



Figure 24 University College Servants Crew, undated. John Wilkins is in the front row, right. (UC:P251/P1/12)

Below are several photos associated with college servants' rowing. Many of these come from the collections at the Henley Museum of River and Rowing.

[734] UC:Darwall-Smith, Robin, 'Transcript of Peter Bayley's interview with Norman Dix' 25 March 1997

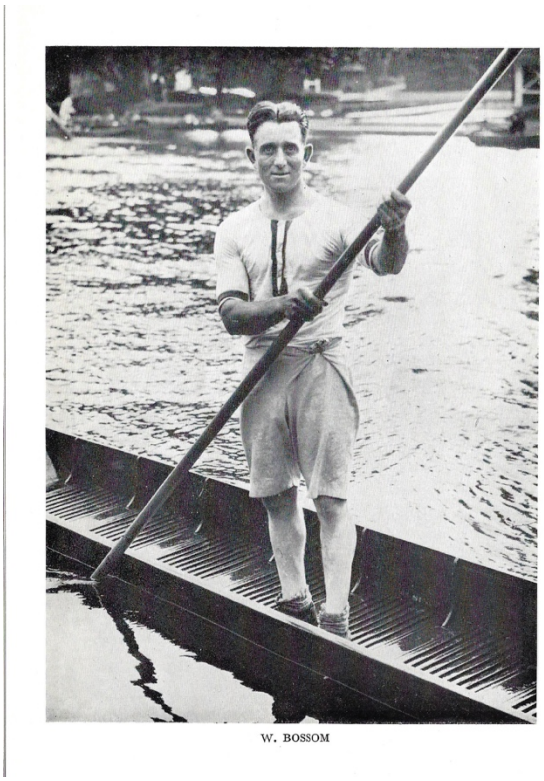


Figure 26 Undated photo of Wilfred 'Tricky' Bossum (Lincoln College Record 1964-5)



Figure 25 1878 Easter Regatta Challenge Four, Hertford College (Photo:RRM River and Rowing Museum)



Figure 27 1903 Oxford and Cambridge Servants' Boat Race, Oxford leads Cambridge. (Photo:RRM)

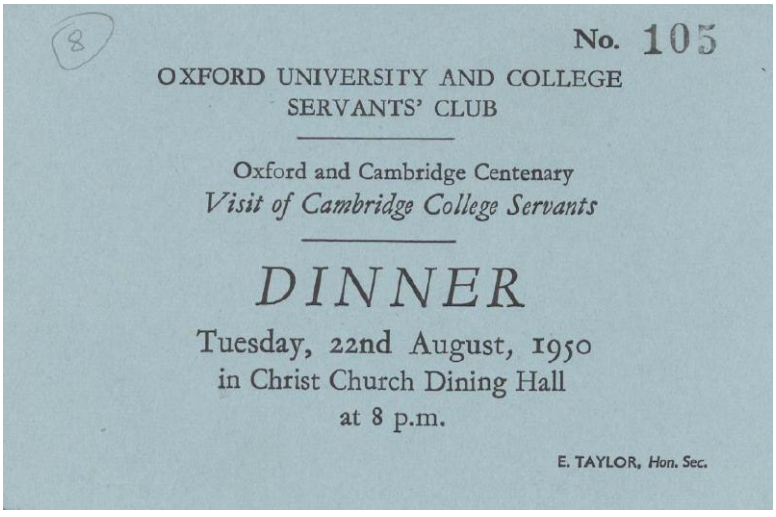


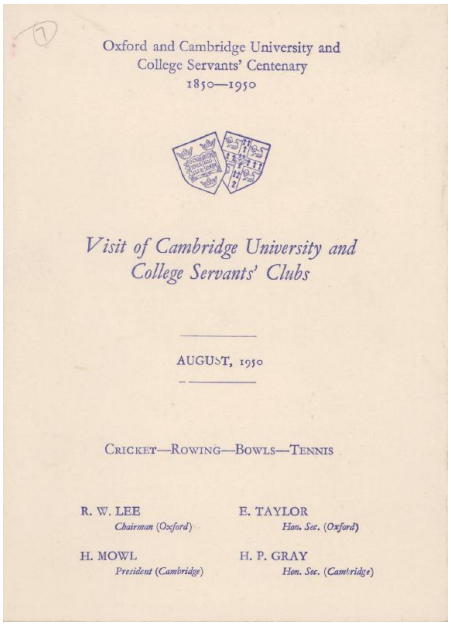
Figure 28 1950 Dinner ticket for the Oxford and Cambridge Servants' Sports Centenary (Photo:RRM)





Figure 29 Left:CSRC Challenge Cup Whiffs 1890-1953, Right: CSRC Four Oar Challenge Cup 1874-1954 (Photos:RRM)





Oxford and Cambridge University and
College Servants' Centenary
1850—1950

Visit of Cambridge University and College Servants' Clubs

AUGUST, 1950

CRICKET—ROWING—BOWLS—TENNIS

R. W. LEE
Chairman (Oxford)

E. TAYLOR
Hon. Sec. (Oxford)

H. MOWL
President (Cambridge)

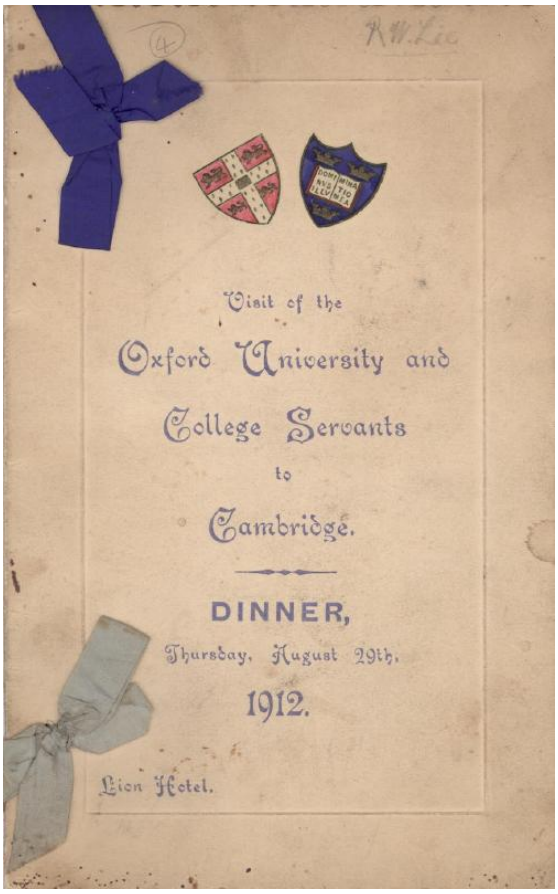
H. P. GRAY
Hon. Sec. (Cambridge)

Figure 30 Left: CSRC Challenge Cup Pairs 1903, Right: Oxford and Cambridge College Servants' Sports Centenary programme (Photos:RRM)





Figure 32 Left: CSRC Badge from William Henry Young, Hertford College servant 1936-60. Young rowed with the CSRC and coached undergraduates. Right: CSRC cap (Photo:RRM, both images)



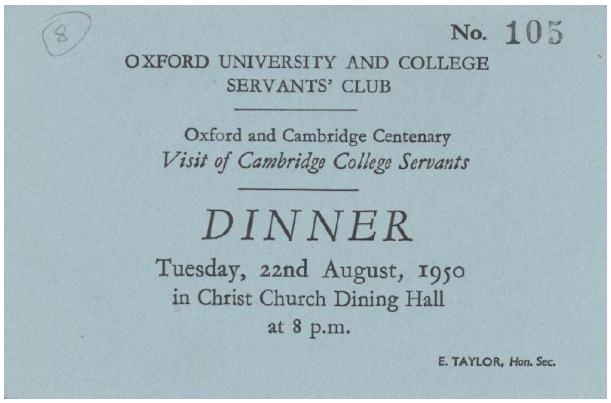


Figure 31 Left:1912 Oxford and Cambridge Servants' Sports Dinner, Right: 1950 Oxford and Cambridge College Servants' Centenary Sports Dinner at Christ Church (Photo: RRM, both images)

7.2. The College Servants' Society 1872-1914

The College Servants' Society, founded in 1872, was modelled on a traditional nineteenth-century working men's club, designed to provide recreation and fellowship in a morally improving environment. The origins of the CSS are not clear; records begin four years after its foundation in 1876.[735] Servants had a number of existing social organizations by this time, the most important of which were the friendly societies and sports clubs. There was also an informal servants' social committee loosely affiliated with the sports clubs that met during this period and held annual concerts and dances. It seems likely that several fellows who took an interest in the welfare of servants worked together with senior servants to establish the organization, raise funds and secure the premises. Some of these names are familiar: William Warner, E.A. Knox and John Rigaud.

Throughout its existence, the CSS served conflicting purposes. It was a private space, away from colleges where servants could relax, socialize, and organize their clubs and activities. It was also a space partly superintended by college fellows, whose motivations were to oversee and improve the moral character of a group of men subordinated to them by their social, cultural, and economic status. Necessarily, the premises were subjected to the oversight of these fellows and servants' behavior was regulated. Gambling and the consumption of alcohol were prohibited. Any activities associated with these vices were also prohibited,

[735] The movement to establish working men's clubs dates to the mid-nineteenth century and is most closely associated with Rev. Henry Solly (1815-1903). Woodroofe observes Solly's close ties to the Charity Organization Society, which was an influential force in Oxford during this period. Kathleen Woodroofe, 'The Irascible Reverend Henry Solly and His Contribution to Working Men's Clubs, Charity Organization, and Industrial Villages in Victorian England' *Social Service Review*, Vol.49, No.1, (March 1975), pp.15-32.

including playing cards. Later some of these restrictions were relaxed in order to attract new members, especially junior servants.

The CSS began in rooms at St. Aldates. It became apparent that larger premises were required to offer the amenities that would attract the membership base necessary to be financially self-sustaining. After several years of declining rolls, the lease at 2 King Edward Street was acquired and the CSS stayed there for over fifty years until the Great War. Initially, the CSS offered members a centrally located, comfortable space to spend their limited hours of leisure during the working day. The premises were a few minutes' walk from Oriel, Christ Church, Merton, Corpus, Refreshments were available, including tea, coffee and cocoa, and the house was looked after by a full-time caretaker. The most popular feature of the club was the reading room, which eventually grew to house a large, well-stocked library of over one thousand volumes and a changing selection of periodicals and daily newspapers. The reading room was furnished with comfortable chairs, lamps, and the walls decorated with framed photographs of college servants' sports teams. Stationery and supplies were furnished for servants' use and the library was supervised by a librarian.[736]

Libraries were a common feature of nineteenth-century working men's clubs, similarly, colleges sometimes provided servants with a library for their exclusive use. Reading was considered a morally improving activity and servants were encouraged to make use of these small collections. However, unlike the CSS library, it does not appear that servants could choose which books were purchased for these college libraries. Evidence survives from three of these, at Magdalen, Worcester, Pembroke and Keble.[737] The servants' library at Worcester

[736] BL:G.A. Oxon 4° 342; BL:Dep.d.825.
[737] PC PMB/B/1/4 Pembroke allocated £10 for the purchase of books for servants on 3 March 1870, no further detail is provided.

was established in 1849, and a library register shows that the college provided a selection of fifty books for the use of servants and their families. These could be borrowed on Mondays at a stated hour and kept by the servant for a fortnight. The library register records 113 loans from June 1849 to December 1851. The most popular books during this period were *Burder's Oriental Customs*, Hall's *Contemplations*, *A Memoir of Felix Neff*, and *Useful Arts and Manufactures*.[738]

At Magdalen, the establishment of a servants' library was linked explicitly to moral improvement. In 1853, John Rigaud was appointed servants' chaplain; minutes note that he was 'to use any other means which he may think most effective for the instruction, proper control, and general advantage of all and especially the junior servants, such as catechizing those who have not been confirmed and that he be provided with the means of establishing a lending library for the use of the college servants'.[739]

The following year, the college made a contribution of ten pounds to the servants' library and committed to contribute a further £2.2.0 annually.[740] Fellows at Keble began to donate books for a servants' library in 1871, records list fifty-nine titles including Scott's *Ivanhoe*, and Dickens' *David Copperfield*. The servants' library at Keble also held subscriptions to several daily and weekly periodicals, including the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Standard*, *Lloyds News* and *The Graphic*. All of these colleges purchased at least some of these books from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK). As the local secretary for the SPCK for over thirty-five years, Rigaud undoubtedly would have recommended the society's publications to

[738] Owen McKnight 'Reading for Servants' *Worcester College Record* 2013, pp.96-100, [Hereafter McKnight, 'Reading'].
[739] MC:VP1/A1/4 26 July 1853
[740] MC:CP1/12 2 February 1854; records show that the college made these contributions for at least ten years, MC DBJ/136.

Magdalen servants.[741] At Worcester, twenty-two books in the collection appear in a SPCK catalogue from 1848 that advertised a selection of fifty-three titles suitable for a lending library for £5.[742]

The society usually employed a servant from the Bodleian Library to organize their collection and supervise lending and circulation. Donations of books were regularly requested from members of the university; a circular was sent around to all the colleges at the establishment of the Society in 1872 and then at least once again ten years later. The letter requested donations of any type of books, citing the wide range of interests among its members. Fellows were assured that even duplicate copies would be gratefully received.[743] These donations comprised the greatest part of the library's inventory in the early years. The Society generally set aside £5 annually for the purchase of new books, for example, in 1882, £10 was spent on the library, and in 1889, 170 new books were purchased, but in some years, they were unable to afford that level of support for the library, and relied on donations to keep the circulating inventory fresh and interesting.

The CSS maintained subscriptions to several periodicals, these changed over the years according to servants' preferences. The selection was reviewed annually and subscriptions were added or cancelled based on a vote of the membership. In 1876, periodicals included: *Daily News, The Standard, Telegraph, Chronicle, Field, Graphic, Illustrated London News, Exchange and Mart, Punch, Oxford Chronicle* and *Oxford Times*.[744]

In addition to lending libraries, servants must have been able to access books by informal means. Servants were responsible for cleaning the college libraries, dusting the shelves and

[741] 'Death of the Rev. John Rigaud' *JOJ* 4 August 1888.
[742] McKnight 'Reading', pp.96-7.
[743] BL:G.A. Oxon 4° 342, 11 October 1882. In 1882, the library contained 450 volumes.
[744] Ibid., CSS Annual Report 1877.

books; it is not difficult to imagine that they may have browsed volumes there or in the course of cleaning fellows' and undergraduates' rooms. In one of the most striking examples of a servant's literacy, Thomas Austin, a servant at Exeter was also one of the most prolific contributors to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, providing over 12,250 quotations.[745] Austin worked as an underporter, a position that unusually afforded a servant time for reading. It was not uncommon for fellows to leave copies of morally improving tracts and pamphlets in the porter's lodge for servants' perusal.

A representative of the CSS was named for each college and contact details of how and where donations, both books and cash contributions, could be received was provided with the circular, further publicizing the work of the society and the participation of individual members. Minutes of the club note that donations were received from Charles Dodgson in 1892, but generally there are no details of either the books donated or of the donors themselves.[746] The society also received books from the estates of former honorary members, John Rigaud's will provided for a large donation of books from his personal library; Henry Bazely's will gave money to the CSS for the purchase of books and several small bequests from other honorary members were received over the years.[747] New books were chosen by a committee of two ordinary members and a college fellow. Other members could submit requests and minutes in several years note that a sheet was available in the reading room for men to offer suggestions of books they would like the library to acquire. The minutes of the

[745] Peter Gilliver, *The Making of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 2016), p.125. Gilliver quotes from a letter sent to Austin in 1879 by James Murray, editor of the *OED*, describing Austin's work as 'of scholarly excellence'.
[746] BL:Dep.d.825.
[747] 'Death of the Reverend John Rigaud' *JOJ* 4 August 1888; Edward Hicks, *Henry Bazely, the Oxford evangelist: a memoir* (London, 1886), [Hereafter, Hicks, *Bazely*].

annual general meeting often give the figures for the number of books lent out each year, usually around 900.[748]

The popularity of the library and reading room raises interesting questions. Did college service attract workers who were interested in further education but were unable to access it because of financial constraints and rigid class hierarchies that restricted access to a university education at Oxford? Across college archives, individual servants are remarkable for their particular talents. Some were able to progress to senior roles with considerable responsibility. To take just one example, John Goldsworthy, a servant at Corpus, who was hired in 1901 as a clerk and worked at the college for over thirty years.[749] Goldsworthy's handwriting is ubiquitous in the college archives during his tenure. He served as Thomas Case's private secretary from 1904 when Case became president of the college, while at the same time holding positions as the bursar's clerk, and then in 1907, he also became the president's butler.

> 'The President trusted him exclusively, refusing to deal with anyone else, so that after a long day's work writing Mr. Goldsworthy would often have to check all the silver back into the cases and then perhaps take down another letter or two. It is almost impossible to believe that one man could have fulfilled all these tasks, and yet it is clear that Mr. Goldsworthy did so ably. … He retired from the Bursary in 1935 and became the first Librarian's clerk, Previously the work had been done by scholars. … He wrote out the entire junior library catalogue. Meanwhile in the evenings, he was helping in Magdalen library, and tutoring backward sportsmen. Yet, this is only half of Mr. Goldsworthy. He was a great sportsman in his time: he won his County Cricket Cap in 1901, and later used to open for North Oxford. … For a short time, he taught boxing in the Holywell Music Room. He is a keen bird watcher … a man of charming old fashioned courtesy, undisturbed by his own dynamic energy…'.[750]

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[748] BL:G.A. Oxon 4° 342.
[749] CCC B/4/7/1B, 23 April 1901. Goldsworthy was hired from Oriel, where he also worked as a clerk. His salary at Corpus was £80 annually, with a scheduled increase of £5 in one year, plus life insurance. In December 1901, he was permitted cold meat and beer for luncheon in term.
[750] *Pelican Record* Vol. 31, 1954-7, p. 140-1. John Goldsworthy's son Graham matriculated aged 17 as an undergraduate at Corpus in 1925. There is no mention of John Goldsworthy in the recently published history of

No sources survive to offer any insight into how John Goldsworthy felt about his career. These demarcations were evident to contemporary observers, but there are very few sources that offer the servants' perspective. Henry Bazely, a local clergyman, former tutor at Brasenose, and supporter of the CSS observed, "Of all classes of men in Oxford perhaps the most destitute in a spiritual sense are the college servants; they come in close external contact with the boundless intellectual and religious resources of the place, but cannot themselves enter in."[751]

Bazely believed the CSS could address this disparity. In addition to the library and reading room, the CSS offered members other opportunities for intellectual fellowship and enrichment. Lectures were held throughout the terms by college fellows who were either requested to speak by the ordinary membership, or offered their services. These were popular and well-attended and included topics such as a series on the history of the Reformation (1876, given by Rev. Knox) and the life of the late Prince Leopold (1884, given by Mr. Hughes).[752]

Less popular were the regularly held bible study groups and lectures. The minutes of annual meetings often lament the lack of attendance at these events and admonish members to recall the original purpose of the Society. After a religious talk given by Canon Paget in 1885 the minutes note that '…the committee at the same time deeply regret the extremely scanty attendance at these meetings and the apparent tendency of the society to depart from one of the chief objects for which it was originally founded.' It is clear that some functions of the

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the college, a striking omission. Thomas Charles-Edwards and Julian Reid, *Corpus Christi College, Oxford A History* (Oxford, 2017).

[751] Hicks, *Bazely,* p.179.

[752] BL:G.A. Oxon 4° 342.

Society existed not in response to the demands of its membership, but because of the perceived moral obligations of the honorary members.[753]

The honorary members of the Society and the fellows who provided day-to-day leadership were keen to promote membership among younger servants. The domestication of younger servants was a mission keenly pursued by the colleges and they often encouraged senior servants to take a more active role in mentoring junior servants.

By the early twentieth century, the CSS had given up the building on King Edward Street and returned to a smaller set of rooms at St. Aldate's. Appeals sent to college bursars on behalf of the CSS in 1913 summarized the life of the society: there were 192 ordinary members, the premises at 113 St. Aldate's had a reading room, billiard room and a 'refreshment bar'. The Oxford contingent of the Army Medical Corps held lectures there and was comprised 'almost entirely of members of the Society'. Library, debates, sports (cricket, rowing, football, and athletics) also highlighted the vacation employment activities. 'We believe the Society has been a great benefit to a large number of College Servants, especially to juniors, for whom it provides a reasonable means of recreation and a Club for the evenings. No club of this kind is ever self-supporting and the Society is bound to depend in part on the assistance of Senior Members of the University'.[754]

The CSS never recovered after the Great War, a few of the members reconstituted the club in another form, a slate club, that enjoyed several decades of popularity and still furthered the original objectives of the CSS – fellowship and mutual aid.[755]

[753] Ibid., CSS Annual Report 1885.
[754] WOR/BUR/8/18/56, 13 February 1913.
[755] NC NCSC/D1, records of the slate club survive in New College's archive.

7.3. Parties and outings

Christmas parties were a regular feature at most colleges, often with separate events for servants and their children.[756] Invitations were extended to wives, making these parties an annual highlight.[757] Records suggest these events were popular enough that tickets were usually printed, along with lists of attendees in order to restrict access to invited guests.[758] In 1896, a children's Christmas party was held at Christ Church, with approximately 130 people in attendance. The steward arranged a 'shadow pantomime' and a Christmas tree, and noted that the cost of the event was £12.8.2.[759] A few days later, servants had their party, also held in the hall. The steward's minutes note that 360 people attended; 'a gorgeous "Masque of Henry VIII" composed by the manciple T.J. Farnell was given, then followed supper and dancing till 4 a.m. Total expenses £54.5.0, the Treasurer contributed £50'.[760]

The following year, the college contributed £5 to the servants' children's party, which was again attended by 130. 'There were games before tea, then a conjuring performance and Punch & Judy show for 1½ hours by Mr. de Loui, 95 Howard Street, then a [sic] Xmas Tree: total expenses £15.8.10'.[761] Records do not note who paid the costs in excess of the college's contribution.

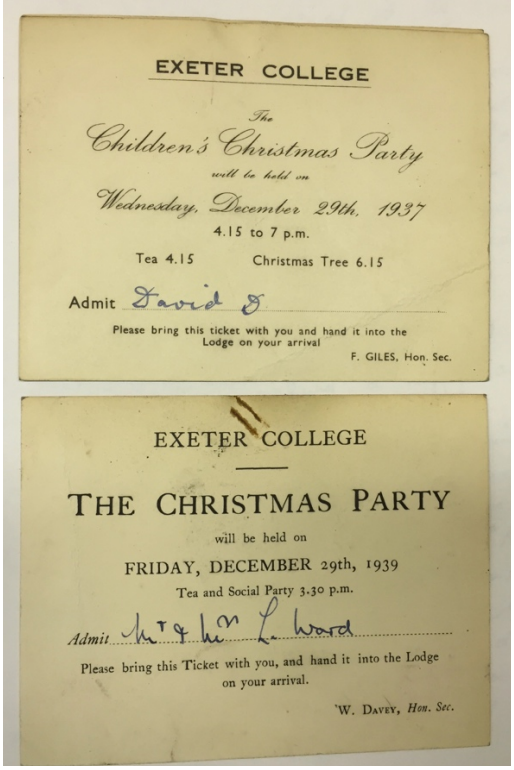
The servants' party, however, was cancelled that year. 'No servants' party was this year given, the opinion being generally expressed in the Governing Body that a change in their character was desirable and therefore that break should be made this year.'[762] No servants'

[756] The practice of hosting dinners for servants likely has a long history in colleges, the expense of 'Servants' Gawdies' is mentioned in W. Blackstone, *Dissertation on the Accounts of All Souls College*, p.6.
[757] See Appendix, images 33-4.
[758] See for example, NC NCSC/A1.
[759] CCA S.xxxi.a.3, 7 January 1896.
[760] Ibid., 9 January 1896.
[761] CCA S.xxxi.a.3, 22 December 1896.
[762] Ibid.

party was given the following year, either. In response, servants organized their own Christmas celebration. It was still held in the college, in the JCR, and funded through the sale of tickets. Attendance was low compared to the previous year, with forty tickets sold.[763] A few months later, in discussing the party, minutes hint at resentment, '…we trust this was only a beginning of many more such meetings when the College does not entertain us'. In the same meeting, the steward was characterized as kindly and helpful, and it seems likely that scouts believed the punishment came from the dean and censors, not the steward.[764] Regardless of its origins, punishing servants by taking away their party does not appear to have been particularly effective. There was no discernible change in servants' behavior indicated in the steward's records. This seems to have been an unusual occurrence, there are no similar examples of servants being punished at other colleges in this humiliating manner.

Accounts of servants' parties were regularly reported in local newspapers, from the nineteenth century well into the twentieth. In 1893, a report of the servants' party at New College included the musical programme with the song list, and a description of the other entertainments, including a dramatic performance with wigs supplied by Mr. Baker of Little Clarendon Street.[765] Coverage of these parties in the local press offered a flattering portrayal of paternalism, emphasizing the generosity of college employers.

[763] CCA S.xxxvi.a.1, 15 December 1897.
[764] Minutes from the dean and censors' meetings for this period do not discuss the servants' party or lack thereof, CCA S.xxxiii.a.1. The steward often found himself uncomfortably situated in the middle of this hierarchy.
[765] *OT* 14 January 1893.



EXETER COLLEGE

The
Children's Christmas Party
will be held on
Wednesday, December 29th, 1937
4.15 to 7 p.m.

Tea 4.15 Christmas Tree 6.15

Admit David D

Please bring this ticket with you and hand it into the Lodge on your arrival

F. GILES, Hon. Sec.

EXETER COLLEGE

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

will be held on

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29th, 1939

Tea and Social Party 3.30 p.m.

Admit Mr & Mrs L. Ward

Please bring this Ticket with you, and hand it into the Lodge on your arrival.

W. DAVEY, *Hon. Sec.*

Figure 33 Tickets for Exeter servants'parties (EC L.II.4/6)

Servants often took an active role in planning these events. At New College, minutes of the Christmas Party Committee show that preparation began months in advance, booking entertainers, making arrangements for the catering and finalizing the guest list.[766] One of the servants dressed as Father Christmas and handed out presents to children, purchased by the club. The committee's accounts show that from 1904, parties typically cost about £22-5 each year, rising to £50 in the interwar period. In 1904, £7 of this was contributed by the college, £10 from the servants' cricket club, and the committee received various small contributions from individual fellows.[767] Invitations were strictly limited and complicated rules developed to qualify attendees. All permanent, year-round employees were entitled to bring their wives and families, part-time or term-time only servants were only entitled to an invitation for themselves. A lunch or supper was usually held the day after the party for pensioners.[768]

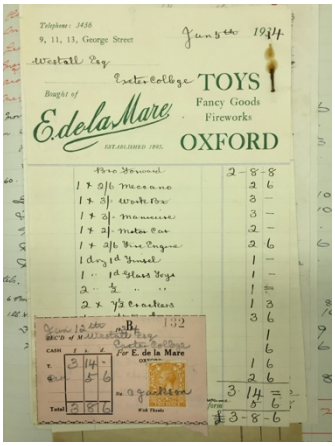


Figure 34 Receipt for children's' toys purchased for Exeter servants' Christmas party 1934 (EC L.II.4/6)

Figure 35 1937 Advertisement for excursion to Margate; Right: Accounts for outing to the Boat Race 1938 (EC L.II.4/6)Figure 36 Receipt for children's' toys purchased for Exeter servants' Christmas party 1934 (EC L.II.4/6)

[766] NC NCSC/A1.
[767] NC NCSC/B1.
[768] EC L.II.4/6, 11 December 1935.

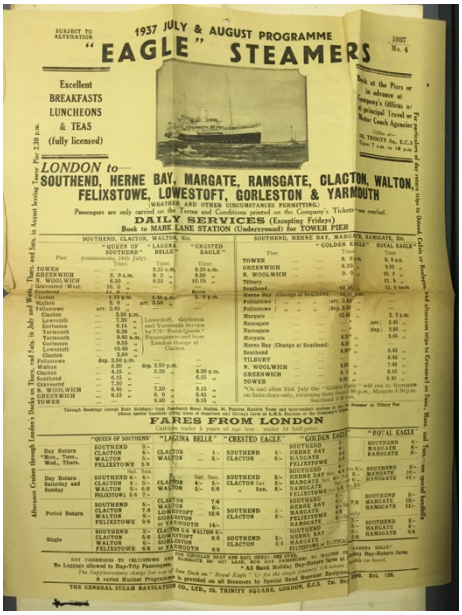
Servants accepted contributions in-kind from local merchants as well, in 1928, for example, the committee received a ham, cards for the whist drive, soda syphons, beer and wine.[769] These gifts were apparently common, records from Exeter show similar donations from tradespeople to servants' Christmas parties. In 1938, servants there organized a Christmas party and lunch for 40. Accounts list gifts from tradespeople, including: 27 gallons of beer, 6 bottles of port, 3 bottles of whiskey, 200 cigarettes, and various other foodstuffs. Servants invited an employee of Fremlin's Brewers to attend the party in 1937, he wrote a letter thanking them for a 'really happy and enjoyable time with you good lads of Exeter'.[770] It appears that despite the reforms of the nineteenth century, the prohibitions on perquisites and threats of severe punishment, relationships between servants and tradespeople were as close as ever. These accounts were kept in college archives, presumably servants solicited and accepted these goods with the tacit approval of the college.

From the early twentieth century, the increased possibilities of travel and the growth of tourism gave rise to the tradition of the staff excursion. These typically were arranged for the summer months, and records show that while colleges and individual fellows contributed to offset the cost of these outings, servants organized them and usually paid something towards the expense. Some of the most complete records of these are found at Exeter, where servants had social and recreation clubs that maintained accounts to fund parties, sports and excursions.

The club received an annual grant from the college of £5, donations from fellows in the SCR of £15.6.0, £5 from undergraduates in the JCR and collected members' subscriptions of £3.7.6, yielding an annual income of £49.12.1, which paid for excursions, parties and sporting

[769] NC NCSC/B1.
[770] EC L.II.4/7, 4 January 1937.

events. In 1933, servants at Exeter planned a trip to Margate, taking a coach to London, then a boat from Tower Bridge to Southend. Servants could pay a supplementary charge to continue to Margate, the rest was paid by the club.[771] The trip cost £11.1.0 for 21 servants. Accounts show that the club paid the cost of hiring another servant to cover the porter's lodge in his absence.[772] Exeter servants went on at least one trip annually, organizing outings to watch international rugby at Twickenham, the undergraduate boat race, and several trips to the seaside, including the Isle of Wight. Records associated with these clubs continue into the late twentieth century, evidence of servants' continued enjoyment of these activities.


1937 JULY & AUGUST PROGRAMME

"EAGLE" STEAMERS

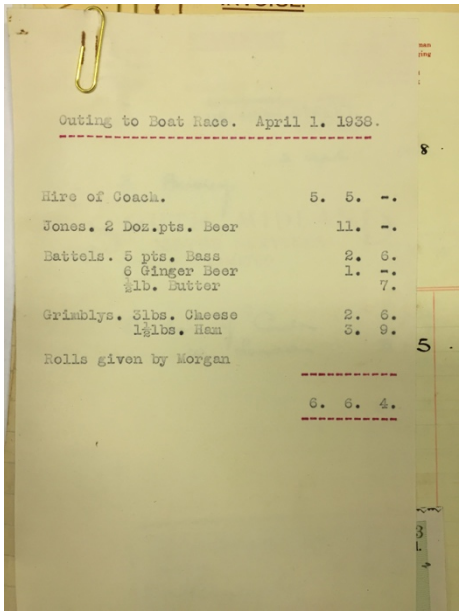
Excellent BREAKFASTS LUNCHEONS & TEAS (fully licensed)

LONDON to SOUTHEND, HERNE BAY, MARGATE, RAMSGATE, CLACTON, WALTON, FELIXSTOWE, LOWESTOFT, GORLESTON & YARMOUTH

DAILY SERVICES (Excepting Fridays)

Book to MARK LANE STATION (Underground) for TOWER PIER

FARES FROM LONDON


Outing to Boat Race. April 1. 1938.

Hire of Coach.	5.	5. -.
Jones. 2 Doz.pts. Beer	11.	-.
Battels. 5 pts. Bass	2.	6.
6 Ginger Beer	1.	-.
½lb. Butter		7.
Grimblys. 3lbs. Cheese	2.	6.
1½lbs. Ham	3.	9.
Rolls given by Morgan		
	6.	6. 4.

Figure 37 1937 Advertisement for excursion to Margate; Right: Accounts for outing to the Boat Race 1938 (EC L.II.4/6)

Figure 38 Richard Gunstone (1840-1924), JCR Steward at Magdalen College (1880-1914), copy after John Collier, Robert John Swan (1888-1980) artuk.orgFigure 39 1937 Advertisement for excursion to Margate; Right: Accounts for outing to the Boat Race 1938 (EC L.II.4/6)

[771] See Appendix, images 35-6.
[772] Ibid.

8. Conclusion



Figure 40 Richard Gunstone (1840-1924), JCR Steward at Magdalen College (1880-1914), copy after John Collier, Robert John Swan (1888-1980) artuk.org

Figure 41 Richard Gunstone (1840-1924), JCR Steward at Magdalen College (1880-1914), copy after John Collier, Robert John Swan (1888-1980) artuk.org

In 1914, Richard Gunstone retired from his position as common room man at Magdalen. After 34 years of service, he received a final salary pension, a gift of £1,351 raised by members of the college, a silver teapot engraved with the college crest and a copy of his portrait. These were presented at a dinner, with 200 guests in attendance.[773]

[773] Sheppard,pp.46-8.

In 1896, a member of another 'family dynasty' at Magdalen, Jane Hall Hambidge retired, aged 53. Jane's father was the college bootblack, and died in 1865 aged 53, after 40 years' service at Magdalen; her mother was a laundress. The family received some assistance from the college, but no details were recorded. Her brother, Thomas continued as the college bootblack until his death, five years later. Once married, Jane also began working as a servant at Magdalen, where she spent the rest of her working life. Her husband William succeeded her brother as the college bootblack and worked in that position until his death in 1881. Jane's father, brother and husband all earned £40 annually. No one in Jane's family was eligible to participate in the college pension scheme, any assistance they received was at the discretion of the college.

Jane was widowed with five children, aged 2-12, and supported her family with her college wages. She gave her occupation variously as college servant, cook and laundress. College minutes describe her as a charwoman. Her eldest son, William was also employed by the college. In 1891, Jane lived with two of her daughters, Florence and Annie, aged 15 and 12. They earned their living as college laundresses. So did Jane's mother, who lived a few doors down with Jane's eldest daughter, Agnes. In 1894, Jane was injured in a workplace accident and after a few months, it was clear she was permanently disabled and could not work. The college awarded her a pension of 5/- weekly. In 1896, unable to manage on this meagre income, she pleaded with the college for assistance and was given an increase in her pension, to 7/- weekly, which she received until her death.

> 'Mrs Hambidge (late charwoman) is now living quite alone and is unable to keep on her house. She has been offered a room at her married daughter's house at Watford and would be glad to accept it with the sanction of the college. She is suffering from rupture in the stomach and is unable to earn

> anything. If the college could give her a little more help, she would be deeply thankful.'[774]

One of the most important contributions of this thesis is the recovery of the histories not only of servants like Richard Gunstone, but also of servants like Jane Hambidge and her family, who have been neglected almost completely in existing histories of Oxford colleges. In addition to highly remunerated senior servants, colleges employed a considerable number of casual, seasonal and low-waged workers. Details of their working lives offer new and important insights into the history of precarious employment.

This research is one of very few historical studies comparing a relatively large number of colleges, and relies on college accounts and financial data, sources which are often underutilised in other historical narratives. The discovery of trade union activity in 1919-20, contrary to existing narratives, provides just one example of the success of this approach.

Similarly, using a variety of sources and a comparative approach, this research shows that rather than the existing narrative of masculine family dynasties, family labour networks more accurately describe patterns of employment. The work of women, particularly of servants' wives like Jane Hambidge, is brought out of the shadows and provides further evidence that married women's labour force participation in this labour market is more extensive than previously assumed, and that these women were able to access better employment opportunities through their husbands.

This case study of a peculiar, even anachronistic, labour market offers new insights into late nineteenth and early twentieth century labour markets more generally by demonstrating how employers approached universal problems, and how they incorporated new types of data into management strategies.

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[774] MC CP/9/24/i-ii, 2 May 1896.

The usual limits of space and time leave considerable scope for further research. Perhaps the most obvious is the work of domestic servants at women's colleges during this period. Very good sources survive for earlier periods in men's colleges, particularly for the work of women. Often the severe language in college statutes restricting women's access has led historians to conclude that for centuries, women had little or no presence in Oxford colleges. However, archival sources clearly show working women have always been there, alongside their male counterparts, making possible the comfortable life enjoyed by fellows. Further research on the history of many of these women, the lodging house-keepers and charwomen particularly, can contribute to our understanding of women's casual labour and its importance to household income. The financial history of the colleges, particularly of their internal management, is also a promising area for further research.

The story of college service during the Victorian and Edwardian era is one of change, but also of persistence. Over the early decades of the twentieth century, this paternalistic relationship which had stood relatively unchanged for centuries crumbled. Colleges failed to adapt to a changing local labour market and more importantly, to understand the fundamental shifts in cultural and social norms that were accelerating during the interwar period. During this period of rapid transformation, however, much has stayed the same. Many of the traditions recalled here still exist today, the friendly staff vs. fellows cricket match; staff outings and parties; and the celebration of long employment attachments. The relationships between undergraduates, staff and fellows are still an integral and lasting part of the fabric of college life. Persistence is seen in other areas, too. College service is still seen as relatively low-paid work, insecure contracts still exist and with some regularity the grievances raised in the interwar period resurface unresolved.

9. Figures and Tables

Figure 1 Undated photo of members of Oxford College Servants' Rowing Club, John Wilkins, scout at University College on right (UC:P251/P1/13) 21
Figure 2 New College Staff top: c.1900, mid: 1927, bottom:1957-8 (NC DB/J1,11,12) 25
Figure 3 Balliol College staff 1878 (BC PHOT 63/5) 27
Figure 4 A page from Richard Gunstone's personal photo album, kept during the early 20th century, This page features a photograph of Gunstone on Addison's Walk at Magdalen College (MC uncatalogued) 40
Figure 5 University College staff, each with at least 40 yrs' service, at an event held in their honor. (UC:P251/P1/14, photo copyright Oxford Mail) 45
Figure 7 John Wilkins, presented with a silver salver at his retirement party in December 1972. (UC:P251/P1/15, photo copyright Oxford Mail) 56
Figure 6 Left: John Wilkins aged 15 in July 1907 (UC:P251/P1/1) Right: Wilkins 1907 in his bell boy uniform. Wilkins worked in a hotel in Lowestoft in the summer of 1907, after he started work at University in 1906. (UC:P251/P1/4) 56
Figure 8 Richard Richmond, porter at University College c.1864 (UC:P4/P/1) 62
Figure 9 John James's remuneration, 1873 (UC:GB4/A1/1-4) 117
Table 10 1927 Porters' Cash Wages, source: PMB Misc 20th century papers; College revenues and members from 1922 Royal Commission report 119
Figure 11 Sketch of William Beasley, undated (OC STA 4 A/1) 137
Figure 12 1907 Notice to college servants re: Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 (CCA S.xxxiii.a.2) 157
Figure 13 Prevention of Corruption Act, 1932 request for permission to offer the butler a gratuity (OC TF 2 B1/2) . 158
Table 14 Oxford Savings Bank 1841 Summary, source: BL:G.A.Oxon c.57 231
Table 15 Payments to Servants from Powell's Benefaction 1862-8, Source: BC D.8.41-41a 239
Table 16 Payments to Servants from Muckleston Bequest 1899-1907, Source: WOR/BUR 1/41 251
Table 17 Age Cohort of CSPI Members 1841, 1875, Source: BL G.A. Oxon c.14 and OC TF 1 G5/1 1841-1859 265
Figure 18 1853 Receipt signed by William Thurland for £5 donation to the CSPI from Lincoln College (LC/B/C/4) 272
Table 19 College Servants' Slate Club Accounts Summary 1947-54, Source: NC/NCSC D1 298
Figure 20 c.1927 Jesus College: Spreadsheet estimating liabilities and income for servants' pension fund (JC Box 65 Uncatalogued items relating to pensions) 340
Figure 21 Oriel College Servants' Cricket Club 1913 (OC STA 5 A1) 347
Figure 22 Oriel College Servants' Cricket Club 1921 (OC STA 5 A2-3) 348
Figure 23 Norman Dix, University College staff, accomplished rower and boatman, undated (UC:P315/4/P1/12) 352
Figure 24 University College Servants Crew, undated. John Wilkins is in the front row, right. (UC:P251/P1/12) 353
Figure 25 1878 Easter Regatta Challenge Four, Hertford College (Photo:RRM River and Rowing Museum) 354
Figure 26 Undated photo of Wilfred 'Tricky' Bossum (Lincoln College Record 1964-5) 354
Figure 27 1903 Oxford and Cambridge Servants' Boat Race, Oxford leads Cambridge. (Photo:RRM) 355
Figure 28 1950 Dinner ticket for the Oxford and Cambridge Servants' Sports Centenary (Photo:RRM) 355
Figure 29 Left:CSRC Challenge Cup Whiffs 1890-1953, Right: CSRC Four Oar Challenge Cup 1874-1954 (Photos:RRM) 356
Figure 30 Left: CSRC Challenge Cup Pairs 1903, Right: Oxford and Cambridge College Servants' Sports Centenary programme (Photos:RRM) 356
Figure 31 Left:1912 Oxford and Cambridge Servants' Sports Dinner, Right: 1950 Oxford and Cambridge College Servants' Centenary Sports Dinner at Christ Church (Photo: RRM, both images) 357
Figure 32 Left: CSRC Badge from William Henry Young, Hertford College servant 1936-60. Young rowed with the CSRC and coached undergraduates. Right: CSRC cap (Photo:RRM, both images) 357
Figure 33 Tickets for Exeter servants'parties (EC L.II.4/6) 368
Figure 34 Receipt for children's' toys purchased for Exeter servants' Christmas party 1934 (EC L.II.4/6) ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Figure 35 Receipt for children's' toys purchased for Exeter servants' Christmas party 1934 (EC L.II.4/6)..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Figure 36 Left: 1937 Advertisement for excursion to Margate; Right: Accounts for outing to the Boat Race 1938Figure 37 Receipt for children's' toys purchased for Exeter servants' Christmas party 1934..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Figure 38 Receipt for children's' toys purchased for Exeter servants' Christmas party 1934 ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Figure 39 1937 Advertisement for excursion to Margate; Right: Accounts for outing to the Boat Race 1938 371
Figure 40 Richard Gunstone (1840-1924), JCR Steward at Magdalen College (1880-1914), copy after John Collier, Robert John Swan (1888-1980) artuk.org 372

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